

Spanish Stuffed Bell Peppers

(Rachel Ray)

I loved the flavour of this recipe when I made it. I couldn't find the piquillo peppers so feel free to leave them out. Manchego is an aged sheep cheese from Spain. You could use an aged cheddar instead.

Serves 6

6 medium red bell peppers
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 ½ lb lean ground chicken
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 Piquillo peppers, minced
½ cup golden raisins, chopped
2 tsp sweet smoked paprika
¾ cup dry sherry (or sherry vinegar)
2 15-oz cans of Tomato Sauce, divided
½ cup parsley (about a handful), chopped
½ cup slivered almonds, toasted
2-3 cups cooked rice
2 cups Manchego cheese, grated

Cut off the top part of each bell pepper and reserve as a lid. Cut a very thin sliver off the bottom of each bell pepper just to even it off so it sits standing up without wobbling. Make sure the bottom stays intact so that you have a solid cup that won't leak.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and add oil. Add the chicken and season with salt and pepper. Cook until brown, about 5-8 minutes, breaking it up into small bits with the back of a wooden spoon as it cooks. Add the onion, garlic, piquillo peppers, raisins and paprika. Continue to cook until the onions start to get tender, about 3-4 minutes. Pour in the sherry and stir to get any brown bits off the bottom of the skillet deglazing the pan. Add 1 ½ cans of tomato sauce and cook about 5 minutes more. Turn off the heat and add the parsley, almonds and cooked rice to the pot. Stir to combine.

Pour the remaining ½ can of tomato sauce into an oven-safe baking dish with a touch of water for additional liquid to create a bed for the peppers to sit on. Fill each pepper up halfway with the chicken and rice filling mixture.

Top with a little manchego cheese then fill with more chicken and rice mixture, and a little more cheese on top of that. Set in the baking dish and place the tops back on top of each pepper as a lid. Bake, uncovered, for 20-30 minutes.