



Red or Green? A New Mexico Love Story

A Tale as Old as Time — A Forbidden Pairing, or the Perfect Match?

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M — Red or green? It is a question that has been pondered for the past 400+ years. In 1996, it was anointed as New Mexico's "Official State Question." In the middle of this answer is 'New Mexico Certified Chile™.' The New Mexico Chile Association doesn't pick favorites, or even hint at taking sides. Knowing that "Love is a Choice," the organization just wants the question "red or green" to be asked and answered with New Mexico-grown chile varieties.

New Mexico's love story of "red or green" can be compared to other romances such as William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* or Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. It is a love story that some might see as the perfect example of how opposites attract (red or green) or the magic power of combining forces – mixing the green chile's spicy, fresh flavor with red chile's sweet yet hot taste ('Christmas'). On the other hand, some see the two as a forbidden pair that must be forever kept apart.

The red and green chile are borne of different varieties, their worldview informed by different backgrounds. In New Mexico, the NuMex 6-4 is a thick-walled green chile pepper known for its enhanced flavor and consistent heat, grown predominantly in the Hatch region. Conversely, red chile peppers may be of the Chimayó variety, cultivated in Northern New Mexico. The mature red pepper provides a complex, slightly sweet and smoky flavor.

"It is indeed like a dynamic love story, the red and green chile," said Kari Dominguez, executive director of the New Mexico Chile Association. "I think all New Mexicans can agree that they enjoy the 'battle' between the red and green chile and the interplay between the two. Of course, at New Mexico Certified Chile, we can't play favorites. We're proud of both for their unique contributions to New Mexican culture, our communities, and our taste buds. And when in doubt — Christmas!"

Like the tug-of-war of any relationship, many chile-lovers are prepared to dig their heels in when it comes to the 'Red or Green' question, and for good reason. There are distinct differences between the red and green chile that make them both special — differences primarily centered around their maturity and spiciness.

If left to mature on the plant, green chiles will eventually turn red. Green chiles are the key ingredient to the famous New Mexican Green Chile Stew that brings a bright, herbaceous flavor with moderate heat. On the other hand, red chiles are more mature and contain more capsaicin, which gives them more heat and makes for a hearty, New Mexico Red Chile Sauce.

Red, green, or Christmas — one thing is certain: New Mexico Certified Chile is here to stay as a hallmark of New Mexican heritage and culinary authenticity. The love story of the red and green chile is one that people can cherish — and debate — now and in the future.

To learn more about New Mexico Certified Chile or how to join the cause, visit <https://newmexicochile.org/>.

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About New Mexico Certified Chile

New Mexico Certified Chile (NMCC) is dedicated to supporting the NM chile industry by increasing demand for NM chile. We strive to create an atmosphere of chile being for of the NM culture, heritage and pride. Our mission is to cultivate the world-renowned varieties grown only here in New Mexican soil and to protect, promote and advocate for the entire industry dedicated to growing this very special crop. NMCC is a program of the New Mexico Chile Association.