

# Cayenne or Capsicum

Latin Name: *Capsicum annum*

*Also known as:* Red Pepper, Bird Pepper, African Bird Pepper, Pipo

## Scientific Classification

The capsicum genus has many herbs in it, cayenne, chili pepper, bell pepper, pimento, paprika, tabasco pepper, etc.

*Family:* Solanaceae – potato family  
*Genus:* Capsicum – pepper  
*Species:* *C. annum* – cayenne pepper

Influence on the Body	(PRINCIPLE ACTIONS are listed in CAPITAL LETTERS)
<i>Addictions</i>	HANGOVER
<i>Blood and Circulatory System</i>	HEART • HEART ATTACKS • PALPITATION • BLOOD PRESSURE EQUALIZER • HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE • HYPOTENSION • LOW BLOOD PRESSURE • CARDIOVASCULAR TONIC • CIRCULATORY DISORDERS • blood thinner • blood cleanser • arteriosclerosis • external and internal BLEEDING • HEMORRHAGE • NOSEBLEEDS • VARICOSE VEINS • VEIN ELASTICITY • PHLEBITIS (inflammation of veins)
<i>Blood Sugar</i>	DIABETES
<i>Body System</i>	ENERGY • GENERAL TONIC (increases energy and strengthens the muscular and nervous system, while improving digestion and assimilation, resulting in a general sense of well-being) • fatigue • lethargy • preparation for SURGERY • CATALYST (enhances function) • astringent (increases the tone and firmness of tissues, lessens mucous discharge from the nose, intestines, vagina and draining sores) • increases PERSPIRATION • promotes SWEATING • diaphoretic (promotes perspiration, increasing elimination through the skin)
<i>Cancer</i>	TUMORS

<i>Digestive Tract</i>	APPETITE STIMULANT • aromatic (has a spicy taste, contains volatile oils which aid digestion and relieve gas) • digestive disorders • STOMACH ULCERS • ULCERS • CARMINATIVE (brings warmth, circulation, relieves intestinal gas discomfort, and promotes peristalsis) • gas • COLON • COLON INDIGESTION
<i>Endocrine System</i>	pancreas
<i>Eyes and Nose</i>	eyes • sinus problems
<i>First Aid</i>	bruises • burns • sunburn • cuts • WOUNDS (stops bleeding) • vulnerary (promotes healing of wounds by protecting against infection and stimulating cellular growth) • SHOCK • prevents FROSTBITE • insect bites and stings • sprains
<i>Infections and Immune System</i>	CHILLS • COLDS • coughs • hayfever • antipyretic (reduces fever) • INFECTION • antiseptic • antibacterial • spleen • contagious diseases • lock jaw (tetanus) • diphtheria • malaria
<i>Inflammation</i>	inflammation • ARTHRITIS • RHEUMATISM
<i>Liver</i>	jaundice • liver
<i>Lungs and Respiratory System</i>	ASTHMA • BRONCHITIS • GENERAL CONGESTION • fluid in the LUNGS • mucus • pleurisy
<i>Mouth and Throat</i>	offensive breath • pyorrhea (a gum disease) • LARYNGITIS • SORE THROAT • TONSILLITIS
<i>Nervous System</i>	cluster headaches • CONVULSIONS • palsy • spasms • Parkinson's disease • STROKES • paralysis • SENILITY
<i>Pain</i>	chronic pain • external backache • cramps
<i>Reproductive System</i>	<i>Male:</i> • male tonic <i>Female:</i> • menorrhagia (excessive bleeding during menstruation)
<i>Skin, Tissues &amp; Hair</i>	shingles • skin problems • rubefacient (increases blood flow to the skin causing local reddening)
<i>Urinary Tract</i>	kidneys
<i>Other Uses</i>	CATALYST in herb formula combinations (enhances the function of other herbs)

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**Key Properties:**

- HEART and CIRCULATION
- DIGESTIVE AID – relieves gas, increases gastric secretions and appetite, repairs ulcers
- STIMULANT – increases internal heat, dispels chill, strengthens metabolism and circulation
- analgesic – relieves pain • mucous decongestant
- antispasmodic • antiseptic

**Primarily affecting: HEART • CIRCULATION • STOMACH • NERVES**

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**History**

References to cayenne have been found on plaques in Egyptian tombs. It was cultivated for hundreds of years in Africa, India, and tropical areas, including the tropical Americas. Healers from India have used cayenne as an Ayurvedic (Indian traditional medicine) herb for many centuries. The North American Cherokee Indians used cayenne for its stimulating properties, while the Navajos used it as a means of weaning children from breast feeding. The hot, pungent cayenne pepper was introduced to Europe by Columbus on his return trip from the Americas.

John Lindley (1799-1865) wrote in his Flora Medica (1838) about capsicum annum, being employed as a gargle, administered internally, and for treating gout, gas and paralysis.

In 1943, the Dispensary of the United States of America reported, "Capsicum is a powerful local stimulant, producing when swallowed, a sense of heat in the stomach and a general glow over the body without narcotic effect."

Cayenne and related peppers have a long history of use as digestive aids in many parts of the world, but the herb's recent popularity has come through conventional medicine.

Capsaicin, the 'heat' component in peppers, has been approved by the FDA (U.S. Federal Drug Administration) for treatment of pain that often lingers after an attack of shingles. There is also evidence that capsaicin creams may be helpful for relieving various types of arthritis.

My Mom taught us how to use cayenne from a young age. If she was cold, in a cup of water she would mix a teaspoon of cayenne (40,000 HU) and drink it down. She would also put cayenne between two pairs of socks before my brothers would go hiking in the snow of the Sierra Nevadas.

The first time I really experienced the majesty of cayenne, was when a young friend of my son was playing at our home and cut his hand on the top of a can. I ran it under water and put pressure on it, but it still wouldn't stop bleeding. I remembered the cayenne and poured it on his hand. It stopped bleeding immediately and alleviated any discomfort he was experiencing.

More recently, I mixed cayenne into a natural cream for my aging mother's 'burning' feet. After just three applications her discomfort stopped. She had been suffering for over six months with this condition. I also make up an easy and effective cough syrup (recipe to follow). I am grateful each time I remember the wisdom I was raised with. I hope you will pass on this wisdom to the next generation and beyond.

#### **Attributes**

*Key Components: (including, but not limited to)*

Vitamins A (partially responsible for its red color) • Lutein (yellow carotenoid pigment) • Carotenes • B1 (thiamine) • B2 (riboflavin) • B3 (niacin) • B5 (pantothenic acid) • B6 (pyridoxine) • B9 (folic acid) • B12 (cobalamin) • Biotin • Choline • Inositol • PABA (Para-Amino Benzoic Acid) • C • Bioflavonoids • E • K

Calcium • Iron • Magnesium • Phosphorous • Potassium • Sulfur

Phytosterols • Capsaicin (effective for blocking the transmission of the pain impulse to the brain)

#### *Heat Units (HU)*

The 'heat' of the herbs in the pepper family is measured by a Heat Unit (HU) rating system, which is equivalent to BTU (British Thermal Units). In other words, the rating of how 'hot' the herbs are. Cayenne is the hot capsicum pepper, generally rated from 40,000 HU on up to the hottest at around 300,000 HU. Most cayenne is in the range of 40,000 to 100,000 HU.

The hotter pepper heat units do not necessarily mean the herb is more effective medicinally. I recommend the 90,000 HU cayenne. This seems to be tolerated by most people and is still very effective.

*Stimulant*

Cayenne stimulates circulation in the nervous and circulatory systems. The effect is almost immediate and the benefits linger. Circulation is equalized everywhere, the heart is given immediate support and nutrition. The heart beats more firm and steady, and the blood vessels dilate. Nutrients from foods will reach and penetrate damaged muscle and nerve tissues much better and quicker when cayenne is eaten in strong doses along with the meal. Profuse perspiration cleanses the pores of the skin and the effect on the nervous system is electrifying.

Stimulation is the key to healing. When the body and its organs are properly stimulated, they heal, cleanse and return to normal function. If taken regularly, cayenne will reach and rejuvenate every part of the body. It has been used specifically in the treatment of the spleen, pancreas, kidneys, and ulcers of the stomach and intestinal tract.

*Heart and  
Circulatory System*

Capsicum gives the cardiovascular system a little lift by stimulating the heart and enhancing circulation without raising blood pressure (it actually adjusts itself to normal). Pulse rate does not get faster, but each beat of the heart is given more power. Cayenne influences the heart immediately, then gradually extends its effects – feeding, restoring the elasticity, and healing ulcers in the cell structures of the walls of arteries, veins and capillaries.

*Heart:*

Cayenne is used for strengthening the heart muscle. In emergency situations (such as heart failure), cayenne can be administered to stimulate the heart muscle, restore active circulation, and normalize blood pressure. Capsicum is excellent for equalizing blood circulation, which works to prevent strokes and heart attacks, and will bring one quickly out of shock. It is reported that capsicum significantly lowers serum cholesterol and triglycerides and improves the ratio of HDL (high-density lipoprotein - good cholesterol) and LDL (low-density lipoprotein - bad cholesterol) elements, reducing the risk of heart disease.

*Bleeding:*

Cayenne is useful in arresting hemorrhages, both externally and internally. Even when the bone is exposed in a deep injury, cayenne pepper can be poured onto the wound to stop bleeding, cleanse and accelerate healing.

*Red Skin:*

As blood flow increases to the skin, it may cause local reddening and feel warm. When people see this, they may think that the skin is irritated, but cayenne is a counter-irritant (there is no itching involved). Cayenne brings the blood to the surface (causing redness) to take away toxic poisons, and begin the healing process. The warm, burning sensation heals, rather than damages, the tissues.

*Warms the Body:*

Sprinkle a small amount of cayenne into shoes to keep the feet warm on a cold day (too much cayenne will over heat and produce a burning sensation). Sprinkle a small amount of powder into socks to prevent frostbite.

*Promotes Perspiration*

Interestingly, many people who live in hot tropical areas consume goodly amounts of hot peppers every day to cool down. Perspiration is the natural cooling mechanism of the body. Capsicum promotes perspiration and increases elimination through the skin.

*Weight*

By increasing circulation, cayenne raises the metabolic rate of the body, especially when combined with other substances that increase metabolism. Cayenne also stimulates the liver, increases the number of liver enzymes responsible for fat metabolism, and decreases the fat deposits in the liver caused by a high fat diet.

*Digestion*

Like many spices, cayenne pepper increases the flow of digestive secretions from salivary, gastric, and intestinal glands. This stimulates the appetite, improves digestion, relieves gas discomfort and distension, and promotes peristalsis in the intestines. Cayenne enhances the body's ability to digest food in the stomach, assimilate nutrients in the intestines, and expel wastes through the colon. Capsicum supports the cleansing, and removal of, ulcerous tissue from the stomach and the acceleration of tissue regeneration and healing.

*Catalyst for  
Herb Formulas*

Capsicum is used as a catalyst in many herb combinations. It aids in the absorption and effectiveness of most any herb formula. The nutrients are assimilated far faster into the body and moved to where they are needed more efficiently.

*Arthritis*

Those suffering from osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis have received relief by using a rub-on cream made with capsaicin, an ingredient of capsicum. It is possible to make

	<p>a liniment with cayenne extract or the powdered herb to relieve inflammation. Rub the extract over arthritic joints and wrap with a cotton flannel cloth overnight, or make a poultice with the powdered herb.</p> <p>Although the 'heat' of the herb may be severe, there is usually no reddening or blistering of the skin. Capsaicin primarily affects sensory nerves, having very little action upon blood vessels.</p>
<i>Toothaches</i>	Capsicum is useful for relieving toothaches. Rub the powder on the affected area.
<i>Poultice</i>	Combining capsicum and plantain for applying externally in a poultice, can draw out foreign items embedded in the skin.
<i>Infections and Immune System</i>	<p>Cayenne helps build the body's defences. It is excellent for disease prevention and the quick improvement of conditions caused by the flu or a cold. It's high Vitamin C content is especially good to allay or overcome the effects of a cold. In cases of diarrhea caused by exotic bacteria, cayenne (especially taken in capsule form) will often elicit a rapid return to normal gastrointestinal function.</p> <p>Cayenne assists in wound healing and helps prevent infection. It helps arrests bleeding and stimulates cell growth. The powder may be poured directly on a wound or abraision.</p>
<i>Alcohol Addiction</i>	Capsicum is said to be able to help people end their addiction to alcohol, possibly by reducing the dilated blood-vessels and thus relieving chronic congestion.
<i>Cancer</i>	The herb may be taken as a part of a daily diet, to ward off disease in general and specifically to act as a cancer preventative.
<b>Herb Parts Used</b>	Whole red peppers, with or without the seeds, used fresh or dried
<b>Preparations and Remedies</b>	<p><i>Fresh:</i> Fresh chilies are the most nutritious, and have the highest amount of Vitamin C. They also contain a beneficial essential oil that aids digestion. Be cautious and wear rubber gloves when preparing fresh peppers and their seeds, as their oil can burn the skin. Cayenne may be added to soups and salads.</p>

When heated, cayenne loses most of its healing qualities and becomes an irritant.

*Home-made Hot Sauce:*

Cover the fresh or dried peppers with vinegar in a macerating jar (a non-porous container with a lid); soak overnight. Blend and continue to macerate for a week. (Maceration is the process of breaking down the fruit of a plant to a soft, mushy consistency, releasing some of its moisture, flavor and properties into a liquid of choice.) Next, express the pulp out, and add salt to taste. This makes a thin hot sauce that may be used freely according to preference and tolerance.

*Powder*

The cayenne pepper of grocery stores is largely a mixture of paprika and true pepper. Paprika (Hungarian pepper) has scarcely more than one-sixth the pungency of real cayenne pepper.

Color does not entirely determine the quality of powdered peppers. The red color of cayenne does fade when exposed to light. However, some types of red peppers are naturally lighter in color yet still very potent and powerful. The value of any specimen may be fairly estimated by the intensity of its odor (which is peculiar, somewhat aromatic, and extremely irritant) and by its acrid, burning taste.

A teaspoon of cayenne in a cup of water can help stop a heart attack, bring someone out of shock, help a headache vanish, and assist in warming a body in hyperthermia. Cayenne can help stop bleeding when applied to a wound or taken internally. Cayenne is a disinfectant and will actually reduce pain when applied to a cut.

Cayenne is used in nearly all external applications where speed is important, or when quick relief (as in arthritis, rheumatism, bursitis, and sore muscles) is desired. Cayenne may be added to all natural creams or lotions, and used for external discomfort or circulation problems.

Sprinkle powdered cayenne on bleeding cuts and it quickly stops the bleeding. The powder or liquid extract may be rubbed directly on toothaches or swellings for relief.

*Liquid Extract*

The liquid extract is valuable to have on hand for emergencies. Use it moderately, as it is many times stronger than the tea. Place the powder or extract on or under the



	tongue for crisis situations such as shock, hemorrhage or heart attack.
<i>Tea/ Infusion</i>	<p>Cayenne is seldom used in a decoction because some value is lost when it is simmered for any length of time.</p> <p><i>Cayenne Tea:</i> A tea may be made by pouring hot water over the cayenne and letting it steep.</p>
<i>Fomentations</i>	Cayenne is effective as a fomentation (towel soaked in warm infusion and placed on affected area) for rheumatism, inflammation, pleurisy, sores and wounds. It soothes discomfort and promotes healing circulation.
<i>Poultices</i>	<p>Cayenne added to any poultice will promote circulation.</p> <p><i>Healing Poultice:</i> 1 part comfrey leaves 1 part plantain 1/16 part cayenne <i>Optional:</i> add two parts slippery elm for binding a wound and soothing inflammation.</p> <p>Mix powdered herbs with warm water and make a paste. Spread on the affected area and cover with a natural fiber cloth. Apply heat if desired.</p>
<i>Liniment</i>	<p><i>Cayenne Liniment Rub:</i> 1 cup raw apple cider vinegar 1-1/2 teaspoon cayenne</p> <p>Pour hot vinegar over cayenne. Cover and let steep for a few hours. Use immediately, or continue to macerate (soak to soften and release constituents) for up to two weeks, for greater strength. Store liniment rub in a light-proof bottle and apply externally when needed for sprains, swellings, inflammation, and deep-seated internal congestion.</p> <p><i>Alternative:</i> Once the liniment is cool, add 1/4 teaspoon wintergreen essential oil (about 25 drops). Shake capped bottle vigorously each time before using, to disperse the oil.</p>
<i>Spray</i>	<p><i>Cayenne Spray:</i> Distilled Water Cayenne to tolerance Glycerine (optional) for greater adherence</p>

	<p>Mix water with cayenne. Filter out any grittiness by running the mixture through an unbleached coffee strainer. Put in spray bottle. The spray is slightly numbing. Use for the discomfort of arthritis, painful joints, sore muscles, neuropathy, and numbness or burning in the extremities.</p>
<i>Ointments</i>	<p><i>Easy Cayenne Cream or Ointment:</i>  Add cayenne powder or extract (to tolerance) to a simple, organic cream or ointment (without synthetic ingredients). Cayenne ointment is extremely valuable due to its powerful ability to bring out toxic poisons and as a counter-irritant, easing arthritic and sore muscle discomfort. It may be used safely without burning or blistering.</p>
<i>Internal Uses</i>	<p><b>When used as a catalyst in herb formulas, cayenne is generally used as a one-eighth part compared to other herbs used in the formulation, unless otherwise stated.</b></p>
<i>Capsules</i>	<p>Taking cayenne powder in capsules carries the herb deep into the gastrointestinal tract and eliminates the feeling of 'heat' in the mouth.</p> <p>At the first sign of a cold, take two capsules of capsicum every hour with a large glass of water. By eating nothing else, an oncoming illness can be warded off within a few hours. It is not recommended to take more than eight capsules in a twenty-four hour period. Colon discomfort and purging may result.</p>
<i>Tonic</i>	<p><i>Daily Tonic:</i> (four days a week)  Taking 1/4 teaspoon powder in water or juice, up to 3 times a day, will benefit the heart and circulation in the body.</p>
<i>Bleeding</i>	<p><i>For Internal Bleeding:</i>  Take a teaspoonful of cayenne in a glass of extra-warm water and drink it down. By the count of ten, in most cases, the bleeding will stop.</p>
<i>Cough Syrups</i>	<p>2 Tablespoons freshly squeezed Lemon Juice  or raw Apple Cider Vinegar  2 Tablespoons Honey  1/4 tsp or more Cayenne (depending on tolerance)</p> <p>Mix ingredients and keep in the refrigerator. Shake well before using. For sore, scratchy throat or cough, take one teaspoon cough syrup as needed.</p>

<p><b>Safety</b></p>	<p>Cayenne should not be used internally for hemorrhage during childbirth. It can stop bleeding temporarily, but as the circulation increases, bleeding could resume after a short period of time. A skilled midwife may choose to use cayenne directly in the uterus, as she deems necessary.</p> <p>Handle fresh cayenne with great respect and keep out of eyes and away from mucous membranes. Contact with cayenne herb or extract will not permanently damage the eyes or mucous membranes, but it can cause serious discomfort. If cayenne gets into the eyes or mucous membranes, flush the area freely with cold milk until the burning abates. If skin contact with cayenne becomes uncomfortable, first rinse with plain rubbing alcohol and then wash with soap and water.</p> <p>Wear a filter mask when grinding dried cayenne. Grinders used to process cayenne must be cleaned with alcohol, then soap and water, otherwise, potent oils and resins will affect subsequent products.</p> <p>Cayenne sometimes gives a burning sensation to the throat and stomach, but it does not damage them. In fact, studies show that cayenne helps heal ulcers. For the first few days of taking cayenne, it may feel hot going in and hot going out. The body eventually becomes accustomed to the sensation. With continuous use, it feels more like a warm glow.</p>
<p><b>Plant Profile</b></p> <p><i>Description</i></p>	<p><i>Natural Habitat:</i> Indigenous to Mexico and Central America, cayenne is now cultivated in all warmer regions of the globe. While the species can tolerate most climates, they are especially productive in warm and dry climates.</p> <p>The varieties of capsicum fruits vary greatly in size, color and 'heat' of taste. The hottest is the yellowish red fruit of Sierra Leone, West Africa. These African birdseye cayenne have small (1/3 to 1/2 inch long), pungent, bright pods. Once consumed, the 'heat' is retained longer in the body than any other variety. The African varieties grow on shrub-size plants with small and pungent fruit, while the American varieties are herb-size plants with larger, heart-shaped fruit.</p> <p>The red pepper 'cayenne' is a perennial shrub in its native South America and other warm parts of the world. In northern gardens, it is an annual, dying out each year.</p>

	<p>The plant grows 20-60 inches. The leaves are covered with short, soft hairs. Single white flowers, purple-tinged and ornamental, bear thin, long pods that are very shiny and thick-skinned. The pods are initially green and eventually turn red or yellow.</p>
	<p>Cayenne is readily recognized by its characteristic 'heat', due to the high concentration of a compound known as capsaicin (from the Greek word 'to bite'). Capsicum has been aptly described as the plant that bites back.</p>
<p><i>Growing Cayenne Pepper</i></p>	<p><i>Planting:</i> Don't set plants out too early. Peppers are heat-lovers and prefer warm climates. In cooler areas, grow the plant in a greenhouse or amid sheltered borders out of doors, in full sun. The plant flowers in midsummer. Protect the blossoms from sun and wind damage by planting them with taller plants.</p>
<p><i>Harvesting</i></p>	<p>When fruits are uniformly red, cut them from the plant, leaving a stem of at least one half inch long. Dry them immediately on screens, or string together using a needle and heavy thread. The entire plant may also be pulled out of the ground to dry.</p>
<p><i>Storage</i></p>	<p>Do not put cayenne in a paper sack. Paper takes the precious oils out of it. Do not refrigerate. Store peppers whole or ground in tightly sealed containers. Keep cayenne powder at room temperature. Cayenne fades in the light and should always be kept in dark containers. When kept sealed in proper conditions, it will keep its potency for six months to a year. Cayenne will last longer if made into a fluid extract.</p>

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