



Turkish Sweet Pepper Kid Kabobs

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 15 / **Cook Time** 15 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

sauté: to cook or brown food in a pan containing a small quantity of butter, oil, or other fat.

toss: to lightly lift and drop food items together or coat food items with flour, or a sauce or dressing, as in a salad.

Equipment

- Large skillet
- Medium mixing bowl (to soak popsicle sticks)
- Large mixing bowl
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon or tongs

Ingredients

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- 12 to 14 popsicle sticks (+ water to soak them)
- 3 bell peppers, any color ******(for NIGHTSHADE ALLERGY sub any of the following: red onion, broccoli, cauliflower, or mushrooms—more info below)**

- 1 zucchini
- 1 yellow squash
- 2 tsp vegetable oil + a drizzle for cooking **
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp ground black pepper
- 1 tsp cumin
- 2 tsp dried oregano

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Nightshade: For 3 bell peppers, substitute any of the following: 1 red onion, 1 head of broccoli, 1 small head of cauliflower, or 12 small mushrooms.

Soy: Substitute canola oil or other nut-free high-smoking point oil for vegetable oil.

Instructions

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intro

"Merhaba" (Mare-Hah-bah) or "Hello" in Turkish! Any food served on a stick is always a recipe for success. Kabobs are no different. Classically, kabobs include seasoned meat and veggies, skewered and roasted until tender and juicy. Our Sticky Finger Cooking rendition consists of a colorful combination of bell peppers, squash, and za'atar spice blend.

soak + chop

Start by soaking **12 to 14 popsicle sticks** in a small water bath for about 10 minutes while you prepare the veggies. Soaking them will help prevent the popsicle sticks from burning later. Chop **3 bell peppers**, **1 zucchini**, and **1 yellow squash** into thick chunks as equal-sized as you can. Place the veggies in a large bowl.

measure + toss

Measure and add **2 teaspoons vegetable oil**, **2 teaspoons salt**, **1 teaspoon black pepper**, **1 teaspoon cumin**, and **2 teaspoons oregano** to the bowl of veggies. Toss until all the veggies are well coated.

poke + sizzle

Poke the popsicle sticks into the veggies. Arrange them in any way you like; just don't overfill any of the kabobs. I prefer to alternate bell pepper, squash, bell pepper, squash because the bell peppers are my favorite part. Once you have all your veggies distributed on the sticks, place them in a large skillet over medium-high heat with a small drizzle of vegetable oil. Cook the kabobs, flipping them every few minutes for a total of 12 to 15 minutes, or until your veggies are soft and slightly charred.

serve

Serve immediately or let them chill for a while before serving. Either way, these kabobs pair wonderfully with **Roasted Za'atar Honeyed Carrots** and **Feta Whip Dip**. "Afiyet olsun" (Ah-fee-yet ohl-sun) or "Enjoy your meal in Turkish!"

Featured Ingredient: Bell Peppers!

Hi! I'm Bell Pepper!

"Do you like your pizza with green pepper on top? If you do, then you'll like me! I'm a bell pepper, and we come in different colors, like green, yellow, orange, and red. Plus, some of us are a bit sweeter than others. We bell peppers have colorful, glossy skin, and when you bite into one, it will taste fresh and crunchy. We're also very versatile and add distinctive flavor and texture to many dishes!"

History

Bell peppers may be called sweet peppers or capsicum in other countries. They are members of the nightshade family, along with tomatoes, potatoes, and eggplants.

Peppers are native to the Americas. Spain imported their seeds in the late 1400s, and then they spread to the rest of Europe and Asia. Today, China is the largest producer of bell peppers and chili peppers, followed by Mexico, Indonesia, Spain, Turkey, and the United States.

The most popular bell pepper in the United States is the green bell pepper. Other peppers sold in the United States are hot peppers (also called chili peppers).

November is National Pepper Month!

Anatomy & Etymology

Bell peppers are actually fruits, not vegetables! They are technically berries but are most often used as a vegetable.

The bell pepper is a tropical plant, preferring warm, moist soil to grow in.

Green and red bell peppers grow on the same plant. However, as the bell peppers mature and ripen, they change from green to red and become sweeter.

Bell peppers are large and bell-shaped. Depending on the variety, they can be brown, white, lavender, or dark purple, but the most common colors for bell peppers are green, yellow, orange, and red.

Bell peppers have crisp, thick flesh and smooth, waxy skin.

The scientific name for bell peppers is "Capsicum annuum." The scientific name for hot or chili peppers is "Capsicum frutescens."

The "pepper" name came when explorers introduced the plants in Europe. Europeans named them after the peppercorn or black pepper, which is unrelated.

The word "pepper" comes from the Old English "piper," from the West Germanic "pipor," related to the Dutch "peper," from the Greek "peperi," and from Sanskrit "pippalī," meaning "berry," "peppercorn."

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

You want to harvest bell peppers with the right color and sweetness when they're full size. You may want to use all green ones, and so you would pick them at their first stage of ripeness. Many recipes use green bell peppers. Next would be yellow, orange, and then red, the sweetest. You could pick them at each stage if you want multiple colors in your salad, for instance.

Bell peppers can be stored in your refrigerator's crisper drawer for one to two weeks. Then, refrigerate cut bell peppers for two to three days and cooked bell peppers for three to five days.

Bell peppers are a good choice for dishes where you don't want spicy pepper flavor because they don't produce capsaicin like other peppers. Bell peppers have a mild, sweet taste, but the flavors of other peppers can range from mild heat to extremely hot. A hybrid variety of bell pepper, the Mexibelle, is mildly spicy due to a small amount of capsaicin.

Paprika is a powdered red spice made from dried red bell peppers. People often associate paprika with Hungarian cuisine, especially since the name comes from the Hungarian language. However, cooks in many European and other countries use it regularly to color and flavor foods. For example, they add it to soups and stews, sprinkle it over the tops of meats, or add it to other seasonings to make rubs for grilling. Paprika is also often found in sausages. Because red bell peppers are mild and sweet, paprika is usually not as spicy as ground chili pepper. However, paprika can add a little heat to a dish, especially when using certain varieties.

One-half of a medium bell pepper counts as one serving.

Bell peppers are good to eat raw or cooked. They are often chopped and added to dishes such as salads, soups, omelets, stir-fries, fajitas, and pizza, but they can also be hollowed out, stuffed with a meat, veggie, and rice filling, and baked.

Nutrition

Bell peppers are a low-calorie food and are 94 percent water. They are also nutritious, with 97 percent of the daily value of vitamin C. Bell peppers of all colors have a high amount of vitamin C and beta-carotene, but the red bell pepper contains 1.5 times the amount of vitamin C and eleven times the beta-carotene as

green bell peppers.

Vitamin C is an antioxidant that improves your immune system to prevent heart disease and cancer. It also helps your body to absorb and store iron. It helps remove excess fluid from your body, reducing pressure in blood vessels. In addition, vitamin C may help reduce elevated blood sugar levels, and it aids in creating collagen, which is needed for wounds to heal.

Beta-carotene gives yellow, orange, and red fruits and vegetables their color. Beta-carotene is an antioxidant, and it converts to vitamin A in the body, which can help prevent age-related macular degeneration.

Fiber improves your digestive health and, by slowing down the speed of sugar absorption by the body, helps reduce the risk of diabetes.