

SPICE OF THE MONTH

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November's spice is peri peri!

Our new Spice of the Month is peri peri. Or is it piri piri? Or pil pil? This chili blend went on a wild ride before ending up in Croton, and it's picked up a few different names on the way.

It may be hard to believe, but chili peppers — all of them! — originated in Brazil. Although the spicy fruit (they are technically berries) have become ubiquitous in cuisines around the world, they were unique to South and Central America until the 15th century, when European colonists landed in the “new world.” The word “chili” is actually derived from the Aztec word for pepper.

Since then, chilies have spread throughout the world, with each region developing its own cultivars. Peri peri is a variation on the Swahili word for pepper, “piri piri”; they were developed in Mozambique, which was then a Portuguese colony, and became a popular ingredient in many other African countries, as well as in Portugal.

Today, peri peri can be used to describe the chili itself or a spicy sauce or dish made with that pepper. Because the peri peri chili is difficult and expensive to obtain in the United States, spice blends, such as this one, have been developed to approximate its heat and flavor.

Our favorite use of this blend is creating piri-piri sauce — which, according to Marie Kacouchia in her cookbook *Vegan Africa: Plant-Based Recipes from Ethiopia to Senegal*, “can elevate any dish.” Check out the recipe included in this kit to see her version.



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All books listed here are available to check out from the Croton Free Library!

Our sources:


- “The Story of Chile Peppers” from New Mexico State University’s Chile Pepper Institute: pi.nmsu.edu/chile-info/for-kids-pages/the-story-of-chile-peppers.html
- *Vegan Africa: Plant-Based Recipes from Ethiopia to Senegal* by Marie Kacouchia
- *The Oxford Companion to Foods* by Alan Davidson

The recipes in this kit are:

- Prego Rolls from *In Bibi’s Kitchen* by Hawa Hassan with Julia Turshen (p. 186)
- Shrimp Piri Piri from *The Soul of a New Cuisine* by Marcus Samuelsson (p. 128)

See our cookbook collection for additional info & recipes, like:

- Chicken Piri Piri from *The Best Barbeque on Earth* by Rick Browne (p. 153)
- Peri-Peri Sauce from *Vegan Africa: Plant-Based Recipes from Ethiopia to Senegal* by Marie Kacouchia (p.15)



What did you make with your peri peri?
Post it on social media with the hashtag
#CrotonSpiceClub and tag us, or send a photo &
description to ref@crotonfreelibrary.org!

Sesame seeds purchased from MySpiceSage.