



Stuffed Peppers

Ingredients

- **6** medium-sized sweet peppers (I like several colours just for the visual appeal)
- **1** sweet onion, diced
- **2** cloves garlic, grated finely
- **1 ½ lbs.** good quality lean ground beef (pork, chicken, turkey)
- **1 tsp.** salt for each lb. of meat
- **½ tsp.** ground pepper
- **1 small can** fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- **½ lb.** mushrooms, sautéed until well-done - with a couple of sprigs of thyme and fresh lemon juice
- **1 cup** cooked brown rice (I use basmati)
- **1 tsp.** dried oregano
- **½ cup** shredded cheddar cheese
- Pinch of red pepper flakes (optional)

Rice preparation:

- **½ cup** brown rice
- **¾ cup** broth or water
- **½ tsp.** kosher salt
- **1 tsp.** olive oil

Directions

Rice preparation:

1. Rinse brown rice thoroughly in a sieve until water runs clear.
2. Shake off excess water and pour rice into a dry skillet on medium heat.
3. Toast rice until it becomes dry, begins to turn colour and becomes fragrant. You will hear it beginning to 'pop'.
4. Heat water to boiling.
5. Add rice, salt, oil and stir to combine.
6. Cover and turn down heat to simmer until rice is cooked and all the water has been absorbed.

Mushroom preparation:

1. Wipe off mushrooms with a damp cloth.
2. Slice thinly.
3. Melt 1 tsp. butter and 1 tsp. olive oil in a skillet.
4. Add mushrooms, sprinkle with a little kosher salt and ground pepper.
5. Sauté until most of the liquid has evaporated.
6. Add a couple of sprigs of fresh thyme and cook until all the liquid is gone.
7. Squeeze in the juice of half a lemon.

Filling:

1. In a large skillet, brown beef in a couple of tbsp. of olive oil with the salt and pepper.
2. Add onions and cook until onions are translucent and meat is cooked. Stir in the garlic, grated or finely chopped and cook for a couple of minutes. Add rice, cooked mushrooms, tomatoes and dried oregano. Taste and adjust seasoning. (sometimes, I add a splash of balsamic vinegar)
3. Find a cooking vessel or slow cooker with a lid and make sure the peppers will fit. Cut the tops off the peppers and scoop out the membranes and seeds. If necessary, shave a thin slice from the bottom so they will sit upright. Fill the peppers with the mixture. Place in the cooking vessel with a ¼ cup of water, tomato juice or broth.
4. In a slow cooker, cook on low for about 4 hours.

5. In the oven, cook at 350 degrees, uncovered for about 40 minutes or until peppers are tender but not limp.
6. Top with grated cheese, if desired and cook for about 15 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve with sour cream or Greek yogurt.