

History of “The Hottest Chile Pepper” Designation

We have all seen various claims in the media, on the internet and from other sources regarding which is the “hottest chile pepper” out there. To begin with, there are innumerable strains and varieties of chile peppers so what is a Bhut Jolokia to some might not be a Bhut Jolokia to others. A variety should at least be genetically stabilized as a precondition to competing for the “Hottest” crown. It’s noteworthy that the Naga Viper was not genetically stabilized in 2011 when it took the lead. Secondly, the method of making the determination about what the hottest pepper is can be anything from some individual’s opinion to representative testing using the technology of high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC).

For the purposes of this list, I use only the most recognized “authority” for most chile heads when it comes to establishing which it the “hottest”, Guinness World Records. Another good authority is The Chile Pepper Institute of New Mexico State University but the list below does not take that source’s findings into account. Both sources rely only upon HPLC.

Also, remember that this list of chile peppers cannot now be described as the “six current hottest chile peppers”. Over the past few years, many varieties have been developed that drop into ranges above 1,000,000 Scoville units.

So, based on Guinness, this is the way the lead has changed over the years:

<u>Era</u>	<u>Variety</u>	<u>Scoville Rating</u>
1994- Sep. 8, 2006	Red Savina Habanero	577,000
Sep. 9, 2006- Feb. 10, 2011	Bhut Jolokia also known as Naga Jolokia	1,001,304
Feb. 11, 2011 – Feb. 24, 2011	Infinity Chile	1,067,286
Feb. 25, 2011 – Feb. 28, 2012	Naga Viper	1,382,118
Mar. 1, 2012 – Aug. 6, 2013	Trinidad Scorpion Butch T	1,463,700
Aug. 7, 2013- Present	Carolina Reaper	1,569,300

Individual Carolina Reapers have been tested to 2,200,000 Scoville units but of course the testing of one pod is not representative. Stay tuned for changes in this ranking going forward!