

Versatile Sofrito Sauce

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Photo from [VeggieJeva](#)

This week's featured ingredient is the Aji Dulce pepper. Easily mistaken for its MUCH hotter cousin, the habanero, this pepper can seem very daunting to work with but is a delectable staple of many cuisines. The Aji Dulce is traditionally used in Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic and Cuba. Famously, it is one of the key ingredients in sofrito, a base for many of the dishes in these cultures and similar in ubiquity to a French mirepoix.

The recipe I have chosen for this week is in fact the aforementioned sofrito. It is Vegan, Gluten and Soy free! I recommend you make and store in the freezer so you can make a big batch and

save it for whenever you need. One recipe to try with it is a delicious and flavorful [Puerto Rican style rice](#). Simply fry up your rice with the sofrito, replace the water with chicken stock, and throw in a few seasonings like thyme and oregano. Serve it up by itself or as a side.

Another great recipe to do with Aji Dulce is a quick pickle. Slice them up and pickle with some onions and spices using the Beginner Guide included in the Weekly Dirt a few weeks ago. Whatever you do, these crunchy, sweet peppers are sure to impress.

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ pounds of aji dulce (or a mix of sweet peppers)
- 2 large yellow onions, or any onions including the white part of bunching onions or scallions, peeled and diced into chunks
- 2 large plum tomatoes, or any tomatoes
- 1 head of garlic, peeled
- 1 large bunch of cilantro (if this herb does not appeal to you, omit)
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ¼ cup olive oil

Instructions:

1. Prepare and chop all your prepared vegetables into large chunks that fit into a food processor.
2. Blend all the ingredients together until finely minced.
3. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator if using within a few weeks or freeze using an ice cube mold and store in a gallon bag in the freezer.

Notes:

The color of this recipe will vary depending on the colors of the peppers used. You'll get a green color if only green peppers are used, or you can get a dark red color if a mix of red peppers and achote (annatto) oil is used.

Nutrition Corner: Aji Dulce Pepper

Did you know! One portion of bell peppers has your daily requirement of Vitamin C! Vitamin C helps heal wounds by absorbing iron. It is linked to lowering blood pressure and preventing a variety of other health conditions.

The nutrients found in 100g of red bell peppers (very similar to nutrition to other sweet peppers - Aji dulce, etc) provides:

Calories: 39

Fat: 0.5g

Sodium: 6mg

Carbohydrates: 9g

Fiber: 3.1g

Sugars: 6.3g

Protein: 1.5g

Vitamin C: 190mg

Potassium: 314.4mg

Vitamin A: 233.9mcg

Vitamin E: 2.4mg

Vitamin K: 7.3mcg

Source: [USDA](#)