

# SPICE OF THE MONTH

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## January's spice is chipotle!

Long before the word “chipotle” was synonymous with giant burritos and decent guacamole, it meant the rich, smoky heat of a jalapeño pepper that had been preserved in a very specific way. We're hoping that the chipotle powder that we're bringing to you as January's Spice of the Month will bring some heat to this cold time of year!

The word “chipotle” evolved from a Nahuatl word meaning smoked chili pepper. They were first cultivated by the indigenous peoples of southern Mexico and Central America – particularly the Aztecs – as a method of preserving jalapeños so that they could be enjoyed outside of their growing season.

In the United States and elsewhere, chipotles are most commonly available in cans. Those shriveled, flavorful morsels, packed in a piquant tomato puree called adobo sauce, are certainly deserving of that popularity. Packets of dried chipotles are slightly less common, although they are just as smoky and hot as their canned counterparts.

Chipotles became globally available in the 15th and 16th centuries after explorers brought them back to Europe from South and Central America – but chipotles didn't hit the mainstream and become popular in the U.S. until the 20th century.

When the eponymous fast food chain first opened its doors in 1993, the peppers' popularity began to skyrocket as people discovered the rich, smoky flavors that chipotles add to any recipe.



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## All books listed here are available to check out from the Westchester Library System!

### Our sources:


- *Austin Chronicle*: Chipotle Chiles: [austinchronicle.com/food/chipotle-chiles-12085624/](https://austinchronicle.com/food/chipotle-chiles-12085624/)
- Chipotle.com: Chipotle Reopens Doors to Restaurant No. 1 Following First Renovation in 24 Years: [ir.chipotle.com/news-releases?item=122394](https://ir.chipotle.com/news-releases?item=122394)
- Merriam-Webster: CHIPOTLE Definition & Meaning: [merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chipotle](https://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chipotle)
- Nuestro Stories: Chipotle Peppers: Fiery Origin & Popularity: [nuestrostories.com/2024/02/chipotle-peppers-fiery-origin-popularity/](https://nuestrostories.com/2024/02/chipotle-peppers-fiery-origin-popularity/)
- *The Oxford Companion to Food* by Alan Davidson

### The recipes in this kit are:

- Chipotle & Ancho Chile Dry Rub from the *America's Test Kitchen Family Cookbook* (p. 458)
- Mrs. Obama's Breakfast Tacos from *The World Central Kitchen Cookbook* by José Andrés (p. 110)

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

- Veggie Chili & Beer from *The Happy Cook* by Daphne Oz (p. 81)



What did you make with your chipotle?  
Post it on social media with the hashtag  
**#CrotonSpiceClub** and tag us,  
or send a photo & description to  
[ref@crotonfreelibrary.org](mailto:ref@crotonfreelibrary.org)!

**Chipotle powder purchased from Penzey's.**