

Fast & Healthy Mexican Stuffed Peppers

By Jules, Boston Mamas Guest Contributor



My husband loves Mexican food. Loves it. The problem with going out for Mexican (or really, any other dinner) is that you never *really* know what you're eating. This recipe is surely a departure from your mother's rice and meat stuffed peppers, but the idea is the same: a well-balanced meal in a bright, auspicious edible package. And even better, it's comfort food for the next generation: hearty, balanced, and fast.

You might have to play around with portions per recipe; my husband eats 3 halves and I usually have one or two, depending on the size of the peppers. I suggest serving it with rice, but they are really a full meal on their own.

- 4 large bell peppers (any color but green)
 - 1 medium jalapeño pepper, finely diced (optional)
 - 1 can chopped, diced tomatoes
 - 1 cup of your favorite salsa (fruit salsas work especially well here)
 - 1 can black or red beans
 - 2 cups cooked chicken, chopped (this is about 2 large chicken breasts)*
 - 1 cup baby spinach**
 - ½ cup chopped black olives (optional)
 - ½ cup chopped cilantro (plus a tablespoon for garnish)
 - ½ cup chopped scallions
 - Low fat cheese for topping
1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut peppers in half and remove seeds and white ribs. Place peppers, open side down, on baking sheet and allow to soften in oven, about 10 minutes. Remove from oven (leave oven on).
 2. Meanwhile, in a large saucepan, combine jalapeño, tomatoes, salsa, beans, chicken, spinach, olives, cilantro and scallions. Stir well and simmer on low heat for 10 minutes.
 3. Using a large spoon, fill each pepper with chicken filling. Place in oven for 5 more minutes. Top with grated cheese of your choice and return to oven for 2 minutes, or until cheese is melted. Top with sprig of fresh cilantro and your favorite low fat sour cream to serve.

*This is an ideal time to use leftover chicken, or some stores (e.g., Trader Joe's) sell pre-cooked chicken tenders, which are ideal for saving time. Otherwise, cut chicken breasts into quarters. Fill a large pot with water and season with salt and a lemon. When water begins to boil, add breasts and cook in water bath until done: about 5-7 minutes depending on how large your pieces of chicken are. Once cooked, shred into smaller pieces.

**This is the perfect place to throw in some baby spinach where your kids won't see it. It will wilt almost immediately in the heat and be pretty undetectable.