

Try Me!

RED RHUBARB, RED CHILI PEPPER, RADISH



If you look at your plate and see a variety of colors, chances are, you are getting many of the nutrients you need to stay healthy. This year our “Try Me” foods will focus on “Eating a Rainbow” to give you some suggestions to add variety to your menu. This month we are focusing on **RED**. Rhubarb, red chili peppers, and radishes are the red foods that we will focus on here, however, don’t stop with these! Try adding more red foods to your meals to brighten up your plate.

RHUBARB

Fun Facts:

- In traditional Chinese medicine, rhubarb roots have been used as a laxative for several thousand years.
- Rhubarb leaves are poisonous. They contain oxalic acid. The leaves can be made into a natural insecticide.
- Rhubarb is most commonly used with a combination of other fruit, especially in baking.

Picking and Storage

- Rhubarb is typically available late March - June.
- Choose stalks that are firm, crisp, with leaves that have good color.
- To freeze rhubarb up to a year, cut off the leaves, chop stalks, and store in a sealed baggie.

How to Enjoy Rhubarb

- Add some thin sliced stalks to your salad.
- Blend chopped rhubarb stalks into your smoothie.
- Cut rhubarb into bite-sized pieces and dip into sugar, syrup, or honey.
- Sprinkle chopped rhubarb one to your yogurt or cereal.

RED CHILI PEPPER

Fun Facts

- Chili peppers were domesticated in Mexico over 6,000 years ago.
- Christopher Columbus was one of the first Europeans to find the peppers in the Caribbean. He called them “pepper” because of their spicy hot taste.
- Capsaicin gives chili peppers their intensity. Capsaicin is the primary component in pepper spray.
- The “heat” of chili pepper is historically measured in Scoville heat units (SHU).
- These peppers contain oils that can burn your skin and eyes. Avoid direct contact as much as possible.
- The smaller the chili pepper, the more intense the heat.

Picking and Storage

- Red chili peppers are available year-round. They are mainly grown in California, New Mexico, and Texas.
- Choose peppers that are firm to the touch with smooth skin.
- Use the peppers as soon as possible after purchase for best flavor.

If you are unable to use the peppers right after you buy them, store them up to two weeks wrapped in a dry cloth inside a paper bag in the refrigerator.

- Dried chili peppers can be stored at room temperature in a cool, dark place, inside an airtight container.

How to Enjoy Red Chili Peppers

- Add them to your favorite dish. Start sparingly and increase once you have had a taste. The heat can sneak up on you!

RADISH

Fun Facts

- About seven million tons of radishes are produced annually. This represents roughly 2% of the global vegetable production.
- Citizens of Oaxaca, Mexico celebrate the radish in a festival called Noche de los Rábanos (Night of the Radishes) on December 23. It is part of their Christmas celebrations. During the festival they carve figures out of radishes and display them in the town square.



This is an example of the radish displays at the Oaxaca, Mexico celebration.

Picking and Storage

- Radishes are available year-round.
- Pick firm-skinned, radishes with no blemishes.
- Avoid larger radishes as they will not be as crisp.
- Refrigerate them in a perforated bag for 3-4 days.
- Before eating, soak them in ice water to improve crispiness.
- Enjoy radishes with a little salt.

Health Benefits:

- Radishes may help with the following:
- Naturally decrease excess heat in the body.
- Help to fight colds and eliminate toxins.
- Relieve indigestion.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Rhubarb
Calories: 26 (1 cup)
Fat: 0
Vitamin A, Potassium, Calcium, Fiber, Magnesium

Red Chili Pepper
Calories: 18 (1 pepper)
Fat: 0
Vitamins A, C, K, B6, Iron, Potassium and Manganese

Radishes
Calories: 19 (1 cup sliced)
Fat: 0
Vitamins B6, C, Riboflavin, Folate, Calcium, Potassium, Magnesium

References: <http://bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/rhubarb>; http://www.ehow.com/how_5970573_eat-raw-rhubarb.html; <http://whatscookingamerica.net/chilepep.htm>; <http://www.nutrition-and-you.com/chili-peppers.html>; <http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/glossary/radish>