



Ukrainian Stuffed Peppers



Ingredients for the stuffed peppers:

- 1 cup uncooked rice
- 1 pound and 6 oz. 85% ground beef
- 1 medium carrot (grated with a big hole grater)
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 big garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 5 medium size bell peppers (color doesn't matter)

Ingredients for the Zagarka (tomato sauce):

- 1 ½ tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, quartered and sliced
- 1 large carrot (grated on the grated on a big hole grater)
- 1 medium garlic clove, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons good quality tomato paste
- 3 tablespoons sour cream
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 cups chicken, beef or vegetable stock or plain water

Method for the Zagarka (tomato sauce):

1. Heat a large oven-safe pot (preferable Dutch oven) over medium-high heat, and add oil.
2. Add onions, salt, and pepper. Fry for 3 minutes, then add carrots and fry for additional 3 minutes.
3. Add garlic and stir for one one minutes, and then add tomato paste, mix well with the rest of ingredients and caramelize it slightly, about 3 minutes.
4. Reduce heat to medium. Add a little of the chicken stock, so everything comes together.
5. Then add sour cream. Mix everything. Taste and adjust seasoning. Add the rest of the chicken stock. Bring to boil. Taste and adjust seasoning. Remove from heat.

Method for the stuffed peppers:

1. Preheat oven to 360 F.
2. Wash the rice very well.



3. In a medium pot bring the rice to a boil and cook for 3-5 minutes (depending on your rice variety) until al dente. Strain and let it cool completely.
 4. In a large bowl, combine ground beef, carrot, onion, garlic, parsley, salt, and pepper. Add chilled rice and mix everything with the spoon. All ingredients must distribute well but do not over mix it. Otherwise, the mixture will be stiff.
 5. Remove the top and insides of pepper. Wash them well.
 6. Stuff peppers with the mixture. Place peppers vertically in the pot with the sauce. Cover the pot with the lid or foil tightly, so the steam does not escape.
 7. Bake for 1 hour. Baking time depends on the size of your peppers. It may require less or more time. To check for doneness cut the peppers slightly to make sure the beef is cooked.
 8. Remove from oven and serve with plenty of sauce, sour cream, and freshly chopped parsley.
- It is very important to find the same size peppers so that they will cook evenly.
 - The liquid you add to Zagarka can be chicken, beef, or vegetable stock. Even plain water works.
 - Baking time varies on the peppers' size. The bigger size, the more time it needs, the smaller-lesser time.
 - Traditional Ukrainian stuffed peppers are made with half ground beef and half ground pork. For a healthier alternative, I made it with ground beef.
 - You may substitute ground beef for ground chicken or turkey for the even healthier option. My mom and I made all the variations, and all of them are equally Experiment and find your favorite stuffed peppers recipe.
 - Sour cream is necessary here. First, because it is an inalienable part of Ukrainian cuisine. Second, because it is too darn good with these peppers to pass.
 - Do not over mix the stuffing. Preferably, use a spoon. Otherwise, you will end up with the stiff filling.
 - You can use any rice in this recipe. However, the healthier rice is, the tougher and drier your filling will be. Also, if your rice is transparent, boil it only for couple of minutes. This type of rice tends to cook super quickly. You need al dente rice for this recipe.
 - The color of the peppers does not matter. However, I like festive colors and usually buy red, yellow, and orange.
 - These Ukrainian all Beef Stuffed Peppers Recipe is freezer friendly.
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