



Stuffed Bell Peppers with Chicken, Smoked Mozzarella, and Basil

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Serves 4 as a light main dish or side dish

Table salt

4 medium red bell peppers, *yellow, or orange, (about 6 ounces each),
1/2 inch trimmed off tops, cores and seeds discarded*

1/2 cup long grain white rice

1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil

1 medium onion, *chopped fine (about 1 cup)*

12 ounces ground chicken

3 medium cloves garlic, *minced*

1 can (14 1/2 ounces) diced tomatoes, *drained*

4 ounces smoked mozzarella cheese, *shredded (about 1 cup)*

2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

Ground black pepper

1/3 cup bread crumbs (*fresh*)

1. Bring 4 quarts water to boil in large stockpot or Dutch oven over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon salt and bell peppers. Cook until peppers just begin to soften, about 3 minutes. Using slotted spoon, remove peppers from pot, drain off excess water, and place peppers cut-sides up on paper towels. Return water to boil; add rice and boil until tender, about 13 minutes. Drain rice and transfer to large bowl; set aside.
2. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees.
3. Meanwhile, heat 12-inch heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat until hot, about 1 1/2 minutes; add oil and swirl to coat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and beginning to brown, about 5 minutes. Add chicken and cook, breaking it into small pieces with a spoon, until chicken becomes opaque, about 4 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Transfer mixture to bowl with rice; stir in tomatoes, cheese, basil, and salt and pepper to taste.
4. Place peppers cut-side up in 9-inch square baking dish. Using soup spoon, divide filling evenly among peppers. Spoon bread crumbs over each filled pepper. Bake until filling is heated through, 25 to 30 minutes. Serve immediately.

STEP BY STEP: Filling the Peppers



It is easier to fill the peppers after they have been placed in the baking dish, because they hold steady.