Mushroom and Sunflower Seed Stuffed Peppers

4 filled pepper halves; 2 servings · Active 30 min · Total 1 hr 15 min

Skills: Confident beginner

Ingredients

• 2 large bell peppers, halved lengthways and seeds removed (about 500 g prepared weight)

• 1 tablespoon olive oil (15 ml), divided

• 1 small onion, finely diced (100 g)

• 10 1/2 oz mushrooms, finely chopped (300 g)

• 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped (6 g)

• 1 can green or brown lentils (15 oz/425 g), drained and rinsed to yield about 1 1/3 cups (240 g)

• 1/3 cup unsalted sunflower seeds, roughly chopped (40 g)

• 1/2 cup rolled oats (40 g)

• 1 tablespoon tomato paste (20 g)

• 1/2 cup water (120 ml), divided

• 1 teaspoon dried thyme (1 g)

• 1/2 teaspoon fine salt (3 g)

• 1/4 teaspoon black pepper (0.5 g)

Set out

9 by 13-inch (23 by 33 cm) baking dish, Large skillet, Fork, Foil, Instant-read thermometer

Allergens

Oats: use certified gluten-free oats if required and check all ingredient labels; sunflower seeds are a seed allergen for some people. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat the oven to 400°F/200°C. Brush the cut pepper halves with 1 teaspoon of the oil and put them cut-side up in the baking dish. Roast for 12 minutes while starting the filling. Remove the dish from the oven after those 12 minutes and set it aside while the filling finishes; keep the oven on.

2. Heat the remaining oil in the skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the onion for 5–6 minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook for 8–10 minutes, stirring, until their released water evaporates and they begin to brown. Stir in the garlic and tomato paste for 1 minute.

3. Add the lentils and mash about a third with the back of the fork. Stir in the sunflower seeds, oats, thyme, salt, pepper and 1/4 cup (60 ml) of the water. Cook for 2–3 minutes, then remove from the heat and stand for 5 minutes.

4. Divide the filling evenly among the four softened pepper halves. Pour the remaining 1/4 cup (60 ml) water around them, not over the filling. Cover the dish with foil and bake for 20 minutes.

5. Uncover and bake for 8–10 minutes more, until the peppers are tender and the center of the filling reaches 165°F/74°C. Serve two halves per person.

Make the saved portion easy to lift

Refrigerate two pepper halves in each shallow container with a little of the pan moisture. That makes one complete portion easy to reheat without disturbing the rest.

A useful detail

The filling quantity suits four broad, large pepper halves. If yours are smaller, bake extra filling in a small covered dish beside them rather than building an unstable mound.

Keep it well

Refrigerate shallow portions within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, at 40°F/4°C or below for up to 3 days. Freeze for up to 2 months; thaw in the refrigerator. Reheat covered with a spoonful of water to 165°F/74°C. Carry chilled with two cold sources and refrigerate at work.