

Health Benefits of Green Chilis



Chili peppers, also known as chilis or chiles, are botanically classified as berries and found in different shapes and colors. These peppers contain capsaicin and capsaicinoids that contribute to the flavor and aroma of the pepper. They were used by ancient Mayans and Aztecs for their medicinal properties and today, capsaicin is used to treat pain and inflammation.

Chili peppers are believed to have originated in Central America and Mexico. Varieties include green and yellow chilis, jalapeños, serranos, habaneros and ghost peppers. Green/yellow chilis are usually mild and are used in many cuisines to add spice and flavor without “heat.”

WHAT MAKES GREEN CHILIS GREAT?

Nutrition

½ cup raw green chilis provides 30 calories, 1.5 gm protein, 1 gm fiber and no fat or cholesterol.

Vitamins

Green chilis are a rich source of vitamin C and beta-carotene (a precursor to vitamin A). Other phytonutrients include flavonoids and polyphenols. These nutrients are powerful antioxidants that neutralize damaging free radicals, boost immunity and fight chronic inflammation.

Capsaicin has also been shown to have a toxic effect on cancer cells including those of breast, prostate, colorectal, lung, gastric and pancreatic cancers. Capsaicin has been shown to increase thermogenesis, which can increase fat burn and aid in weight loss.

Green chilis provide antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin important for eye health.

Minerals

Green chilis are a good source of potassium which helps to regulate blood pressure. They also provide calcium and magnesium and trace amounts of zinc, copper and selenium which are all important for healthy bone density.

Fiber

Fiber in chili peppers is mostly insoluble, helping to improve digestion and reduce risk of constipation, hemorrhoids and colorectal cancer.

BUYING & USING GREEN CHILIS

Green/yellow chilis peak in the summer growing season and off-season, are grown in Mexico and imported to the US. They can be found fresh in most farmers’ markets and grocery stores year round. Green chilis can also be found frozen or canned.

Chilis can be used raw or cooked. The seeds contain spicy chemicals and can be removed for a milder flavor. Toss on fresh greens, potato or macaroni salads, in hummus, or sliced on sandwiches or burgers. Add to soups, stews, chili or marinara sauce. Sprinkle into vegetables for a spicy flair. They can also be used to make pickles, salsa or jelly.

PRECAUTIONS

Capsaicin in raw green chilis may cause irritation, swelling or itching of the mucous membranes like those in eyes, mouth or tongue, especially in children. Avoid touching eyes after cutting green chilis or other hot peppers, or use food-safe gloves to chop and prepare.

If consumed raw in high quantities, more than ½ cup at a time, chilis may cause damage to the tender lining of the stomach leading to heartburn, indigestion or acid reflux. Those with irritable bowel syndrome may experience diarrhea or rectal pain.

Slowly increasing consumption over time may result in building a tolerance to irritation and greater enjoyment of the spicy flavors.



Oregon State
University



stephanie.polizzi@oregonstate.edu
541-572-5263 ext 25291
[https://extension.oregonstate.edu/coos/
healthy-families-communities](https://extension.oregonstate.edu/coos/healthy-families-communities)

Green Chili Mac-n-Cheese

Minimalistbaker.com

Ingredients:

10 ounces large macaroni shells
 ½ medium white onion, diced
 3-4 cloves garlic, minced
 1 cup raw cashews (soaked 4-6 hrs or overnight, then drained)
 1½ cups vegetable broth
 1 Tbsp cornstarch
 ½ tsp cumin
 ¾ tsp chili powder
 2 Tbsp nutritional yeast
 1 4-oz can diced chilis (half into sauce, half in finished dish)
 1 cup tortilla chips (optional)
 Fresh cilantro (optional for topping)

Directions:

1. Boil macaroni according to package instructions. Drain the noodles, set aside, and cover (with a towel).
2. In a medium skillet over medium-low heat, sauté onion and garlic. Season with salt and pepper, stir and cook until soft and fragrant, about 7 minutes. Set aside.
3. Add onions and garlic to a blender with remaining ingredients, adding only half of the green chilis. Blend, scraping down sides as necessary, until smooth and creamy.
4. To the same pot you boiled the noodles in, add the cashew mixture and cook on low stirring frequently until slightly thickened.
5. Add the macaroni noodles to the cheese, along with the remaining green chilis and stir.
6. Serve immediately, topping with crushed toasted tortilla chips and cilantro (optional).

Green Chili Casserole

Minimalistbaker.com

Ingredients:

16-oz pkg firm tofu, drained, grated or 2 cans black beans	Cashew jalapeño sauce:
2 Tbsp olive oil	¾ cup raw cashews, soaked 4 hours or overnight, then drained
½ yellow onion, chopped	½ small jalapeño, chopped
1 red bell pepper, chopped	½-1 Tbsp nutritional yeast
4-oz can diced chilis, drained	2/3 cup water
1 tsp sea salt	1 Tbsp lime juice
1 Tbsp chili powder	½ clove garlic, peeled
6 (6") corn tortillas, cut in half	¼ tsp salt
2 batches cashew jalapeño sauce	Blend all ingredients smooth

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Sauté onion, pepper and chilis in saucepan until soft.
2. Place ¼ of first batch of sauce in bottom of baking dish. Top with 4 half tortillas, half the filling mixture and rest of first batch of sauce. Repeat layers using remaining sauce.
3. Cover with foil, bake 20 minutes. Top with optional chopped cilantro.

Green Chili Sauce

Brandnewvegan.com

Ingredients:

½ onion, diced	½ tsp each salt
3-4 garlic cloves, minced	½ tsp pepper
2-3 cups green chilis	2 cups vegetable broth
¼ tsp cumin	1 Tbsp arrowroot
¼ tsp oregano	

Directions:

1. Sauté onion in water or broth until soft. Stir in garlic and simmer 1 minute.
2. Add spices, chilis and broth and simmer until bubbly.
3. Mix arrowroot with 2 Tbsp cold water to make a slurry.
4. Add arrowroot to sauce until thickened to desired consistency.
5. Use sauce on burritos, enchiladas, as a dipping sauce or salad dressing.

REFERENCES

USDA National Nutrient Database
[Ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8839052/)
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8839052/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9570844/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8463741/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7729576/>