



Demonstration Guide

BEEFY STUFFED PEPPERS

Bell Peppers

Whenever you say “peppers” people usually immediately identify “hot” and “spicy” but that is not the case when you think about bell peppers. Bell peppers are the friendly pepper that provide flavor without the added heat. Bell peppers are great to work with because of their versatility. They can be eaten raw, stuffed, roasted, stewed or pickled. They have an easy ability to be mixed and prepared with almost any type of food whether it is pasta, fish, poultry, beef, rice or other vegetables.

Peppers come in all types of varieties, ranging from sweet to hot and spicy. They were first grown in Central and South American over 2,000 years ago. Christopher Columbus brought peppers to Europe and they were quickly adopted and cultivated after his voyage to the New World. Portuguese traders then took peppers to India and Southeast Asia. The rest is history when it comes to their spread and popularity.

The most common variety grown and used in dishes in Kentucky is the bell pepper. They are also known as green peppers and are the most common sweet pepper. Their versatility makes them easy to prepare for tasty family meals, but the biggest challenge usually is to use the summer’s bounty of endless pepper supply.

Bell peppers are high in vitamin C and they are a good source of vitamin A and beta-carotene. Bell peppers are fat free, cholesterol free, sodium free, and a source of potassium, folic acid and fiber, which makes them a perfect addition to any family meal. A 1 cup serving of raw bell peppers contains only 40 calories.

Choose firm bell peppers with deep color, glossy skin and a fresh green stem. Avoid peppers with thin, flimsy walls; wilted, cut or torn sides; and soft watery spots. Bell peppers are best stored unwashed in the refrigerator in plastic bags until ready to use. They can hold two to three weeks, if harvested fresh.

Beef

Beef is a natural nutrient-rich source of ten essential nutrients. Beef is America’s No. 1 food source for protein, an essential nutrient for the human body. Protein helps build, maintain and repair body tissues, form hormones and increase resistance to infection and disease.

There are 29 cuts of lean beef. A lean cut of beef contains less than 10 grams of total fat, 4.5 grams or less of saturated fat and less than 95 milligrams of cholesterol per 3.5 ounce serving.

A 3-ounce serving of 95 percent lean ground beef has around 140 calories and 5 grams of total fat. Lean ground beef might cost slightly more than higher fat content ground beef, but consumers get more protein per ounce once the meat is prepared for consumption.

Beef has been available in America for about 1,500 years. Kentucky is the largest producer of beef cattle, east of the Mississippi River, and ranks 8th nationally in beef cattle production. Cattle are produced in every county in the state and represent a multi-billion dollar industry in Kentucky.

Beef and bell peppers are a great combination and a wonderful addition to any family meal.

Presentation Plan

Grocery list:

- Bell peppers
- Whole-wheat couscous
- Tomato
- Garbanzo beans
- Italian seasoning
- Ground black pepper
- Salt
- Low-fat mozzarella cheese
- Green onions
- Garlic
- Lean ground beef

Equipment needs:

- Burner or portable electric range
- Oven
- Small saucepan with lid
- Stockpot
- Medium to large skillet
- Medium mixing bowl
- Paring knife
- Large spoon
- Measuring spoons
- Measuring cups
- Cutting board
- Can opener
- Several small to medium sized preparation bowls
- 9 x 9 inch baking dish

- Cooking spray
- Paper towels

Display preparation:

- Arrange vegetables for display in a basket or on a tray.
- This recipe has several steps that will be difficult to demonstrate in front of a group. Consider having one completed dish, fresh from the oven to show and serve, while preparing additional steps.
- Have plates and utensils available for sampling.
- Cover display table with a bright cloth or placements for two display areas — commodities and recipe ingredients and the finished product.
- The whole-wheat couscous and lean ground beef needs to be cooked in advance, prior to demonstration.
- Have green onions and tomatoes already chopped and on display in small, clear bowls. Have spices already measured, and in small, clear bowls.
- Be ready to show how to prepare green peppers for this recipe. A small electric range or gas burner will be necessary for this step to show how to cook peppers.
- Have “freezer safe” materials available to show how to freeze this recipe as a finished product. See publications, FCS3-3334 “Home Freezing Basics” and FN-SSB.095 “Make Ahead Meals”, for more details and information.
- Publications can be found at: <http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/fcs3/fcs3334/fcs3334.pdf> <http://www.ca.uky.edu/hes/fcs/factshts/FN-SSB.095.PDF>

Demonstration steps:

1. Discuss the two focus commodities and talking points: Bell Peppers and Lean Ground Beef.
2. Prepare recipe and emphasize how to prepare and blanch peppers.
3. Discuss the idea of cooking once and eating twice with make ahead meals. This recipe is great to double and freeze half for a later family meal.
4. Put finished product on the plate and discuss how stuffed peppers are a complete meal within a “cup”.
5. If time allows, demonstrate how to package a meal safely for freezer. The recipe can be frozen as a “complete meal” or just the filling only. Encourage participants to freeze bell peppers

from their garden or from the local farmers market. Purchasing in-season peppers is moneywise for the family food budget.

6. General directions for freezing bell peppers: When using peppers in future recipes, where

the peppers are cooked you can water blanch the pepper halves 3 minutes and strips or rings 2 minutes. After removing from the boiling water, cool in an ice water bath promptly. Leave a ½ inch headspace, seal and

freeze. However, blanching is not required for peppers. If using peppers in unheated, uncooked foods in the future, they will have a crisper texture if packaged raw, leaving no headspace, then seal and freeze.

Beefy Stuffed Peppers

1 cup uncooked, whole wheat couscous
1 small tomato, diced
½ cup garbanzo beans
1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon salt

½ cup low fat shredded mozzarella cheese
4 large bell peppers
½ pound lean ground beef
1 tablespoon chopped green onion
1 tablespoon minced garlic

Cook couscous according to package directions. **Preheat** oven to 350 degrees F. **Combine** cooked couscous, tomato, beans, Italian seasoning, pepper, salt and mozzarella cheese in large bowl; set aside. **Remove** the tops, seeds and membranes from peppers. **Cook** peppers in boiling water for 5 minutes; **drain** upside down on paper towels. **Cook** beef until lightly browned in skillet. **Add** minced garlic and green onions to beef and sauté until soft. **Drain** fat. **Toss** beef mixture into the couscous mixture. **Stuff** bell peppers evenly with mixture. **Place** in a lightly greased 9 x 9 inch baking dish. **Bake** for 15-20 minutes or until peppers are tender and cheese is melted.

Yield: 4 servings

Nutritional Analysis: 280 calories, 6 g fat, 2.5 g saturated fat, 35 mg cholesterol, 790 mg sodium, 36 g carbohydrate, 7 g fiber, 6 g sugar, 21 g protein

Sources:

- http://www.panen.org/sites/default/files/pepper_brochure_022207.pdf
- http://www.extension.org/mediawiki/files/c/c5/Bell_Pepper_green.pdf
- http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze/pepper_bell.html
- <http://www.beeftwhatsfordinner.com/beefhealth.aspx>
- Publication ID-128, Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture.
- Publication FCS3-558, Power-Up Your Vegetable Choices, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture.
- For more delicious recipes and information using "Kentucky Proud" fruits and vegetables, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service or visit: www.kentuckyproud.com.

June 2013

Plate It Up! Kentucky Proud Project

Lara C. Savage, Monroe County Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences

County Extension Agents for Family and Consumer Sciences

University of Kentucky, Dietetics and Human Nutrition students