Stuffed Bell Peppers

Make-ahead · Serves 6

Ken's note: TBD

Six upright peppers filled with beef, rice, and tomato, baked in a little extra sauce. Green peppers taste more classic; red, orange, and yellow are sweeter. They reheat well.

Ingredients

- 6 medium bell peppers
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1½ lb ground beef
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1½ tsp Italian seasoning
- ½ tsp paprika
- ¼ tsp crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste (optional)
- 1 can (15 oz) tomato sauce, divided
- 1½ cups cooked rice
- 2 Tbsp chopped parsley or basil
- 1 tsp kosher salt, divided
- ½ tsp black pepper, divided
- ½ cup water or beef broth

Method

1. Heat the oven to 375°F. Cut the tops off the peppers and remove the seeds and ribs. Trim a sliver off the bottoms if needed so they stand level. Rub the outsides with the olive oil and sprinkle a little salt and pepper inside. Stand them in a 9×13 dish with ¼ inch of water, cover with foil, and bake 15 minutes.
2. Meanwhile brown the beef in a large skillet, breaking it up; drain excess fat. Add the onion and cook 4–5 minutes. Stir in the garlic, Italian seasoning, paprika, and pepper flakes for 30 seconds, then the tomato paste for 1 minute. Add 1 cup of the tomato sauce and the rice. Off the heat, stir in the parsley. Taste; the filling should be slightly more seasoned than you want on the plate.
3. Pour the water out of the dish. Mix the rest of the tomato sauce with the ½ cup water or broth and pour around the peppers. Fill each pepper, mounding the tops. Cover with foil and bake 30–40 minutes, until the peppers are tender and the filling is hot. Uncover the last 5–10 minutes to brown the tops. Rest 5–10 minutes and spoon sauce over each pepper.