
Bell Peppers Stuffed with Quinoa



*Quinoa is a delicious source of protein, fiber, phosphorus, magnesium, and iron.
Makes 8 servings (1 serving = 1/2 pepper)*

Ingredients:

- 1 cup finely chopped onion, (about 1 medium)
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon ground cumin
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 10oz package frozen chopped spinach (thawed and squeezed dry)
- 2 15 oz cans diced tomatoes, drained, (reserve liquid)
- 15oz can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 3/4 cup quinoa (dry, uncooked)
- 3 large carrots, grated (1 1/2 cups)
- 1 1/2 cups shredded reduced-fat pepper Jack cheese, divided
- 4 large bell peppers, cut in half lengthwise, ribs removed

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Over medium heat, cook the oil in a medium sauce pan. Add the onion and cook for about 5 minutes, or until soft. Add the cumin, garlic and sauté 1 minute. Stir in spinach and drained tomatoes. Cook 5 minutes or until most of liquid has evaporated.

2. Stir in black beans, quinoa, carrots, and 2 cups water. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 20 minutes, or until quinoa is tender. Stir in 1 cup cheese. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.
4. Pour reserved liquid from tomatoes in bottom of baking dish.
5. Fill each bell pepper half with a heaping $\frac{3}{4}$ cup quinoa mixture and place peppers in baking dish. Cover the baking dish with foil and bake for 1 hour. Uncover and sprinkle each pepper with 1 Tablespoon remaining cheese. Bake 15 minutes more or until tops of stuffed peppers are browned. Let stand 5 minutes. Transfer stuffed peppers to serving plates and drizzle each with pan juices before serving.

NOTE: Quinoa has become highly appreciated for its nutritional value, as its protein content is very high (12%–18%). Unlike wheat or rice (which are low in lysine), and like oats, quinoa contains a balanced set of essential amino acids for humans, making it a complete protein source, unusual among plant foods. It is a good source of dietary fiber and phosphorus and is high in magnesium and iron. Quinoa is gluten-free and considered easy to digest.