



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

[www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com](http://www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com)

September 18 - 19, 2020

## Vegetable Feature: Korean Chili Peppers

By Chef Andrea

Two years ago this pepper caught our eye in the seed catalog for no reason other than it had an interesting name (Dang Jo Cheong Yang) and it was a purple hot pepper. We were looking for a different hot pepper to grow so decided to give it a try. One of the fun parts of growing a new crop is figuring out when to harvest it, how to use it, etc. Once the peppers turned purple we thought they were ready to harvest, but when we tasted them it was pretty disappointing. They really didn't have much flavor. They just tasted like a boring green pepper with heat. We decided to leave them and see what would happen. I'm glad we did because they started to turn from purple to brilliant red and when they did the flavor changed dramatically! In that first year we had no idea that we had stumbled upon a unique Korean pepper. I had to really search and dig to figure out where this pepper came from and it was through both research and using it that we have come to love this hot pepper both for its history and origin, but also for its complex flavor.

This pepper is referred to as *gochu* in Korean. While not all Korean food is spicy, many of the traditional foods in Korean cuisine are spicy and this pepper is one of the most widely used ingredients. One source (<http://bburikitchen.com/korean-chilies-101>) claims this pepper is "Korea's most consumed vegetable when measured by weight (200 to 250,000 metric tons per year)." I'm not sure how common it is to use it in its fresh form in Korea, but most references I found demonstrate that it is most commonly dried and used as dry flakes or powdered. These forms are the way this pepper is used in traditional Kimchi (fermented cabbage and vegetables) and Gochujang (fermented chili paste). Both of these foods have been part of Korean cuisine for thousands of years and originated out of a need to preserve and extend the shelf life of food. The capsaicin (the component that makes it hot) in the peppers is an important part of the preservation process coupled with fermentation which not only preserves the food but also develops complex flavors.

I found some interesting information in the *Journal of Ethnic Foods* in an article entitled "*History of Korean gochu, gochujang, and kimchi.*" Some sources debate the origin of this Korean pepper arguing that peppers are a New World fruit that must've been brought to Korea through trade. In this article they state the belief that this pepper is actually indigenous to Korea and references to its use and cultivation in Korea are documented in records over 2,000 years old. They also stated that "Based on scientific evidence, gochu started to grow on the Korean peninsula a few billions of years ago, and it is safe to say that it is original to Korea."

I mentioned earlier that one of the reasons we love this pepper is for its complex flavor. Yes, it's a hot pepper, but you taste more than just hot when you eat it. It has a unique flavor and a bit of sweetness that balances the heat in such a way that the

## What's In The Box?

**KOREAN CHILI PEPPERS:** These peppers are long, skinny and bright red in color. They are a hot pepper and you'll find them packed in a brown paper bag along with one green jalapeno pepper. Make sure you don't confuse them with the mini sweet peppers! Read more about Korean Chili Peppers in this week's vegetable feature article. There are about 4 oz in this week's box.

**RED & YELLOW ONIONS:** Use some of this week's yellow onions to make **Spicy Korean-Style Gochujang Meatballs**. While the Korean chili peppers are the focus of this recipe, onions provide the background flavor in the meatballs.

**PORCELAIN GARLIC:** Use this garlic to make this week's featured recipe for **HVF Fresh Korean Chili-Garlic Sauce**.

**VARIETY OF LARGE TOMATOES:** Last week was cold and overcast, so we didn't see a lot of ripening in the tomato field. If your tomatoes are a little green, ripen them further at room temperature. Check them daily for any signs of deterioration. If you see a spot forming, cut it away and enjoy the remainder of the tomato!

**JALAPEÑO PEPPER:** Look for your jalapeño pepper in the paper bag with the Korean Chili Peppers. We wanted to keep all the hot peppers together so there's no chance of confusing them with a mini sweet pepper!

**BROCCOLI ROMANESCO OR PURPLE CAULIFLOWER:** Either of these beautiful selections are delicious roasted or stir-fried. These cooking methods also help preserve the texture and optimize the color!

**SWEET CORN:** This is our final week of Sweet Corn and our final crop was affected by the Corn earworm. Please read the important message about this week's sweet corn in your "What's In the Box" email before you remove the husk from your corn.

**GOLD BEETS:** While borscht is traditionally made with red beets, you could make a golden version as well. A member in our **Facebook Group** offered the great suggestion to substitute beet greens for cabbage!

**MINI SWEET PEPPERS:** This is the tastiest, sweetest pepper variety we grow! They are packed in the green pouch bag and come in red, yellow and orange colors.

**BROCCOLI RAAB:** This is the bunching green in this week's box. While you may find some small broccoli-like sprouts growing up from the main stem, this green is more similar to mustard greens. This is our favorite time of year to grow this crop because the flavor is mild and delicious. Cook this green with lots of garlic in olive oil. Season with salt, pepper and a little touch of red pepper flakes.

**ORANGE CARROTS:** Roast carrots, chunks of sweet peppers and beets as the base under a roast chicken. By the time the chicken is cooked you'll have a delicious blend of mixed roasted vegetables marinated in all the chicken juices.

**SWEET PEPPERS:** This week you'll receive a variety of sweet peppers which may include the following: [Green, Red or Orange Italian Frying Peppers](#) which are long and slender with a pointy tip; [Yellow bell peppers](#) and/or [Red Ukraine peppers](#) which are red-orange in color and have a more blocky, stout appearance.

**GREEN OR PURPLE TOMATILLOS:** Some of the outer husks surrounding the tomatillo may have some spots on them. This typically only affects the outer covering which is inedible and should be removed anyway. Once the husk has been removed, wash the fruit and it's ready to use! Refer to our **Tomatillo Vegetable Feature** article published on our blog earlier this season which included a list of recipe suggestions.

heat doesn't just burn your mouth. I should also mention that while it is hotter than a poblano pepper, they are a modest heat pepper that are often more mild in heat than jalapenos. Of course the heat can vary depending on the season. We have received feedback from members over the past two years that individuals who don't typically enjoy hot peppers actually like this one! Since this pepper is traditionally used in fermented foods, we decided to see what would happen if we used it to make a fermented hot sauce. We worked with Faith at Fizzleology Foods in Viroqua. She made the most delicious Fermented Korean Chili Hot Sauce that was very well received by some of the "hot sauce experts" within our membership. One of the great things about fermented foods is that they just continue to get better with time. We are going to make more this year, but we do have a limited amount of last year's batch remaining. Check out our "Produce Plus" offerings if you're interested.

So what can you do with these fresh peppers? You can use them anywhere you need a fresh hot pepper in salsas, sauces, curries, soups, etc. I also have several simple suggestions for preserving them so you don't have to use them all right now. For starters, you can follow Korean tradition and dry them. After they are dried you can turn them into pepper flakes or grind them into a powder. When we first featured them in 2018 we published a recipe for **Salt-Cured Chiles** which is available on our website. You can do this with nearly any chili pepper, but I really like to do this with the Korean peppers. It's super simple and all you need is salt and the peppers. Once you've salt-cured them they will store for quite awhile in the refrigerator. In fact, I still have a jar that I made last year! The beauty of salt-cured chili peppers is you can use them to add heat to anything you want and they still have a fresh chili flavor. I use them throughout the winter for stir-fries, fried rice, soups, stews, sauces, etc.

**Visit our Blog where you will find the rest of this feature article as well as links to recipe suggestions!**

#### HVF Fresh Korean Chili-Garlic Sauce--Updated

Yield: 1 cup

4 oz fresh Korean chili peppers	2 Tbsp honey
4 cloves garlic	3 Tbsp tamari or soy sauce
1/3 cup miso	1 tsp rice vinegar

1. Remove the stem and roughly chop Korean chili peppers (seeds included) into one inch pieces. Put the peppers in a food processor or blender along with the garlic cloves and roughly chop them until they are a fine, yet chunky paste.
2. Add the miso, honey, tamari and rice vinegar. Blend together until smooth.
3. Taste and adjust the flavor as needed to your liking. Add tamari for more depth of flavor, honey for more sweetness, garlic to get more "zing" or salt if it just needs a little enhancement to wake up all the other flavors.
4. Put the sauce in a glass jar and store in the refrigerator for up to 2-4 weeks. Alternatively, you can freeze it in smaller portions as a means of preserving it for later use.

Note: You may use this in place of the Korean fermented chili paste called gochujang. It's pretty hot, so a little bit will go a long way!

Recipe originally adapted from *minimalistbaker.com*.

#### Sweet and Spicy Gochujang Butter Popcorn

Yield: 2 Servings

2 Tbsp butter	1 tsp honey
1-2 tsp gochujang or HVF Fresh Korean Chili-Garlic Sauce (see note)	2 Tbsp vegetable oil
1 tsp toasted sesame oil	1/2 cup unpopped popcorn kernels
	Fine sea salt, to taste

1. Melt butter in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Add gochujang, sesame oil, and honey. Whisk together until well combined. Remove from heat and set aside in a warm place.
2. Pop popcorn by your method of choice. If you are popping it on the stovetop, heat vegetable oil in a medium saucepot over medium heat. When the oil shimmers on the bottom of the pan, add popcorn kernels. Cover and shake intermittently until popping starts, then continue to shake the pan until popping stops or significantly slows. Remove the pan from the heat and pour popcorn into a medium bowl.
3. Whisk the butter mixture to ensure it is well-combined, then pour evenly over hot popcorn and toss to coat. Season with salt to your liking. Eat immediately!

NOTE: For milder gochujang butter, use only 1 tsp of gochujang. If you like it spicier, use 2 tsp.

Recipe adapted from *domesticdreamboat.com*.

#### Spicy Korean-Style Gochujang Meatballs

Yield: 16-18 meatballs

##### Meatballs:

1/2 cup finely minced onion	Fresh Korean Chili Garlic Sauce*
1 egg, lightly beaten	1 Tbsp minced fresh ginger
1 lb ground beef or pork	1 tsp kosher salt
1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs	1/2 tsp ground white pepper
1-2 Tbsp gochujang or HVF	

##### Gochujang Glaze:

1/2 cup apricot preserves
1-2 Tbsp gochujang or HVF Fresh Korean Chili Garlic Sauce*
1 1/2 Tbsp rice vinegar
1 Tbsp soy sauce

##### Garnish:

Sliced green onions (when in season) and/or toasted sesame seeds

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large bowl, combine all meatball ingredients. Using your hands, mix all ingredients until everything is well mixed. Form the mixture into golf-ball sized meatballs and place on a cookie sheet. You want to spread them out a bit so there is space in between them. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until they are cooked through and firm.
2. While the meatballs are baking, make the glaze. In a small saucepot, combine all glaze ingredients. Cook over medium heat for 5-7 minutes or until mixture is bubbly and slightly thickened. Remove from heat.
3. Once the meatballs are cooked through, remove the pan from the oven and transfer the meatballs to an 8 x 8-inch baking dish or other small casserole. Pour the glaze over the meatballs, making sure all are covered in the glaze.
4. Return the pan to the oven and bake an additional 10 minutes.
5. Sprinkle with green onions and toasted sesame seeds if desired.

\*I made this recipe using 1 Tbsp of HVF Fresh Korean Chili Garlic Sauce in the meatballs and 1 Tbsp of the sauce in the glaze. This will give you a spicy, but not over the top, meatball. If you really like spice, increase the gochujang quantity.

Recipe adapted from a recipe submitted to *Food52* by foxeslovelemons.