

Making Stuffed Peppers Your Way

Ingredients

- 4 large red, orange or yellow bell peppers
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup finely chopped dense vegetables such as carrot, celery, broccoli, sweet potato, fennel, winter radish or winter squash
- 1 cup finely chopped yellow onion (about 1 small)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon red-pepper flakes
- 1 pound ground beef (at least 15 percent fat), turkey, chicken or pork, or one pound meat substitute of choice, crumbled (I use tofu.)
- ¾ cup dry white wine, chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 1 (14-ounce) can diced fire-roasted tomatoes
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt, plus more to taste
- ½ teaspoon black pepper, plus more to taste
- 1 cup cooked white or brown rice or other grain of choice
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh herbs such as parsley, basil or dill, plus more for serving (optional)
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella, provolone or other semi-firm cheese

Instructions

- Heat the oven to 400 degrees. Cut the peppers in half lengthwise and carefully remove core, seeds and ribs using a paring knife. Arrange the peppers, cut-sides up, in a 9-by-13-inch pan or other baking dish in which they fit snugly.
- In a large (12-inch) skillet, heat the olive oil over medium. Add the veg and onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in the garlic, oregano and red-pepper flakes, and cook until the garlic is fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the protein and cook, breaking it up if necessary with a wooden spoon, for 3 to 5 minutes, until no longer pink (if animal protein).
- Add ½ cup wine or broth, increase the heat to medium-high and cook, scraping the bottom of the pan, until the liquid in the pan is reduced by about half.
- Add the tomatoes and their juices, salt and pepper and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat and stir in the rice, Parmesan or Romano and fresh herbs if using. Taste and adjust seasonings.
- Divide the mixture among the peppers. Pour the remaining ¼ cup wine or broth into the bottom of the dish, wrap tightly with foil and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, until a paring knife easily pierces the peppers. Remove the foil and spoon any juices that have accumulated in the bottom of the pan onto the peppers. Sprinkle the mozzarella evenly onto the peppers and bake another 10 to 15 minutes, until the mozzarella is melted and beginning to brown.
- Allow the peppers to cool for 5 minutes, sprinkle with fresh herbs, if using, and serve hot.