



Stuffed pepper casserole

Introduction

Stuffed pepper casserole is a comforting and hearty dish that brings the classic flavors of stuffed peppers into a convenient one-dish meal. This easy recipe allows you to enjoy the delicious combination of ground meat, colorful bell peppers, and rice, all smothered in rich tomato sauce and melted cheese. Perfect for busy weeknights or family gatherings, this casserole is not only simple to prepare but also a crowd-pleaser that can be customized to suit your family's tastes.

In this article, we'll walk you through the ingredients, preparation, and cooking process to ensure you whip up a scrumptious stuffed pepper casserole that everyone will love.

Detailed Ingredients

1 cup cooked rice: You can use white, brown, or even a combination of both for an added texture.

1 pound ground beef or turkey: Choose your preferred meat for a delicious, protein-packed meal. Ground turkey is a lighter alternative and can be a healthier option.

2 bell peppers, diced: Use any color you prefer—red, yellow, green, or orange to add a vibrant and sweet flavor to the dish.

2 cloves garlic, minced: Fresh garlic will give the dish a fragrant aroma and enhance the overall flavor profile.

1 can diced tomatoes (14.5 oz), undrained: The juices from the tomatoes add extra moisture and flavor to the casserole.

1 can tomato sauce (8 oz): This will create a rich and tangy base for the dish.

1 cup shredded cheddar cheese: Cheddar cheese provides gooey, melty goodness that pulls the dish together beautifully.

1 onion, chopped: Chopped onion adds depth of flavor and sweetness to the dish.

1 teaspoon Italian seasoning: This blend of herbs, such as basil and oregano, enhances the Italian flavors.

Salt and pepper to taste: Essential seasonings that will elevate the taste of your dish.

Prep Time

Prep Time: 15 minutes

See also Instant Pot Cherry BBQ Meatballs and Cocktail Wieners

Cook Time, Total Time, Yield

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Yield: 6 servings

Detailed Directions and Instructions

Preheat the Oven

Start by preheating your oven to 375°F (190°C). Grease a 9×13-inch baking dish, ensuring that it is well-coated to prevent the casserole from sticking during baking.

Cook the Meat and Vegetables

In a large skillet over medium heat, add the ground beef or turkey. Brown the meat thoroughly, stirring occasionally to break it apart and ensure even cooking. Once browned, drain any excess fat to keep the dish lighter.

Next, add the chopped onion, diced bell peppers, and minced garlic to the skillet. Sauté the mixture for about 5-7 minutes, or until the vegetables are softened and the onion is translucent. This step builds the foundation of flavor for your casserole.

Add Tomatoes and Seasoning

Once the vegetables are ready, stir in the can of diced tomatoes (with their juices), the can of tomato sauce, Italian seasoning, and add salt and pepper to taste. Let the mixture simmer over low heat for about 5 minutes. This allows the flavors to meld together beautifully, creating a savory filling.

Combine with Rice and Transfer to Baking Dish

With the meat and vegetable mixture ready, it's time to add the cooked rice. Fold it into the skillet until everything is well combined. The rice will absorb the delicious sauces and become infused with flavors.

Now, transfer this hearty mixture into your prepared baking dish. Spread it out evenly, ensuring that all edges are filled and the mixture is evenly distributed.

Top with Cheese and Bake

Sprinkle shredded cheddar cheese generously over the top of the casserole. Cover the dish with aluminum foil to retain moisture during baking. Place the covered dish in the preheated oven and bake for 20-25 minutes. You'll know it's ready when the casserole is bubbly, and the cheese is melted and slightly golden.

See also [Chia Seed Pudding](#)

Serve

Once baked, carefully remove the foil and allow the casserole to cool for a few minutes. This cooling period will make it easier to serve without disrupting the layers. Scoop portions onto plates and enjoy every bite! This dish is delightful on its own or served with a side salad for a

complete meal.

Notes

- Feel free to mix and match different vegetables. Corn, zucchini, or even spinach can add a new twist to the traditional flavor.
- If you want to add a bit of heat, consider adding chopped jalapeños or a dash of hot sauce.
- For a vegetarian version, substitute the meat with cooked lentils or a plant-based meat alternative.

Cook techniques

- Browning: Browning the meat adds flavor through the Maillard reaction, which creates a rich, savory taste.
- Sautéing: Sautéing the vegetables softens them and releases their natural sugars, enhancing their sweetness.
- Simmering: Simmering allows the flavors to develop and meld together, enriching the overall taste of the casserole.

FAQ

Can I make this casserole ahead of time?

Yes, you can prepare the casserole ahead of time and store it in the refrigerator. Just bake it when you're ready to serve it for a quick and easy meal.

Can I freeze the stuffed pepper casserole?

Absolutely! To freeze, assemble the casserole but do not bake it. Wrap it tightly in plastic wrap or foil, then place it in an airtight container. It will last in the freezer for up to three months. When ready to bake, thaw it overnight in the refrigerator and bake as directed.

See also [Swiss Mushroom Burger](#)

What other cheeses can be used?

While cheddar is delicious, other cheeses like mozzarella, Monterey Jack, or pepper jack cheese can also work well depending on your preferences.

How can I make this dish healthier?

To make the casserole healthier, use lean ground turkey, brown rice, and add more vegetables or even substitute some of the rice with quinoa for a protein boost.

Conclusion

Easy stuffed pepper casserole is the kind of meal that comes together quickly and delivers big on flavor. With its vibrant colors, hearty ingredients, and cheesy topping, it's sure to be a hit with your family and friends. This dish is not only flexible in terms of ingredients but also provides a delicious way to enjoy the beloved stuffed pepper flavors without all the fuss of stuffing individual peppers.

Whether you whip it up for a family dinner or a cozy gathering, your loved ones will surely gather around the table for seconds.

More recipes suggestions and combinations

Italian Sausage and Vegetable Bake

A savory combination of Italian sausage, colorful veggies, and pasta baked in a rich marinara sauce with a cheesy topping.

Chicken Alfredo Pasta Bake

A creamy chicken Alfredo pasta dish baked to perfection with cheese and breadcrumbs for a crunchy topping.

Vegetable Enchilada Casserole

Layers of corn tortillas filled with beans, cheese, and vegetables, smothered in enchilada sauce and baked until bubbly.

One-Pan Cheesy Chicken and Rice

A comforting dish that combines seasoned chicken thighs with rice and cheese, all cooked in one pan for minimal cleanup.

Each of these recipes offers a satisfying meal that can be adapted to fit your family's tastes, showcasing how easy it can be to prepare delicious home-cooked dishes. Enjoy your culinary adventures!