

# PICK A PEPPER

Bring the heat in the kitchen by reaching for inflammation-neutralizing, metabolism-revving chile peppers. Mexico City-born chef and restaurateur Richard Sandoval shares his cheat sheet.



## HABANERO 10

Few peppers on the market beat these red-orange scorchers' intense heat. The raw versions harbor a fruity undertone, but you'll get a nuttier flavor if you grill or roast them, says Sandoval, who often uses them in sauces and dressings. Throw in a few slivers when you're marinating pork or making a ceviche.



## SERRANO 8

Clean and crisp, these skinny green chiles often pop up in pico de gallo and guacamole. Sandoval also likes deploying them in cocktails; give your next batch of margaritas a kick by tossing a few slices in the blender or infusing your tequila with a couple halves.



## JALAPEÑO 7

These zesty capsules are typically plucked from the vine while green, which is when Sandoval uses them raw or pickled. They're equally tasty when they're fully ripened and smoked (aka chipotles).



## POBLANO 6

The relatively mild behemoths feature prominently in several South-of-the-Border specialties. Sandoval stuffs ripe ones with queso fresco to make chile rellenos, while the dried peppers get folded into mole sauces.



## PADRÓN 2

Most of these little guys register so mild you can eat 'em whole—but every bunch includes a couple fiery ones. Sandoval's go-to preparation couldn't be easier: Panfry them whole in olive oil until tender, then sprinkle with sea salt and lemon juice.



### CHILE PRIMER

To control the spice level of his dishes, Sandoval—who runs nearly 20 eateries in the U.S.—keeps two S's in mind: shape and seeds. Hotter chiles are usually narrow and pointy at the bottom, while milder varieties have broad shoulders and blunt tips. Seeds contain most of a chile's capsaicin, the compound that triggers tongue scorching as well as the metabolic boost. Removing them will dial down the burn, but it'll also decrease the health benefits.

### HEAT INDEX A guide to the chiles' lip-tingling potential



For three of our favorite spicy-pepper dishes, visit [naturalhealthmag.com/chilerecipes](http://naturalhealthmag.com/chilerecipes).