

Turn up the heat with healthy hot chili peppers

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Red or green, sweet or hot, peppers are a great source of vitamins A, C, E and many of the B vitamins, plus minerals like calcium, iron and potassium.

These and other nutrients are jammed into a low-calorie "package" that's perfect for stuffing with other healthful foods. Chili [peppers](#), such as jalapenos and serranos, also add zesty spice to dishes. They get their heat from a special compound called capsaicin that may also have health properties, including [pain relief](#). (All peppers except bell peppers contain some capsaicin.)

When shopping for peppers, look for firm, unblemished skins with no soft spots. Store them in produce bags in the fridge for up to three days.

One of the tastiest Mexican [chili peppers](#) is the poblano. It looks similar to a green bell pepper, but has a slightly darker [skin](#), longer shape and spicier, deeper flavor. Like bell peppers, poblanos can be heartily stuffed to make a complete meal. Here's a

meatless recipe that delivers on flavor as well as satisfaction.

Stuffed Poblanos

- 4 poblano chili peppers
- 4 cups baby spinach or 10-ounce package of frozen spinach, thawed
- 1/4 cup raisins, red or golden
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts or chopped walnuts
- 4 tablespoons mild or medium salsa
- 1 cup grated Colby or Jack cheese

Roast poblanos under the broiler on an ungreased baking tray for three to four minutes, turning often until their skins start to blacken and blister. Transfer the peppers to a glass bowl and cover with plastic wrap to loosen the skins. When cool, remove skins and place chili peppers in a baking dish.

Steam spinach if using fresh and chop coarsely. Combine with raisins and nuts, and use mixture to stuff [chili](#) peppers. Top with salsa and grated cheese.

Place under the broiler for one minute to melt the cheese. Serve immediately.

Yield: 4 servings

More information: The American Chemical Society has more on [chili peppers](#) and their heat rankings.

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