

# Fluvanna County Public Library

## Spice of the Month Club

### Crushed Red Pepper

#### Ingredients: Red Pepper

The chili pepper is one of the spiciest members of the capsicum family. There's no better place to turn if you're looking to add spicy, intense flavor to any dish. You know your crushed red pepper is fresh if it sets your nose tingling when you take the first whiff. It should be a deep red color, with flecks of yellow seeds. Ground red pepper is also known as cayenne and is a member of the capsicum family of chili peppers and brings intense chili heat and bright red color to every dish it's part of.

Made from the seeds and pods of red, ripe chili peppers that have been gently sun dried and milled. Usually it's a combination of different types, including jalapeño, Fresno and cayenne. You might even find bell peppers in the mix. Because all the heat-containing seeds and ribs of the peppers are left in, crushed red pepper flakes are quite spicy.

Red pepper flakes are made from a combination of different peppers while chili flakes are usually made from a single type of pepper. (Which single type of pepper will vary from product to product.)

Chili flakes are also usually deseeded while crushed red pepper flakes contain all the peppers' seeds

Digestive health: Capsaicin can help stimulate the production of digestive juices, which can aid in digestion. It may also have a protective effect on the stomach lining and help prevent ulcers.

Immune system support: Red pepper flakes contain vitamin C, which is important for immune system function.

#### Sweet and Spicy Shrimp (2 servings)

- ¼ cup honey
- 1 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- ½ tsp. finely grated fresh ginger root
- 2 tsp. unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1 tsp. soy sauce
- 6 ounces raw shrimp, thawed, peeled and deveined
- ½ Tbsp. olive oil

1. Add honey, pepper flakes, grated ginger, rice vinegar and soy sauce to a small liquid measuring cup or bowl. Whisk until well combined. Set aside.
2. Pat the shrimp dry with a paper towel. Set aside.
3. Heat the olive oil in a cast iron or non-stick pan until shimmering.
4. Add the shrimp and cook until pink on the outside and opaque in the center (between 1 and 4 minutes per side, depending on size).
5. Transfer the cooked shrimp to a bowl and set aside.



6. Pour the sauce ingredients into the pan you cooked the shrimp in (no need to clean the pan in between). Cook the sauce until starting to thicken (about 2 minutes).
7. Pour the sauce over the shrimp and serve immediately. (If the sauce cools too much it will become a little sticky. If that happens, simply reheat it to loosen it up.)

<https://thespicetrain.com/sweet-and-spicy-shrimp/>

### Sun-Dried Tomato Pasta with Chicken and Creamy Mozzarella Sauce (4 servings)

- 3 garlic cloves , minced
- 4 oz. sun-dried tomatoes (see NOTE)
- 2 Tbps. olive oil
- 1 lb. chicken breast tenderloins , sliced
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. paprika
- 1 cup half and half (or use ½ cup heavy cream + ½ cup milk)
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded (do not use fresh Mozzarella, use pre-shredded Mozzarella)
- 8 oz. penne pasta
- 1 Tbsp. basil
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper
- ½ cup reserved cooked pasta water or more
- ¼ tsp. salt to taste



1. In a large skillet, sauté garlic and sun-dried tomatoes (drained from oil) in 2 tablespoons of olive oil (reserved from the sun-dried tomatoes jar) for 1 minute on medium heat until the garlic is fragrant.
2. Remove the sun-dried tomatoes from the skillet, leaving the olive oil.
3. Add sliced chicken (salted and lightly covered in paprika for color) and cook on high heat for 1 minute on each side. Remove from heat.
4. Cook pasta according to package instructions. Reserve some cooked pasta water. Drain the pasta.
5. Slice sun-dried tomatoes into smaller pieces and add them back to the skillet with chicken.
6. To make creamy pasta sauce, add half-and-half and Mozzarella cheese to the skillet, and bring to a gentle boil.
7. Immediately reduce to simmer and cook, constantly stirring, until all cheese melts and creamy sauce forms.
8. Add cooked and drained pasta to the skillet with the cream sauce, and stir to combine.
9. Add 1 tablespoon of basil, and at least ¼ teaspoon of red pepper flakes. Stir to combine.
10. If the creamy sauce is too thick: Add about ½ cup of reserved cooked pasta water to the skillet to thin it out. Do not add all of pasta water at once - you might need less or more of it.
11. Season the chicken pasta with salt and more red pepper flakes, to taste, if needed. Let it simmer for a couple of minutes for flavors to combine.

<https://juliasalbum.com/chicken-mozzarella-pasta-with-sun-dried-tomatoes/>

## Fire Crackers

- ½ tsp. Black pepper
- 1 ⅔ C. Olive oil
- 2 Packages of ranch seasoning mix
- 1 tsp. Garlic powder
- 3 Tbsp. Red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp. Onion powder
- 1 Box of Saltine crackers

1. Place the olive oil and all seasonings into the large 2 gallon Ziploc bag.
2. Close the bag, and combine all of the seasonings well.
3. Add the crackers to the bag with the seasonings, and toss to coat well.
4. Leave the crackers in the sealed bag overnight.
5. Serve the next day, or store in the airtight bag until ready to use.

<https://cheekykitchen.com/fire-crackers-recipe/>



## Spaghetti Aglio e Olio

- 1 pound dried spaghetti
- 1/2 cup good-quality olive oil
- 6 to 8 cloves garlic, very thinly sliced
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes (or more, to taste)
- optional garnishes: chopped fresh parsley, freshly-grated Parmesan cheese



1. Cook the spaghetti. Bring a large stockpot of generously-salted water to a boil. Add spaghetti and cook until nearly al dente (like, just one minute shy of being done).
2. Sauté the garlic. Meanwhile, about 3 minutes after you add the pasta to the boiling water, heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the sliced garlic and crushed red pepper flakes and sauté for 3 to 5 minutes, or until it is lightly golden. (It's very important that the garlic not burn. So if the pasta is not ready to go by the time the garlic is lightly golden, remove the sauté pan from the heat until the pasta is ready.)
3. Toss the pasta in the sauce. As soon as the pasta is ready to go, use tongs to transfer the pasta to the sauté pan, along with 1/2 cup of the hot starchy pasta water. Toss the pasta continuously until it is evenly coated in the garlic sauce. If the sauce looks a bit too dry, add in another 1/4 cup of the starchy pasta water.
4. Taste and season. Give the pasta a quick taste add an extra pinch of salt and/or crushed red pepper flakes if needed.
5. Serve immediately while it's nice and hot, garnished with any toppings that sound good.
6. NOTE: Add veggies: And/or you can add in any cooked veggies that you love too (such as broccoli, mushrooms, bell peppers, onion, etc).

<https://www.gimmesomeoven.com/spaghetti-aglio-e-olio/>

## Cheesy White Bean Tomato Bake recipe

- 1/4 cup olive oil extra virgin
- 3 large garlic cloves thinly sliced
- 4 to 5 San Marzano peeled tomatoes
- 2 handfuls fresh spinach\*
- 2 (15 oz) cans Cannellini white beans rinsed and drained
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1/4 to 1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella



1. Pre-heat the oven to 475 degrees. In a 10-inch ovenproof skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Fry the garlic until lightly golden, about 1 minute. Add in the San Marzano peeled tomatoes (be careful of splattering) and mash them down with a potato masher or the back of a wooden spoon. Let cook for about a minute and then reduce the heat as needed to prevent the garlic from burning.
2. Add the spinach and the beans, water and then all the Italian seasoning, crushed red pepper flakes, and season with the salt and pepper. Stir to combine. Sprinkle the cheese evenly over the top, then bake until the cheese has melted and browned in spots; for about 8 to 10 minutes. For more browning, switch to the broiler setting and leave under the broiler for about 2 minutes. Serve with tortilla chips and enjoy immediately.
3. \*If you add a lot of spinach, adding water isn't necessary.

<https://hipfoodiemom.com/2021/02/10/cheesy-white-bean-tomato-bake/>

## Japanese Zucchini (4 servings)

- 3 medium zucchini,
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 medium sweet onion, coarsely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. teriyaki sauce
- 1 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1/4 to 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame seeds.



1. Cut zucchini into 2 inch long pieces and then cut each piece into 6 wedges.
2. Heat vegetable oil over medium-high heat in a large nonstick skillet.
3. Add zucchini and onion and cook for 2 minutes.
4. Add teriyaki sauce, soy sauce, red pepper flakes and black pepper. Cook for 4 to 5 more minutes or until soft enough for your liking.
5. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve.
6. NOTE: For extra richness, you can add a tablespoon of butter to the pan at the end.

[https://spicysouthernkitchen.com/wprm\\_print/27534](https://spicysouthernkitchen.com/wprm_print/27534)



## Creamy Caprese Quinoa Bake (6 servings)

- 2 cups cooked quinoa
- 1 cup of your favorite pasta sauce
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1/3 cup heavy cream
- 1/3 cup parmesan cheese
- 1 cup mozzarella divided
- 1/2-1 cup grape tomatoes halved
- 1 large bunch fresh basil cut into ribbons
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Heat tomato sauce and tomato paste over low heat in a large saucepan. Once warm, stir in heavy cream, parmesan, crushed red pepper, salt and pepper. Remove from the heat and stir in the quinoa. Fold in half of the mozzarella and half of the tomatoes, then chop 6 fresh basil leaves and add them in too. Once combined, spray an 8x8 or 9x9 baking dish with non-stick spray and pour the entire quinoa mixture into the dish. Top with fresh mozzarella rounds or shredded mozzarella and the remaining tomatoes.
3. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes and then turn the broiler on and broil for 1 to 2 minutes or until cheese is golden and bubbly.
4. Remove from the oven and top with fresh basil ribbons. Allow to sit five minutes and then serve.

<https://www.halfbakedharvest.com/creamy-caprese-quinoa-bake/>

## One-pan Cheesy Sausage and Rice Recipe

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 ring (13.5 ounces) smoked sausage, sliced into ¼-inch pieces
- 1 yellow onion, finely diced
- 1 green bell pepper, finely diced
- 1 red bell pepper, finely diced
- 1 tsp. garlic, minced
- 2 cups instant white rice
- 2 cans (10.75 ounces each) cream of chicken soup
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups mild cheddar cheese, shredded, divided
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- ⅛ tsp. black pepper
- ¼ cup (½ stick) unsalted butter, sliced into 4 pats
- parsley, for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.



2. Add olive oil to a 15-inch oven-safe skillet over medium heat. Once the oil is hot, add the sausage and sear it on each side until browned, 2-3 minutes on each side.
3. Remove the skillet from heat and add the onion, green bell pepper, red bell pepper, garlic, rice, cream of chicken soup, chicken broth, 1 cup of cheese, red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper. Stir to combine.
4. Top with pats of butter (evenly spaced) and the remaining shredded cheddar cheese.
5. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes.
6. Remove the foil and bake another 20 minutes, or until cheese is hot and bubbly.
7. Top with parsley. Salt to taste.

<https://tastydone.com/one-pan-cheesy-sausage-and-rice-recipe/>

### Italian Sausage and Orzo Soup

- 1 pound ground Italian sausage (mild or spicy)
- 1 medium white onion, peeled and diced
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 6 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 (15-ounce) can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- 8 cups chicken stock (or beef or veggie stock)
- 1 Tbsp. Italian seasoning
- 1 cup uncooked orzo pasta
- fine sea salt and freshly-cracked black pepper
- 2 large handfuls fresh baby spinach or kale
- optional toppings: freshly-grated Parmesan, chopped fresh basil and/or parsley



1. Brown the sausage: Heat a large stockpot over medium-high heat. Add the ground sausage and sauté until browned and cooked through, stirring and crumbling with a wooden spoon as it cooks. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the cooked meat to a clean plate and set it aside, reserving 1 tablespoon of grease in the pot. (If there is more grease in the pot, discard it. If there is no grease remaining, add 1 tablespoon of olive oil to the stockpot.)
2. Sauté the veggies. Add the onion, carrots and celery and stir to combine. Sauté for 6-7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions are softened and translucent. Add the garlic and crushed red pepper flakes and sauté for 2 more minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Simmer the broth. Add the diced tomatoes, stock, Italian seasoning and cooked sausage and stir to combine. Continue cooking until the broth reaches a simmer, then reduce heat to medium-low to maintain the simmer.
4. Cook the pasta. Stir in the orzo until combined. Cover the pot with a lid and continue simmering the soup, stirring occasionally so that the orzo doesn't stick to the bottom of the pot, until the orzo is al dente.
5. Add the spinach and season. Stir the spinach into the soup. Taste and season with salt and black pepper, as needed. (Feel free to also add in extra Italian seasoning, if you would like.)
6. Serve immediately, garnished with your favorite toppings.
7. Notes: The longer that this soup continues to sit, the more broth the orzo will absorb. If you would like to add extra broth later, I recommend adding in 1 cup of extra chicken stock along with an extra 1/2 teaspoon of Italian seasoning (plus salt and black pepper, to taste).

### Zucchini Garlic Cheese Steak (4 servings)

- 2 medium zucchinis.
- Kosher salt.
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped or grated.
- 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes, plus more for serving.
- 4 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided.
- 2 oz. mozzarella cheese, shredded (about 1/2 cup).
- 1 oz. Parmesan cheese, finely shredded (about 1/2 cup).
- 2 Tbsp. fresh basil, torn.



1. Using a sharp knife, slice each zucchini in half lengthwise to create 4 'steaks.' Score the flesh side of each steak 1/4' deep diagonally at 1/2' intervals. Rotate the steaks 90 degrees and score diagonally again to form a crosshatch pattern. Season the steaks on the scored sides with 1 teaspoon of salt. Let them sit for about 15 minutes to release moisture.
2. Place a rack in the center of the oven and preheat it to 425°F (220°C).
3. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook the garlic, red pepper flakes, and 2 tablespoons of olive oil, stirring until the garlic is fragrant, about 1 to 2 minutes. Scrape the garlic oil into a small bowl.
4. In the same skillet over medium-high heat, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Pat the zucchini dry. Arrange 2 halves flesh side down in the skillet and cook until golden brown on the bottom, about 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a baking sheet flesh side up. Repeat with the remaining zucchini and 1 tablespoon of olive oil.
5. Brush the zucchini steaks with the garlic oil. Bake until the zucchini is tender in the center, about 8 to 10 minutes. Top with mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses.
6. Heat the broiler on high. Broil, watching closely, until the cheese is melted and browned, about 2 to 3 minutes.
7. Transfer the zucchini to a platter. Top with torn basil and more crushed red pepper flakes before serving.
8. Enjoy these flavorful and cheesy zucchini steaks, perfect for a summer side dish or light main course. The combination of garlic, red pepper flakes, and melted cheeses makes this dish a crowd-pleaser.

### Menemen/Turkish Scrambled Eggs with Tomatoes

- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, cored, seeded and chopped
- Kosher salt
- 2 vine-ripe tomatoes, chopped
- 3 Tbsp. tomato paste
- Black pepper
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. Aleppo pepper, more for later
- 4 large eggs, beaten
- Crushed red pepper flakes, optional if you like spicy





- 1 French baguette for serving thickly sliced (optional)
1. In a 10-inch skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of oil over medium heat. Add the onions and peppers and season with kosher salt. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes, stirring regularly until softened (being careful not to brown the onions).
  2. Add the tomatoes and tomato paste. Season with a little more kosher salt, black pepper, oregano, and Aleppo pepper. Cook for a few minutes over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes soften but still hold their shape (5 to 7 minutes).
  3. Push the tomato and pepper mixture to one side of the pan. Lower the heat to medium-low. Add the beaten egg, and cook briefly, stirring gently as needed, until the eggs are just set. Fold the tomato mixture into the eggs.
  4. Finish with a little EVOO and more Aleppo pepper and crushed red pepper flakes, if you need a little kick. Serve immediately with thick slices of bread.

<https://www.themediterraneanandish.com/menemen-recipe/#recipe>

### Zucchini Tomato Gratin Recipe (6 to 8 servings)

- 3 medium sized zucchini squash, cut into 2 inch pieces
- 3 yellow summer squash, cut into 2 inch pieces
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper, rubbed together between your hands to bring out the flavor, plus salt and pepper to taste
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 to 2 Roma or other smallish tomato, thinly sliced. You can also use grape tomatoes
- 1 to 2 oz. cheddar, Gruyere, or Swiss cheese, grated, plus 1/2 oz Parmesan cheese, grated



1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Bring a large sauce pan of water to a boil. Add the zucchini and summer squash pieces, bring the pot back to a boil, and simmer for 10 minutes. Strain the pan into a colander. Dump the cooked squash pieces into a heat proof bowl and roughly mash the pieces with a potato masher. You want to have large pieces, so don't over mash. Dump the mixture back into the colander to drain off extra liquid.
3. Combine the squash, herbs, red pepper, salt and pepper, and egg into a baking dish and stir to evenly distribute everything. My gratin dish is 11 x 8. An 8 x8 Pyrex would be perfect.
4. Add the tomato slices. Tuck some of the slices under the mixture, and top the mixture with the rest of the slices.
5. Place the dish into the preheated oven and bake uncovered for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, remove the dish, and top with the cheeses and return it, uncovered, to the oven for 20 minutes. At the end of 20 minutes, if the cheese is not brown enough, turn on your broiler, raise the rack, and place the dish under the broiler. Stay close by and remove the dish when the cheese is how you like it.
6. Note: This recipe can easily be scaled. I also think it would be wonderful in little individual gratin dishes.

<https://www.karenskitchenstories.com/2012/08/zucchini-tomato-gratin.html?m=1>