

roasted red peppers

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Roasted Red Peppers

Sweet peppers charred until the skin blisters, then peeled and stored in oil or brine. In cold food they are the highest-value jar in the cupboard: they supply sweetness, softness and a faint smokiness, and they are the **one roasted thing** that stops a raw vegetable sandwich being a plate of salad.

Jarred versus your own

Jarred is genuinely good and worth buying. Look for peppers packed in oil or water rather than heavy brine, and Spanish **piquillo** peppers if you can find them — small, pointed, roasted over wood, and markedly better than the standard jar.

To roast your own: whole peppers directly over a gas flame or under a hot grill, turning until blackened all over. Then **steam them** — a covered bowl or a paper bag, 15 minutes — which is what lifts the skin. Peel, do **not** rinse; rinsing washes away the smoke. Seed, tear into strips, and store under oil with garlic and a little vinegar.

In cold food

- **Drain and pat dry** before they go into a sandwich; jarred peppers carry a lot of liquid.
- **Tear, do not slice.** Same reason as [fresh mozzarella](#) — a ragged edge holds dressing.
- Their sweetness needs a counterweight: [capers](#), [table olives](#), [red wine vinegar](#) or a sharp cheese.

Keeping

Unopened, a year or more. Opened, 2 weeks refrigerated if kept **submerged in oil**; a week in brine. Home-roasted, 2 weeks under oil.

Off-season use

A jar of these is the standing substitute for tomatoes between about October and June — in [caprese sandwich](#), in [cold pasta salad](#), anywhere a recipe assumes a ripe summer tomato that is not available.

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