

Smoked Chipotles

Homemade Chipotles

Smoking Jalapeños

The smoky spice of the chipotle makes them my favorite flavor addition to almost any dish. This obsession has led to a quest for the perfect smoked jalapeño created at home.

The ideal chipotle will start with homegrown jalapeños fresh from the garden. Firm, ripe chiles are the best choice. You may use either red or green jalapeños, but the red jalapeños have a better flavor. If there are holes or soft spots in your jalapeños, save them for fresh uses where you can slice out the affected areas. Cut off the stems before smoking the peppers. You may also slit the peppers in half to remove the seeds, or cut small slits to let out the moisture and let the smoke in. One pound of fresh peppers will end up as one tenth of a pound of chipotles.

In Mexico, pecan wood is most commonly used to smoke chipotles. If you do not have ready access to pecan wood, any wood from a fruit tree will make a good substitute. Try smoking with apple or pear wood. Hickory or oak or a combination of the two may also be used.

After washing the chiles, you can start your smoker. Once the smoker has started smoking, lay the chiles side by side on your grill - do not stack them on top of each other. The goal of smoking peppers is a slow flavor infusion. To keep the chiles from falling through the grill, make a tray of aluminum foil, use a disposable foil pan, or try our [Smokehouse Drying Screens](#). Insert the grill rack into the smoker and close the smoker.

Check the peppers periodically throughout the smoking and rotate their position in the smoker to maintain even smoking. The chipotles are complete when they become ugly, shriveled, hard brown objects that don't look too appetizing. This may take as long as six to eight hours. Be sure to check the chiles every hour when you check the fuel pan.

After removing the chipotles from the smoker, place them on a rack and loosely cover them. Leave at room temperature for a week or two, depending on the humidity, to continue the drying process. I keep my finished chipotles in small cleaned airtight butter containers stored at room temperature. This way you do not need to let air into all of them each time you open the container. The less often you use chipotles, the smaller your storage containers should be. Stored properly, you can keep your chipotles for one to two years.

Chipotles can be crumbled by hand, run through a blender to create a powder, or re-hydrated by soaking in hot water for 30 minutes or so, then blended into a sauce.

If you find that you like the flavor of home-smoked peppers, don't stop with jalapeños. Experiment with other peppers, like Anaheim chiles, too!