



RECIPE OF THE WEEK: 13/09/2021
Yemista Me Piperies, Ntomates Ke Rizi
(Stuffed Peppers, Tomatoes and Rice)

Cook Greek stuffed vegetables with rice and herbs following this simple recipe. This is an inexpensive and desirable dish using plenty of olive oil. It is suitable for vegan and vegetarians, or it can be enjoyed by everybody, especially in those hot sunny days.

Serves 4

Ingredients

For the vegetables

4 large peppers, green, yellow or red

4 large onions

8 medium tomatoes or 4 beef tomatoes, ripe and firm

You may use courgettes or aubergines if you wish

For the stuffing

250ml olive oil

300g rice, risotto or long- grain rice

2 garlic cloves, minced

2 tbsp sugar

1tbsp tomato paste

350ml vegetable stock

a small handful of fresh mint, leaves only, finely chopped

a small handful of parsley, leaves only, finely chopped

2 tbsp fresh dill, finely chopped (optional)

4 large potatoes, peeled and cut into wedges

salt and freshly ground black pepper



Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/ 160°C/ gas 4.
2. Wash the vegetables well and pat dry them with kitchen paper.
3. With the aid of a small sharp knife cut the top of the peppers about 1-2cm from the stalk. Leave the stalk on the cut off topping. Take out the seeds and the membrane and place the peppers on a tray 22 x 33cm.
4. Slice off the top of the onions 1-2cm from the top. Scoop out most of the onion layers leaving about 5 or 6 outer layers. Place the onions on the tray with the peppers. Finely chop the onion layers to use them for the stuffing.
5. Follow the same process and slice off the top of the tomatoes 1-2cm from the top leaving the stalk on. Scoop out the flesh from the tomatoes and with your hands squeeze out the excess liquid. Place this in a large bowl and set aside until needed. Place the tomatoes in the tray with the other vegetables.
6. Place the potato wedges around the onion shells, peppers and tomatoes to keep them upright.

For the filling

1. Heat 4 tbsp of olive oil in a large pan with a heavy base over a low- medium heat and cook the chopped onions with a large pinch of salt for 5-6 minutes until the onion is soft.
2. Add the garlic and sauté for one more minute. Add 1 tbsp of sugar in the onion and garlic mixture and mix well with a wooden spoon. Let it cook for 5 minutes until it caramelises.
3. Add the rice and sauté for 2-3 minutes to get a golden colour.
4. Stir in the tomato flesh, tomato puree, the vegetable stock or 350ml of water and lots of seasoning. Sauté for 5-6 minutes.
5. Add the mint, parsley and dill if using and stir in the stuffing.
6. Drizzle small amount of olive oil inside and out of the vegetables. Add the rest of the sugar and season with salt and ground black pepper inside the shells.
7. With the aid of a spoon fill in the cavities of the vegetables approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ but not completely as the rice will expand and may break the vegetables like the tomatoes. Normally, you may need 1 tablespoon of stuffing per small vegetable and 2 tablespoons for larger vegetables.
8. Cover the vegetables with their topping and drizzle them with more olive oil. Add 250ml of water round the vegetables in the tray.
9. Cover with aluminium foil and bake for 60 minutes in the preheated oven. Remove the foil and bake for another 10-15 minutes until the vegetables have a nice golden brown crispy colour.
10. Serve with feta, lots of crusty bread and Greek salad.