

## ID Chart for Sweet and Spicy Pepper Sampler with Andy's Take on their Spiciness



**1. Gold Bell Pepper, Bulgarian Cheese Pimiento, Heart Pimiento, Corno di Toro, and Cubanelle peppers:** These peppers rate zero on the Scoville Scale. They have no heat. As far as earthquakes go these peppers are like the earthquake that hasn't happened in Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota. These peppers can be eaten raw, fried or roasted. Personally, I prefer to roast them because the heat caramelizes the sugars in the tissues and they become very sweet. I like to use the nectar that roasted sweet peppers give up to jazz up a tomato sauce. Zero on the Richter.



**2. The Jimmy Nardello pepper:** This long, skinny pepper has zero Scovilles too, but because of its shape, which looks exactly like a spicy Cayenne, many people will not believe that it has no heat. Some folks even have suffered a reverse Placebo effect where they taste a spiciness that is not there because they have not seen a pepper shaped like this which isn't hot. As far as earthquakes go the Jimmy Nardello pepper is like a 2.0 on the Richer Scale earthquake that happens in California that your great Aunt Winnie in Lake Minnetonka hears about on Fox News so she decides that she will not- actually CAN'T EVER- go to California because it's too dangerous. I like this pepper minced and fried up in scrambled eggs for breakfast, but it's good in potato salads to lend color and sweetness. It's a very nice pepper.



**3. The Jalapeño pepper:** These peppers have some kick! Different sources place the Jalapeño in the 2500 to 5000 Scoville Range. I've grown Jalapeños that were very mild, but these are on the spicy side of the equation. This year's crop is like the earthquake that happens far enough away so that the effects at your house are diffuse. The glasses rattle in the cabinets maybe, and you're unnerved enough to text your friend and ask, "did you feel that?" I like the Jalapeños roasted and I mince them raw judiciously into fresh salsas. I really like roasted Jalapeños minced and added to otherwise raw tomato salsas because the roasting does mellow them a bit. 2.5 on the Richter.



**4. The Hungarian Hot Wax pepper (The light green peppers in the photo to the right.):** This pepper is likewise rated at 2500 to 5000 Scovilles: The ones we are picking now are yellow, with a few picking up an orange blush. Later they will turn all the way to red. Some tables list this pepper as packing up to 10,000 Scovilles. The Scoville measurement is somewhat subjective. This pepper is like an earthquake which sends the cat running to hide under the bed, but in the end no china is damaged. 2.7 on the Richter. (The dark red peppers are a sweet Bulgarian Cheese pepper.)



**5. The Bulgarian Carrot Chile:** Orange when fully ripe, and with the size and heft of a Serrano, this pepper weighs in about 3 on the Richter Scale, or 7000 Scovilles. It is a nice pepper to dry for chile flakes because of its thin walls and festive color. I used one with great effect by slitting down the side and immersing it in the tomato sauce I was making for a pasta dish, and then I took it out, along with the bay leaf, when I spooned the sauce over the noodles. Used to infuse a dish, it was perfect. If you consume this pepper raw in one bite it's like those modest earthquakes that happen where a lot of fracking is going on- yeah, nature plays a role, but human ingenuity is

largely to blame for the disaster that ensues.

**6. Turkish Paprika:** I can't find this pepper on any chart. No, it's not "off the charts," but it is spicy. I rank it as similar to the Cayenne, described below. Because it is a slender pepper with a deep rich color I find it easy to slice tiny coins of this paprika to put in sauces. Bar Tartine, a restaurant in San Francisco with an Eastern European focus, has purchased this pepper in the past to make into dried powders. Magnitude 4 on the Richter.



**7. Cayenne:** 30,000 to 50,000 on the Scoville Scale, or 5.0 on the Richter Scale. These numbers seem high to me, but you are going to want to bolt the plates to the table if you plan to use a lot of these at any one time. They are best employed when making hot sauces or chile flakes where they can be used judiciously. I give our Cayenne a solid 20,000 on the Scoville Scale, but no more. That's enough, anyway! But even pretty powerful earthquakes are survivable when there's some planning ahead that happens. If you just eat this one raw you'll see the Grandfather Clock tip over and fall face down on the living room floor and the cat won't come back for a week! I use a pinch or two of the dried flakes to wake up wintertime sauces.

**8. Chile Peron, or Manzano:** This pepper, a fleshy, fruity, South American native, is rated at 30,000 Scovilles too. Frankly, this puzzles me. I do not experience it as a truly earth-shaking pepper, but then again I do not eat it raw. Instead, I remove the seeds and mid ribs, I shave it, and I marinate it in lemon juice and salt. It is delicious this way and a relish made in this manner can last for a week in the refrigerator and only mellow over time. I don't think that bacteria can handle this pepper because the relish doesn't seem to rot. At any rate I always finish it before it can. 7 on the Richter. Water mains are breaking if you eat this, seeds and all, raw.



**9. Habañero:** Here's the Loma Prieta of peppers, the earthquake that scrambled up the Marina District and tumbled parts of the Oakland Bay Bridge, clocking in at 300,000 to half a million Scovilles. Yes, this pepper can do damage so don't use very much of it at any one time. There are many more powerful peppers in the world but I don't grow them because, why bother? The Habañero is plenty strong. I'm growing Habañeros in part because I wish to know how to harness the fruit, how to use it with grace and élan. And besides, I have customers who demand it.

Please remember when handling spicy peppers to be careful to wash your hands after slicing them and don't rub your eyes while you're working. If you're sensitive wear rubber gloves when working with them or make your partner or your friends do the work. If you are drying out lots of spicy peppers with a food dehydrator to make into flakes or powder OPEN THE WINDOWS or put the dehydrator on the porch. Do NOT try to dry them fast by roasting them in the kitchen oven at medium heat with your apartment's windows closed. Trust me on this! Peppers are beautiful, peppers are tasty, peppers are fun so please enjoy them safely.

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