



HATCH HOW-TO

How to make the most of Hatch Chile season

Learn why we love Hatch Chiles and get some tips on how to become an expert! Grown only in New Mexico's Hatch Valley in rich Rio Grande soil, Hatch Peppers are a favorite for foodies. The season is short, extending from the end of July through mid-August. When roasted, they have a unique sweet, tangy and rich flavor.

SELECTION: Choose a chile that is bright green, smooth, symmetrical, heavy for its size, mature and crisp. Wash peppers before roasting.

ROASTING: Roasting (or blistering) adds a distinct flavor to the final product. Here are several ways you can do this:

OVEN OR BROILER METHOD: Place chile in a hot oven or broiler at 400 degrees F for 6-8 minutes or until skin blisters away from the flesh of the chile.

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RANGE TOP METHOD: Cover gas or electric burner with a layer of heavy wire mesh and place chile on mesh once hot. Using tongs, carefully turn peppers frequently, exposing all surfaces to heat until skin blisters evenly.

OUTDOOR GRILL METHOD: Place peppers on a charcoal grill about 5 to 6 inches above glowing coals. Using tongs, carefully turn peppers frequently, exposing all surfaces to the heat source until skin blisters evenly on all sides.

MICROWAVE METHOD: Place peppers in a microwave-safe dish; cover with secure air-tight lid to allow for steam build up. Place container on rotating plate in the center of the oven. Microwave for 7 to 8 minutes. Blistering is not apparent with this method. However, the skin will have a tougher, more brittle texture compared to the raw pepper. Allow steam to fully develop in the covered container for 1 to 2 minutes after cooking.

PEELING: Use safety glasses, remove contact lenses before peeling, wear gloves and wear a long-sleeved shirt. After roasting and cooling, the blistered skin will pull off the chile flesh with a gentle tug and occasional rinse with water. In areas that did not completely blister, the skin can be removed by scraping with a sharp knife or vegetable peeler. To help in peeling, place roasted peppers (while hot) in a microwave-safe or heat-tolerant covered container or plastic bag (food-grade) that will allow steam to release slowly from the roasted peppers. Once cooled, the skin can then be pulled off.

TIP! Peeling chiles under running water in a sink helps separate the skin from the pod and can significantly speed up the peeling process.

FREEZING AND STORAGE: Roasted peppers must be properly frozen to ensure high quality. Roasted, peeled peppers should be refrigerated within 2 hours of exposure to heat. Whole peppers can be frozen unpeeled and are easier to peel after freezing. It's best to use shallow containers to allow for quick cooling. Specialized plastic freezer containers with lids or freezer bags are best for storing in freezer. Remove as much air as possible. Peppers can be stored safely in the freezer for 12-18 months.

*** Information provided by the New Mexico State University Cooperative. For more information visit hatch-geen-chile.com.**