

STUFFED BELL PEPPERS, FULLY



THE COOKFUL

Edited by Lyndsay Burginger and Christine Pittman

Stuffed Bell Peppers, Fully

Comfort food doesn't usually look super-impressive. It's not very colorful and it's sloppy, gloppy and stodgy. But our newest topic here on The Cookful? It's comfort food through and through but in full color. These babies stand up tall and glorious with no slop, glop or stodge in sight.

That's right, we're talking about Stuffed Bell Peppers, and are we ever going to talk about them! We've got gobs and gobs of stuffed pepper info for you. Truly everything you've ever wanted to know about stuffed peppers from ways to cut them, to keep them from falling over, how to speed up the cooking process plus more tips, how-to's and recipes. Yes, there will be recipes. Yes, you will love them. How could you not? They're stuffed peppers! Oh, stuffed peppers, how we love you. Let's dig in!



THE COOKFUL

Stuffed Bell Peppers, Fully

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Stuff Your Shopping Cart with Stuffed Pepper Tools

By Lyndsay Burginger

Do you like shopping? And do you like stuffed peppers? Good! You've come to the right place.

Just like peppers, I like to stuff my shopping cart with cute (often kitschy) kitchen items. Although stuffed peppers don't require special equipment, there are some tools that help. Plus that pepper-inspired spice rack is totally adorable!

Stuff it Pan: This pan is your stuffed-pepper's best friend. Its six compartments hold the stuffed peppers in place while they cook. No topsy-turvy peppers here!

Aluminum Foil: However, if buying a new pan isn't for you, tin foil is the perfect solution for topsy-turvy peppers. Make a little nest for each pepper and you're good to go.

Stuffed Pepper Tools

Continued from previous page

Pepper Corers: Core peppers in a snap with this yellow and green corer. Just pop, turn and voila! The peppers are ready to stuff.

Bell Pepper Save-a-Half: Save your leftovers with this pepper-shaped container.

Pepper Spice Rack: Add some peppery spice to your kitchen with this pepper-shaped spice rack.

Paring Knife: This paring knife is the perfect tool to de-stem and core bell peppers.

Bell Pepper-Colored Tongs: Use these colorful tongs (like those pictured earlier) to transfer the steaming peppers from the pan to the plate. We also really like these ones because they have a little prop that keeps the messy tips off of your counter.

Casserole Dish: Present your peppers beautifully with this 3-quart casserole dish.

Now let's get stuffing!



Buffalo Chicken Stuffed Peppers

By Christine Pittman

Wing sauce, chicken, ranch dressing, carrots and celery – but it’s not wing night. It’s stuffed pepper night! You are not going to believe how delicious these are. Or how easy they are to make.

Hot sauce and chicken go together like Fall and football. That’s probably why wings are such a tailgating favorite. However, their messy attributes (wet-naps anyone?) are less than desirable.

We’ve devised a recipe that allows you to have your chicken and keep your hands clean too. A bell pepper is the perfect edible bowl to contain the messy saucy chicken. The carrot and celery go right in the stuffing! How cool is that? Oh, and we added cheese. Because you can’t have a stuffed pepper without cheese.

A great thing about this recipe is that you don’t have to pre-cook the filling before stuffing. The pepper halves are shallow enough that the chicken in there cooks through in the time it takes the pepper to soften. Game day has never been so easy!

Buffalo Chicken Stuffed Peppers

Continued from previous page

Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

1 lb. raw chicken breast,
chopped into 1/2-inch
pieces
3 tsp. flour
1/2 tsp. salt
2 carrots, shredded
2 ribs celery, thinly sliced
1 cup grated cheddar cheese,
divided
3 Tbsp. buffalo wing sauce
2 Tbsp. ranch dressing
4 bell peppers, each cut in
half from stem to base,
seeds removed

1. Preheat oven to 400F.
2. In a medium bowl toss the chicken with the flour and salt. Add the carrots, celery, 1/2 cup of the cheese, the wing sauce and the ranch dressing.
3. Place the pepper halves on a large rimmed baking sheet. Divide the chicken mixture among the peppers. Top each pepper with 1 tablespoon of the remaining cheese.
4. Bake until chicken is cooked through and peppers have achieved desired softness, 30-40 minutes.

Classic Stuffed Peppers Like Momma Used to Make

By Christine Pittman

There are a bazzillion recipes for stuffed peppers out there, every variation imaginable. But sometimes you just want the mom-style comfort of the classic. Here it is. Beef, rice, tomato sauce, cheese, good.

OK, so I'll just tell you straight out that I was never a fan of traditional stuffed peppers. I liked how they tasted. Sure. But they're a pain in the ass to make.

You have to cook rice, cook beef, mix it together. Then hollow out the peppers, put it all in there and then wait for, like, ever until the peppers are cooked and softened and everything is heated through. Instead of all that, I developed a quicker way to make peppers (basically, I cut them in half rather than keeping them whole and then make a filling out of raw meat, seasonings and cheese. The meat cooks through no problem in the shallow pepper boat. Find out more about that method on page 25).



But if you're craving classic stuffed peppers, then you need to do it the long way. There are a few short cuts though.

1. Use leftover rice. Or even buy pre-cooked rice. It's not delicious by itself but mixed into the pepper stuffing, you won't know the difference.
2. Get out a big skillet for cooking the beef. The meat will have more space so it will cook more quickly. It will also brown better, rather than steaming.
3. Pre-boil the peppers. It sounds like a pain. And it kind of is. But it cuts the baking time of the stuffed peppers down by a good 20 minutes. That's a big deal any night.

Classic Stuffed Peppers

Continued from previous page

Yield: 6 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Total Time: 50 minutes

Ingredients:

1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
1 lb. lean ground beef
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. coarse black pepper
2 clove garlic, minced
6 large bell peppers
2 and 1/2 cups tomato sauce,
divided
2 cups cooked rice
2 cups shredded mozzarella
cheese

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a large skillet heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally until softened, 2-3 minutes. Add the beef, salt, pepper and garlic. Cook stirring occasionally until beef is cooked through, 6-7 minutes. Drain the fat and discard. Stir in cooked rice and 2 cups of the tomato sauce.
3. Cut a thin slice from stem end of each pepper to remove the top. Remove seeds and membrane. If your pepper is wobbly, cut a thin slice from the bottom so it stands erect.
4. (Optional Step) In 4 qt. Dutch oven, place peppers and fill with water (to avoid floating). Fill the pot with water and bring to a boil on high. Bring temperature down to medium-low and let simmer 3 minutes. Remove from pot and place in ice bath. Drain.
5. Stuff Peppers with beef mixture and place in a 9x13" baking dish.
6. If you pre-cooked your peppers: Bake 25 minutes. If you did not pre-cook your peppers: Bake 40-45 minutes. To test if peppers are ready: Stick with toothpick near the top of the pepper. If it slides through the skin easily, then you're good to go. After the baking time is complete, add remaining 1 tablespoon of tomato sauce on each pepper. Sprinkle with shredded mozzarella. Bake for 5 minutes longer, until peppers are tender and cheese is melted.

Two Ways To Cut a Pepper for Stuffing

By Christine Pittman

Did you know that there are two different ways to cut a pepper before stuffing it? And how you do it may tell you something about yourself.

There are two kinds of people. Traditionalists and...umm...nontraditionalists. I'm betting we can figure out which kind you are by how you prep your bell peppers for stuffing.

Do you keep them whole, with just the top and stem removed? You traditionalist, you.

Do you halve the peppers and leave the stem on for a cool presentation? Oh, aren't you modern.

Whichever you prefer, we want to urge you to shake yourself free and give the other a try. You never know, you might learn something new about yourself. To help with this self-exploration, we're giving you the how-to guide for both prepping methods. Read on to find out how to cut peppers to stuff them the traditional way and an untraditional way.



Two Ways To Cut a Pepper for Stuffing

Continued from previous page

Traditional: Whole Peppers

The most traditional way to prep a pepper (like the kind your mom used to make) is to keep the pepper mostly whole. All you're going to do is cut off the top, really.



Step #1: Lay the pepper on its side. In a fluid motion, cut the top stem section of the pepper off. Add whooshing sound effects for added entertainment.



Step#2: Use a paring knife to remove the remaining pith and seeds.



Step #3: Go in with the paring knife to dislodge any excess pith or seeds. You can turn the pepper over to shake some of the loose seeds out.

Two Ways To Cut a Pepper for Stuffing

Continued from previous page

The Modern Way: Halved Stuffed Peppers

The traditional whole peppers have a large cavity to fill, which means that it takes a long time for the filling to heat through. These days, few of us have time for that. Thus, the modern pepper cut! These Buffalo Chicken Stuffed Peppers from page 6 use halved peppers. The amazing thing about them is that you don't even have to pre-cook the filling. The cavity of the pepper is shallow enough that you can put in raw chicken and it will cook through in time.



Step #1: Sit your pepper on the cutting board stem side up. Cut the pepper in half vertically right through the middle of the stem and the bottom of the pepper.

At this point you can either choose to keep the stems intact, or remove them from the peppers. By leaving the stems intact, it creates a small bowl which is easily filled to the



top. And, the stem makes a nice presentation. If you instead decide to cut off the stem, you benefit by being able to eat the entire pepper.

Step #2: Use a pairing knife to cut away all of the pith and seeds.

They All Fall Down: Topsy Turvy Peppers and How to Fix Them

By Lyndsay Burginger

“Help! I made stuffed peppers but they fell over while cooking. Now dinner’s wrecked and my oven’s a mess. What should I do?”

Well, there’s nothing we can do to help you AFTER your peppers have fallen over. Our only advice: Clean the oven while you wait for the pizza delivery guy to arrive ;)

But if you’d asked us BEFORE you made your peppers, we’d have had you covered. Here’s how to stop your peppers from falling over.

There are two things you can do. Try cutting a small flat piece off of the bottom of the pepper so that it has a more even bottom. Don’t cut all the way through the pepper when doing so or any liquid from the stuffing will leak out onto the pan making a mess.

The other thing you can do for topsy turvy pepper is to make a nest for them using aluminum foil.

Take a 12” square of foil and form it into a bowl shape by crumpling the edges towards the center. Make the scoop of the bowl the size of your pepper. Set each pepper in its own nest.

Put the peppers inside of their nests into a baking dish.

Or, if you make stuffed peppers all the time and you’re a gadget gal, you can buy this [special Stuffed Veggie Baking Pan](#). It’s sole design purpose is to hold your peppers up. Cool, right? OK, we’ll let you get back to your oven-cleaning and pizza-eating now. Have a good night!



Stuffed Peppers Through Time and Space

By Lyndsay Burginger

Stuffed peppers didn't originate with our moms. They go way back. Find out when the trend started and get stuffed pepper ideas from around the world.

In America, the classic Stuffed Pepper consists of a bell pepper (usually green for its added bitterness), ground beef, tomatoes, rice and a sprinkle of cheese. You know the ones. I bet your mom used to make them.

So, who started stuffing peppers in the first place? Before your mom, that is.

According to [Kitchen Project](#), there are records of Classic Stuffed Peppers in cookbooks dating from the 1890's. The Boston Cooking School Cook Book (say that three times fast) boasts two variations of the dish, including one seasoned with onion juice. Yes. Onion juice. ?!?

Stuffed Peppers probably go further back than the 1890s though. Many cuisines around the world have a traditional stuffed pepper that's been passed down for generations. Here are a few to check out:

Spain: [Pimientos Rellenos de Arroz con Salsa de Tomates](#) — Bell pepper stuffed with Valencia or arborio rice and saffron, then cooked in a tomato sauce

India: [Bharawn Shimla Mirch](#) — Bell pepper stuffed with spiced mashed potatoes

Tunisia: [Fil Fil Mashsi](#) — Bell pepper stuffed with lamb, rice, and sprinkled with nutmeg, saffron and cardamom

Mexico: [Chile Rellenos](#) — Poblano pepper stuffed with carnitas meat, kielbasa and topped with cheddar cheese



History of stuffed peppers

Continued from previous page

Denmark: [Fyldte Peberfrugter](#) — Bell pepper stuffed with bulgur, mushrooms and kale

Hungary: [Toltott Paprika](#) — Bell pepper stuffed with ground meat, rice and paprika. Served with sour cream

United States: [Classic Stuffed Peppers](#) — Bell pepper stuffed with ground beef, rice and tomato sauce

Romania: [Ardei Umpluti](#) — Bell peppers stuffed with pork and rice and served in a creamy sour cream sauce

Korea: [Gochu Jeon](#) — Chili peppers stuffed with tofu

Philippines: [Pandak na tao pinalamanan peppers](#) — Bell peppers stuffed with shrimp, pork and water chestnuts

[Tweet “I’m traveling the world — stuffed pepper style. “]

While we’re talking history, have you ever wondered how bell peppers got their name? While Columbus was sailing the ocean blue he came across a kind of pepper that he’d never seen before. He took them back with him noting their bell-shape and the name stuck.

How to Bake Stuffed Peppers Like a Pro

By Lyndsay Burginger

So you're a rocket scientist? That doesn't impress as much as stuffed pepper cooking skills.

While you can slow-cook or even grill stuffed peppers, we've found that baking them the old-fashioned way is the way to go.

There are two types of fillings (cooked and uncooked) and two ways to cut your peppers (whole and halved). Which equals four different filling-to-pepper combinations. Yay math!

All four combinations require different oven temperatures and times. So pick out a recipe and scroll down to find how to cook your perfect stuffed pepper.



FOR FULLY COOKED FILLINGS IN WHOLE PEPPERS

450F for 20-25 minutes or 350F for 45 minutes

This is the most traditional style of stuffed pepper. You remove the top of the pepper and then fill it with a fully cooked filling. Stuffed whole bell peppers are a two-step process; cooking the filling then cooking the peppers stuffed with the filling. Once the filling is cooked and stuffed, the only step left is to slide them into the oven. You can bake them at 450F for 25-30 minutes, depending on the size of your pepper or if you prefer your pepper on the softer side, try dropping your oven down to 350F and bake for 45 minutes. Alternatively, you can pre-cook the peppers for a few minutes in boiling water to speed things up.

How to Bake Stuffed Peppers

Continued from previous page

FOR FULLY COOKED FILLINGS IN HALVED PEPPERS:

450F for 20 minutes or 350F for 35-40 minutes

A quicker-cooking alternative is to cut the peppers in half to stuff them. These have less filling and therefore take less time to heat through. We found that the perfect temperature for baking these peppers is fast, hot heat. We recommend 450F for 20 minutes. It cooks the pepper while leaving an al dente feel. If you have added oiled bread crumbs on top of your pepper, they will benefit from this high heat, adding a nice brownness to the tops. The stuffing will be fully heated as well with this method. However if you prefer your peppers softer, try baking them at 350F for 35-40 minutes.

FOR UNCOOKED FILLINGS IN WHOLE PEPPERS:

350F for 1 hour

It is possible to stuff peppers with a raw filling. If you're stuffing a whole pepper, it takes awhile to cook because the filling needs to reach a safe temperature. Out of all the stuffed peppers, this one takes the longest to cook because of its size. To avoid drying out the stuffing, bring the temperature down to 350°F for an hour. Use an instant read thermometer for all meat products (160°F for a stuffing containing ground beef and 165°F for a stuffing containing ground chicken, ground turkey or pieces of chicken).

This is our least favorite way to do stuffed peppers though. The filling isn't usually at its best and nor is the pepper. Note, do not put uncooked carbs (pasta or rice) in this pepper. It will not cook because it would require more water than the pepper could possibly contain. You've gotta stick with meats and vegetables here.

FOR UNCOOKED FILLINGS IN HALVED PEPPERS:

400F for 20 minutes or 350F for 35-40 minutes

If you want to go with an uncooked filling (so easy! Just mix and stuff) your best bet is the halved pepper. Make sure that any meat stuffing is either ground or cut up small to ensure even cooking. Also, don't pack the filling in there. You want a nice loose amount of stuffing that just comes to the top of the pepper, not overflowing.

Cook them quickly at 400F for 20 minutes, although you should always test your meat with an instant read thermometer (160°F for a stuffing containing ground beef and 165°F for a stuffing containing ground chicken, ground turkey or pieces of chicken). For softer peppers you can bake at 350F for 35-40 minutes.



Lickety Split Chicken and Cheese Stuffed Peppers

By Christine Pittman

It's crazy how quickly these stuffed peppers come together. you'll have them in the oven within minutes. While they cook, you won't even have time for an episode of Veep. In fact, we bet you'll be finished eating before the show is over.

These stuffed peppers are quick to make because the filling isn't cooked before the peppers are stuffed. You mix up the raw chicken and the cheese, scoop it into bell pepper halves and then bake. The filling will cook through in the time it takes the peppers to soften.

Bonus! These peppers are stable and not sloppy so you can eat them with your hands. They work as party food just as well as they do for a quick weeknight dinner.

Chicken and Cheese Stuffed Peppers

Continued from previous page

Yield: Serves 4

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 22 minutes

Total Time: 32 minutes

Ingredients:

1/3 cup panko bread crumbs

1/4 tsp. garlic powder

salt

black pepper

olive oil

1 cup shredded cheddar
cheese, divided

3/4 lb chicken breast cutlets,
roughly chopped

1 Tbsp. chopped fresh thyme
leaves (1 tsp. dried leaves)

2 tsp. all-purpose white flour

4 red bell peppers, halved
from stem to base and de-
seeded

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. In a small bowl combine the panko, garlic powder, 1/8 teaspoon of salt, 1/8 teaspoon of black pepper, 1 teaspoon of olive oil and 1/3 cup of the shredded cheese. Use your fingers to rub the crumbs and cheese together until the bits of cheese are about the size of the larger crumbs. Set aside.
3. In a second bowl combine the chicken, thyme, 1/4 teaspoon of salt the remaining 2/3 cup cheese and the flour.
4. Brush the outsides of the peppers lightly with olive oil (about 1 tablespoon will be enough for them all) and sprinkle lightly with salt. Arrange them on a baking sheet cup-side-up. Fill each half of pepper with approximately 1/4 cup of the chicken filling and then top each with about 1 tablespoon of the crumbs.
5. Bake until the chicken is cooked through and the crumbs on top are golden brown, 22-25 minutes.

Who Pre-Cooks Their Peppers? Hands Up!

By Christine Pittman

Do you do it? Do you pre-boil your peppers before stuffing them? If not, we bet you will next time!

There are hundreds of different ways to make Stuffed Peppers. Creating different fillings, slicing the pepper in half or leaving it whole, and the most debated, to pre-cook or to not pre-cook. To blanch or not to blanch.

Note first off that pre-cooking is not the same as blanching. To blanch you get the water boiling first. Then add your veg. It goes in for a short short time and then is transferred to an ice bath to stop the cooking process. Blanching helps vegetables retain a nice bright color but it doesn't really cook the vegetable.

You can absolutely blanch your bell peppers before stuffing them. It would result in a nicer color for the finished product but it wouldn't help you in terms of cooking time or any other thing a busy person might need. We don't blanch our peppers but we won't make a big deal about it if you do. We just don't know why you'd bother.

Pre-cooking, on the other hand. That's where it's at!

Pre-cooking is different. Pre-cooking is the idea of quick-starting the cooking process of your stuffed pepper. Since stuffed peppers can take as long as 45 minutes to bake, shortening that down with a quick boil really helps a girl out.

How to do it? Cut the tops off of your peppers and get them ready for stuffing. Then follow the instructions below.



Pre-cooked Peppers

Continued from previous page

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 3 minutes

Total Time: 13 minutes

Ingredients:

Peppers, either halved or whole and hallowed

Tools:

Large Pot

Pot Cover

Slotted Spoon

Large Bowl filled with Ice Water

1. In large pot, fill peppers with water (to prevent floating), and fill pot around peppers with water until peppers are fully covered.
2. Cover pot and bring to a rolling boil on high heat. Bring the temperature down to medium-low and let peppers hard simmer for three minutes, or until tender.
3. Using slotted spoon, transfer peppers to ice water to cool.
4. Spoon peppers out of water and shake off excess. Place in baking dish and stuff.
5. Proceed with recipe, cooking for 25-30 minutes.



Macaroni and Cheese Stuffed Peppers (Just Because We Can)

By Christine Pittman

Stuffed peppers are soooo versatile. Fill ‘em up with leftovers, like Mac n’ Cheese. We double-doggy-dare you not to smile.

I love mac ‘n cheese and I love stuffed peppers. This was a no-brainer. The cool thing about this recipe is that the filling is precooked.

Precooking a filling before stuffing a pepper is great because you never have to worry about whether the filling is still raw. All you’re doing is letting it heat right through to the middle while the pepper cooks.

You can use leftover mac ‘n cheese for this recipe or use your favorite version or use what we’ve jotted down below. Whatever you do, make sure the mac is really really creamy. The noodles will be sucking up moisture as they heat up in the oven. If the sauce isn’t liquidy

Mac and Cheese Stuffed Peppers

Continued from previous page

enough you'll end up with really dry macaroni in the middle.

Tip: If you're using leftover macaroni and cheese and the noodles have already sucked up lots of sauce and are looking dry, liven them up with a splash of warm milk.

Yield: 6 servings

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

1 lb. elbow macaroni noodles
6 bell peppers
8 oz. cream cheese (1/3 fat
cream cheese works fine in
here)
8 oz. cheddar cheese,
shredded
2 cups milk
1 tsp. dijon mustard
1/2 tsp. salt
a pinch of cayenne pepper
(optional)
6 tsp. panko bread crumbs
baking spray

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. Cook the macaroni according to package directions. While it cooks, prep the peppers either by cutting them in half front stem through to bottom and then deseeding or by cutting off the stem end of the pepper and deseeding. Arrange peppers cut-side-up on a large rimmed baking sheet.
3. Make the macaroni and cheese sauce by measuring the cream cheese, cheddar cheese and milk into a microwave-safe bowl. Cook in the microwave 1 minute at a time for 3-5 minutes, stirring after each interval until sauce is fairly smooth with no big cream cheese chunks. Whisk in the mustard, salt and cayenne.
4. Drain the macaroni noodles well and then combine them with the sauce. Let sauce sit on noodles for 5-10 minutes. Stir well and then fill peppers with macaroni and cheese.
5. Top each pepper with some of the panko crumbs and then spray tops lightly with baking spray. Bake until breadcrumbs are browned and peppers are desired tenderness, 20-25 minutes.*

**If you like your peppers very soft, bake them for 40 minutes at 350°F instead of 20-25 minutes at 450°F*



Cooked Fillings for Stuffed Peppers

By Lyndsay Burginger

How do you get out of your stuffed pepper rut? We've got the answer. Hint: It may involve queso or maybe even leftover pizza.

The most standard way to make stuffed peppers is to prepare and cook a filling before stuffing it into the peppers. This is traditionally a combination of cooked meat, cooked rice, tomato sauce, spices and a sprinkle of shredded cheese. They are seriously good but who says you have to stick with tradition? There are tons of other pre-cooked fillings to try.

For example, the Macaroni and Cheese Stuffed Pepper on the previous page uses a quickly-cooked mac & cheese filling made with a two-cheese sauce. A spattering of panko (Japanese bread crumbs) gets brown and toasty on top while the peppers cook.

Cooked Fillings for Stuffed Peppers

Continued from previous page

Here are a few more that look pretty sweet:

- [Southwestern Stuffed Peppers](#)
- [Turkey & Arugula Stuffed Peppers](#)
- [Vegetarian Quinoa Stuffed Peppers](#)
- [Couscous & Feta Stuffed Peppers](#)
- [Tuna & Avocado Stuffed Peppers](#)

If you're short on time, leftovers are a great place to look for pre-cooked filling inspiration. All you need to do is stuff your leftovers into some peppers and heat them through. Voilà! A whole new dinner!

Here are some leftovers for some serious pepper perfection:

- Leftover Chili
- Leftover Turkey and Stuffing
- Leftover Rice and Black Beans
- Leftover Taco Toppings (ground beef, beans, cheese and tomatoes. Top it with warm queso before serving like in the picture on previous page)
- Leftover Roasted Chicken, Broccoli and Quinoa (I'd add some cheese in there!)
- Leftover Flank Steak with Bell Peppers and Provolone Cheese (Philly cheesesteaks anyone?)
- Leftover Risotto
- Leftover Spaghetti and Meatballs
- Leftover Pizza

Leftover pizza? Say what? I'm not even kidding. Chop it up, mix it with tomato sauce and stuff it in. It's crazy good.

Really, any dinner leftovers will work. In fact, I've got some leftover meatloaf, mashed potatoes and mushroom gravy in the fridge. And a bell pepper or two. So what if it's 9:37 am? Game on. Now.



How To Cook Fillings Inside of a Pepper

By Lyndsay Burginger

Yes, you can absolutely put raw fillings into peppers and bake them. You just need a bit of know-how. Don't worry, we'll fill you in.

If you don't want to cook up a filling, which can be oh-so time consuming, you can still make stuffed peppers. In fact, stuffed peppers can be a super-quick weeknight meal depending on [how you cut your pepper](#). Halved Peppers are faster to cook — plus they look like little boats. I love that!

If you're using an uncooked filling there are a few things you need to know:

1. As mentioned, your best bet is halved peppers rather than whole peppers. The reason is that they're shallower and thus contain less filling, which will heat and cook through more quickly.

How To Cook Fillings Inside of a Pepper

Continued from previous page

2. When dealing with a raw filling, especially if it contains meat, don't pack things in too tightly. You need the heat to circulate in there to make sure everything cooks evenly.
3. Make use of an instant-read thermometer. This is critical if you put raw meat or eggs in there. Make sure that a filling with chicken is at 165°F and those with ground meats are at 160°F. Technically, chunks of beef, lamb, veal and pork could be safe at as low as 145°F but given that they're inside a pepper with other ingredients all touching each other, we still recommend that you bring the filling up to 160°F. A filling containing egg also needs to reach 160°F in the center.
4. It's difficult (read: impossible) to add uncooked carbohydrates to a stuffed pepper. Uncooked rice or pasta will not cook properly because of the lack of liquid inside the peppers. Raw pasta/rice? Blech. Adding the amount of liquid you would need to cook the carbohydrate properly would make the peppers waterlogged. If you want to include a carb, cook it first and then add it to your raw ingredients or use a fully-cooked filling. [Here](#) are some great ideas for cooked fillings for stuffed peppers.

Raw or uncooked fillings are quick to make and use less dishes than their cooked filling counterparts. Here are some uncooked fillings to try for your next stuffed pepper supper:

- [Kale and Bacon Breakfast Stuffed Peppers](#) (pictured above)
- [Chicken and Cheddar Stuffed Peppers](#)
- [Buffalo Chicken Stuffed Peppers](#)
- [Salad Stuffed Pepper Bowls with Creamy Avocado Dressing](#)
- [Meatloaf in a Bell Pepper](#)
- [Cajun Stuffed Peppers](#)
- [Healthy Stuffed Peppers With Ham And Cheese](#)
- [Cheese Stuffed Peppers](#)

101 Trendy Stuffed Pepper Recipes

By Lyndsay Burginger

Although the traditional filling for stuffed bell peppers is ground beef and rice, creative fillings for bell peppers are in style. From Cordon Bleu Stuffed Peppers to pizza and taco fillings galore, these 101 Stuffed Peppers have all your favorite trends covered.

Beefy Bells

1. [Stuffed Bell Peppers with Picadillo](#)
2. [Jack 'o Lantern Stuffed Bell Peppers](#)
3. [Taco Stuffed Peppers](#)
4. [Mini Taco Stuffed Peppers](#)
5. [Light Crock Pot Taco Stuffed Peppers](#)
6. [Mini Italian Meatball Mac & Cheese Stuffed Peppers](#)
7. [Meatloaf Stuffed Peppers from](#)
8. [Classic Stuffed Peppers](#)
9. [Sloppy Joe Stuffed Peppers](#)

Peppers That Do Brunch

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50. [Bacalao-Stuffed Peppers with Tapenade Dressing](#)

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Contributors

Many thanks to our writers for this edition of The Cookful.



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It's always entertaining when Lyndsay's in the kitchen. She's even been known to belt out Broadway show tunes while making dinner (a handy whisk as her microphone, of course). She currently writes for Cook and a Good Book, a personal blog focusing on recipes based on literature. Lyndsay is also on the editorial team at The Cookful.



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Christine is the Founder and Senior Editor of The Cookful. She also blogs at COOKtheSTORY where she specializes in easy healthy homemade recipes. Healthiness aside, she has been known to shred cheese onto a dinner plate, microwave it for 30 seconds, and then eat the messy goop with a spoon.

About The Cookful

Do you love to geek-out over food and cooking? Then The Cookful is where you need to be.

We cook and write about one topic at a time, diving in deep to help you cook (and eat!) better than ever. Each topic comes with How-To's, innovative recipes, and a bunch of interesting tidbits so that you can learn all about it. Some topics we've covered are Margaritas, Quick Soups and Popcorn. Head over to [The Cookful](#) to find out what our next topic is and then get ready to go off the deep end with us.



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