

The Kitchen Diva's Energy-Boosting Stuffed Bell Peppers

Ingredients

Makes 8 servings, 2 stuffed pepper halves per serving

8 red, yellow, or orange bell peppers or a mixture of all (about 4 lbs)

2 tbsp canola or olive oil, divided

1 medium-sized yellow onion, chopped

4 garlic cloves, peeled and minced

1 tsp salt

1 tsp ground black pepper

1 tbsp chili powder

1 tbsp ground cumin

16 oz fresh Italian turkey sausage, removed from casing or lean ground turkey (You can use pre-cooked turkey or slices of deli turkey cut into small pieces and use it in place of the turkey sausage, if desired.)

1 (16 oz) jar chunky salsa, mild or hot

2 cups fresh baby spinach, rinsed and chopped or 1 (10 oz) package chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed to remove moisture

1 cup cooked quinoa (optional)

1 cup cooked brown rice

1 cup low-fat cheddar cheese

2 large avocados, peeled and pit removed, sliced

1/2 cup low-fat Greek yogurt

1/4 cup finely chopped fresh basil leaves

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F. Cut the peppers in half lengthwise, slicing from the stem to the bottoms, leaving the stems intact. Remove the white pithy ribs near stem and down length of inside. Remove the ribs and seeds and discard. Place the peppers in a shallow 13 x 9 inch baking dish. Drizzle the peppers with 1 tablespoon of the oil. Cover the dish with foil, and bake the peppers 15 to 20 minutes, until they start to soften.

Meanwhile, heat the remaining 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion, garlic, salt, black pepper, chili powder, and cumin; cook until the vegetables are softened, about 3 minutes. Add the sausage to the skillet. Cook, breaking it up with a slotted spoon or potato masher, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the salsa and the spinach, and cook, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat and stir in the cooked brown rice and quinoa (optional).

Carefully fill the pepper halves with the turkey mixture. Cover the dish with foil, and bake until the filling is hot and the peppers are tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove foil, and sprinkle the cheese over the top of the peppers. Return to oven; bake, uncovered, until cheese has melted, about 7 to 10 minutes. Top the peppers with a heaping tablespoon of the yogurt. Place slices of the avocado on top of each pepper. Sprinkle with the basil. Serve immediately.

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