Lentil Mushroom Stuffed Peppers with Feta

8 stuffed pepper halves; 2 halves per serving | Active 30 min | Cook 40 min | Total 65 min

Ingredients

• 4 large red bell peppers (about 700 g edible weight after coring), halved lengthwise and seeds removed

• 1/4 cup water (60 ml/60 g)

• 2 tablespoons olive oil (30 ml/28 g)

• 1 medium onion (150 g), finely diced

• 10 oz cremini mushrooms (280 g), finely chopped

• 2 garlic cloves (6 g), minced

• 3 cups plain ready-cooked green or brown lentils (600 g drained weight)

• 3/4 cup plain dry breadcrumbs (60 g)

• 7 oz feta cheese (200 g), crumbled and divided

• 1 teaspoon dried oregano (1 g)

• 1/4 teaspoon fine salt (1.5 g)

• 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper (1 g)

• 1 can crushed tomatoes (14 oz/400 g)

Set out

9 × 13-inch/23 × 33 cm baking dish, Foil, 12-inch/30 cm skillet, Mixing spoon, Instant-read thermometer

Allergens

Milk, Wheat. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat oven to 400°F/200°C. Arrange pepper halves cut-side up in the baking dish. Pour the measured water around them, cover with foil and bake 15 minutes. Carefully uncover, tip out the water and leave peppers in the dish.

2. Meanwhile, heat oil in the skillet over medium-high heat. Cook onion and mushrooms for 10–12 minutes, stirring, until softened and their liquid has largely evaporated. Add garlic and oregano and cook 30 seconds.

3. Add cooked drained lentils, breadcrumbs, 150 g feta, salt and pepper. Stir gently over low heat for 2 minutes until evenly combined.

4. Pour crushed tomatoes around the pepper halves. Divide filling among all eight halves, mounding loosely. Scatter remaining 50 g feta evenly over them.

5. Bake uncovered for 20–25 minutes, until pepper flesh is tender, feta has golden spots and the center of the filling reaches 165°F/74°C. Serve two halves per person with one-quarter of the tomato sauce.

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Estimated nutrition per serving

Calories: 540 kcal | Protein: 28.3 g | Carbohydrate: 68.1 g | Fat: 20.0 g | Fiber: 19.4 g. One of 4 servings. Batch yield: 8 stuffed pepper halves; 2 halves per serving. Base ingredients and full measured oil included; optional variations excluded. Estimates vary with brands, cooking and actual portions.

Make the count work for you

Two pepper halves form one clear portion. Pack matching sizes together if the peppers vary, and add an equal share of the sauce to each container. A rigid box protects the softened walls better than wrapping them in foil, especially if lunch has to travel beneath other items in a bag.

A useful detail

The stated total starts with ready-cooked lentils. If cooking dried lentils, prepare and drain them separately first; do not substitute the same weight of dry lentils. Use lentils cooked today or yesterday and safely chilled, or a freshly opened ready-cooked product; follow any shorter packet opening limit. Earlier lentil cooking is not included in this recipe time.

Another way

Replace feta with 200 g crumbled firm goat cheese for a different tang; nutrition changes.

Use yellow peppers at the same 700 g edible weight for a sweeter color contrast, keeping the par-bake step.

Keep it well

Refrigerate in shallow containers at 40°F/4°C or below within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C. Keep up to 3 days or freeze up to 2 months; peppers become softer after freezing. Reheat covered with sauce until the filling reaches 165°F/74°C. Pack cold with two cold sources in an insulated bag. For home-cooked lentils, use the finished dish within 3 days of their original cooking date, or the shorter stated storage limit; assembling or warming them does not restart that clock.