

Black Bean, Mushroom, and Quinoa-Stuffed Peppers

MAKES 4 LARGE STUFFED PEPPERS

Again, this is a recipe inspired by my mom. She's been making stuffed peppers for years from a recipe off of a veggie crumbles package. She bugged me pretty much daily to put this recipe in the cookbook and I had to remind her, "Mom, no prepackaged foods, for the love of God!" One day she came over armed with the recipe and was determined to somehow force it into the cookbook. We came up with this recipe instead, and now everyone is happy.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium-size onion, finely chopped (about 1 cup)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups finely chopped mushrooms
- 1 tablespoon chile powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup quinoa
- 4 large red bell peppers
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 teaspoon pure maple syrup
- Fresh cilantro for garnish

In a saucepan over medium heat, sauté the onions in the olive oil for 3 to 5 minutes, until the onions are translucent. Add the garlic and mushrooms; sauté about 5 minutes, until the mushrooms have released their moisture. Stir in the chile powder and salt. Add the quinoa and 1 cup of the tomato sauce (reserve the rest) and the water, lower the heat and cover, and simmer for about 20 minutes, stirring once.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 350°F and prepare the peppers: Boil a pot of water. Cut the tops off the peppers and remove the seeds. Boil the peppers for 5 minutes and then drain them.

Combine the beans and maple syrup with the cooked quinoa mixture. Stuff each pepper with filling and stand them upright in a baking dish. Pour the remaining tomato sauce over the peppers and bake for 15 minutes. Remove from oven, garnish with cilantro, and serve.