Carrot-Apricot Pepper Jewels

24 filled mini-pepper halves, 2 per buffet portion | Active 30 min | Cook 45 min | Total 90 min

Ingredients

- 12 broad mini sweet peppers, about 480 g/17 oz whole, each about 6 cm/2 1/3 in long
- 250 g/9 oz peeled carrots, cut into 1 cm/3/8 in pieces
- Water for boiling carrots; drain away
- 180 g/6 1/3 oz drained ready-to-eat canned chickpeas, rinsed
- 30 g/1 oz dried apricots, finely chopped
- 15 ml lemon juice (1 tablespoon)
- 15 ml olive oil (1 tablespoon), divided 5 ml peppers and 10 ml filling
- 1 g ground cumin (1/2 teaspoon)
- 2 g fine salt (about 1/3 teaspoon)
- 0.5 g black pepper (1/4 teaspoon)

Set out

Oven, Rimmed tray with usable 40 × 30 cm/16 × 12 in base, Saucepan and colander, Bowl and masher, Knife and board, Small spoon, Food thermometer, Covered shallow carrier, Refrigerator, Pastry brush, Wide spatula

Allergens

No major US allergen identified in base ingredients. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat the oven to 400°F/200°C. Halve all 12 peppers lengthwise and remove seeds and tough pale ribs. Keep 24 halves, cut sides up, on the tray. Brush with 5 ml oil and roast 10 minutes.

2. Meanwhile boil carrots in water 12-15 minutes after the water boils, until tender. Drain well and mash with the chickpeas. Stir in all the apricot, lemon juice, 10 ml oil, cumin, salt and pepper. The complete thick filling should weigh roughly 500 g.

3. Divide all the filling among the 24 pepper halves, about 20-21 g each. Mound gently rather than pressing it into a dense plug. Bake 15-20 minutes more, until peppers are tender and several filling centers reach 165°F/74°C.

4. Rest 5 minutes. Transfer with a spatula to a shallow serving tray and offer 2 halves per buffet portion. There is no extra cheese or garnish to add.

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Bring it

Use a single layer in a rigid covered tray. Carry hot at 140°F/60°C or above, or chilled at 40°F/4°C or below. Uncontrolled journey and display together have a 2-hour limit, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C.

Finish at the gathering

For a cold journey, arrange a 375°F/190°C oven for 15-25 minutes and reheat filling centers to 165°F/74°C. They are already assembled; the host needs only oven space, not a food processor.

Make it yours

Mix red and yellow peppers for a bright winter platter. Keep each half intact rather than cutting it into unstable little pieces; two halves make the stated portion.

Ingredient labels

No major US allergen is intentionally required, but check chickpea, dried-fruit and spice labels and any shared-equipment warnings. This is not an allergen-free certification.

A useful detail

The 90-minute total includes cutting peppers, boiling and draining carrots, overlapping first roasting, mashing, final baking and a short rest. Very narrow peppers are unsuitable for the stated 24-half yield.

Another way

Use 30 g finely chopped ready-to-eat pitted dates instead of apricots for a darker sweet accent.

Use 1 g smoked paprika instead of cumin for a different savory direction.

Keep it well

Refrigerate shallow portions promptly at 40°F/4°C or below and use within 3 days or an earlier chickpea opening deadline. Follow the Bring it handling limits; reheat centers to 165°F/74°C. The peppers soften after chilling, so avoid heavy stacking.