

## Making Sense Out of Chiles

Type	Form	Name & History	Description	Preparation & Uses
<b>Chile Habañero</b> 1 3/4" Long 1 1/4" Wide Heat Level: 10	<b>Fresh or Dried</b>	"Habañero" means "Havana-like" in Spanish. A small cultivated Habañero was found in a prehistoric cave in Peru, dating from 6,500 BC, indicating that people have been eating these small chiles for 85 centuries!	Ripens from green to yellow to orange. Although considered to be the hottest chile in Mexico, it also has a distinctive flavor and is often added to dishes to give flavor rather than sharpness or heat. There is no substitute for chile Habañero.	Chopped raw, seeds and all, or roasted whole, then ground, it is used chiefly in Yucatan dishes, Yucatan being the primary, if not only place where it is grown commercially in Mexico.
<b>Thai Chile</b> 2" to 3" Long Heat Level: 9	<b>Fresh or Dried</b>	This type of cayenne chile may be called variously Santaka, Japanese, chile Japones, Thai chile, Szechuan, Hunan, or simply green chile or red chile.	Slender, pointed, straight pod. Red or green when fresh; red when dried.	Used throughout India, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia in all manner of dishes including sauces, and oils for stir fry.
<b>Chile Pequin</b> 1/4" to 1/2" Diameter Heat Level: 8	<b>Fresh or Dried</b>	"Pequin" may be derived from the Spanish word for small, "pequeno," referring to the size of this tiny chile. The wild form of the chile pequin is the chiltepin, or chile tepin.	Tiny, triangular, round or cylindrical in shape. Orange to deep red.	Most often crushed or powdered. Used in soups, stews, bean dishes and as a condiment.
<b>Chile de Arbol</b> 2" to 3" Long 3/8" Wide Heat Level: 7	<b>Fresh or Dried</b>	"De Arbol" means "tree-like" in Spanish, referring to the shape of the plant. Mexican common names for this chile include: "pico de pajar" or "bird's beak," and "colo de rata" or "rat's tail," referring to the long, curved shape of the pod and its graceful stem.	Slender, tubular, slightly curving pod. It ripens from green to bright red and remains this vivid color when dried.	Traditionally, the seeds and veins are not removed from this chile. It is often ground into dried powder, giving a distinctive flavor to chile sauces. Individual pods may be added to soups and stews. It is also used in table salsas, chile oils and vinegars.
<b>Chile Serrano</b> 2" Long 3/8" Wide Heat Level: 6	<b>Fresh</b>	In Spanish, "serrano" means "from the mountains." This chile is believed to have been first grown in the mountains of the Mexican states of Pueblo and Hidalgo.	Smooth, shiny skin. Ripens from green to red. Used mostly in its green stage.	Appears primarily in fresh salsas used as dips or as condiments for meats.
<b>Chile Jalapeño</b> 2 1/2" Long 1" Wide Heat Level: 5	<b>Fresh</b>	The jalapeño is the best known chile outside of Mexico. It is named after the city of Xalapa in Veracruz, where it was first grown in ancient times. There are a number of varieties now grown in both the USA and Mexico.	Plump, tapered, roughly textured when dried. Dark green, sometimes with brown striping. Bright red when fully ripe.	Fresh jalapeños have more limited use in Mexico than in the USA, where they are used in almost any dish, whole, cut in in strips, or chopped and blended into salsas.
<b>Chile Chipotle</b> Dried Chile Jalapeño	<b>Dried</b>	When dried, the chile jalapeño is called chile chipotle, meaning "smoked chile," referring to the process used to dry it.	Tough, leather, and wrinkled. Dark brown with lighter brown streaks or ridges. Distinct smoky aroma and sweet flavor.	Used to flavor soups and pasta dishes. Mixed with other ingredients in sauces to flavor meat and seafood dishes.
<b>Chile Poblano</b> 3" to 5" Long 2 1/2" Wide Heat Level: 3	<b>Fresh</b>	"Poblano" means "people" chile, referring to the valley of Pueblo in Mexico, from which it may have originally come.	Plump with large wide stem. Broad at the shoulders tapering to a point. Distinguished by a deep ridge around the base of the stalk. Dark green, ripening to a deep red.	Usually roasted and peeled, seeds and veins removed. Whole, it is stuffed for chile rellenos. Cut into strips it is fried with other vegetables, added to tomato sauces, used to garnish soups, blended with cream for a rich sauce, or added to rice.
<b>Chile Ancho</b> Dried Chile Poblano	<b>Dried</b>	In its dried form the chile poblano is called "chile ancho," which literally means "wide chile pod." The chile Ancho is often confused commercially with the chile pasilla and sold as such.	A good quality ancho is flexible, with a wrinkled skin that has some shine to it. It is a dark reddish brown, almost black color. It has been described as being "sharper" and "fruitier" than the chile	Most commonly used chile in Mexico. Whole it is stuffed for chile rellenos. Blended with other ingredients it is used in moles. Ground into powder, it is used as a condiment.
<b>Chile Mulatto</b> Dried Chile Poblano	<b>Dried</b>	The plant that produces the dried chile mulatto is essentially the same as the chile poblano, but with differences that affect the color and taste when the chile is dried.	Blackish brown with a skin smoother than the chile ancho. It has been described as being "softer and more chocolaty" in flavor.	Preparation and uses same as those of chile ancho, but because their flavors are different, these two chiles cannot be used interchangeably to produce the same results.
<b>Chile Chilaca</b> 1" Long 1/2" to 1" Wide Heat Level: 3	<b>Fresh</b>	The chile chilaca is the fresh form of the chile pasilla. In Spanish "pasilla" means "little raisin," referring to the appearance and aroma of this chile. In some places, the ancho is called "pasilla," causing confusion in both the kitchen and the market place. The pasilla may also be called "chile negro" or "chile pasilla negro" -- little black raisin.	Long, slender, tubular, tapering, with blunt end. Shiny skin with vertical ridges. Blackish green ripening to a deep brown.	In its fresh form, the chile chilaca is usually roasted and peeled, veins and seeds removed, before it is cooked. Shredded it may be fried with other vegetables, combined with cheese as filling for tamales, or added to a tomato sauce.
<b>Chile Pasilla Negro</b> Dried Chile Chilaca	<b>Dried</b>		Shiny, black, wrinkled surface with vertical ridges. It has been described as having a "rich, but sharp flavor," unlike the more mellow chile mulatto, also black.	Used in powdered form in tamales, quesadillas, rich, thick sauces, and moles. Used also as a garnish for tortilla soup.
<b>New Mexico Chile</b> 6" to 8" Long 1" to 2" Wide Heat Level: 2 to 4	<b>Fresh or Dried</b>	"New Mexico" refers to a family of chiles, including New Mexicos, Anaheims, Texas, California, Colorados, etc., all of a similar pod type. They were developed and grown in New Mexico, then seeds were transported to other areas of the Southwest. The New Mexico chile has become the cultural symbol of the state of New Mexico.	Tapering to a point from narrow shoulders. Ripening from green to bright red. They are red to dark brown when dried. They vary in heat and flavor depending upon specific type, growing conditions, and individual crop.	Fresh or dried, these are considered the best stuffing chiles in the USA. Usually roasted and peeled, veins and seeds removed before using for chile rellenos, in salsas and in casseroles. Dried, they may also be crushed, seeds and all, to product a mild to medium hot chile powder.