

PEELING SWEET PEPPERS: Lay the peppers in a broiler pan, and broil until their skins blister (2-3 minutes). With a tong or long fork, slightly rotate them and continue turning until the peppers are completely charred, then pop them into a paper bag. Close the bag and let the peppers sit in it for 15-20 minutes: the charred skin steams loose from the flesh. Then, holding each pepper over a bowl, slit down one side, open it up, and discard the seeds, ribs and stem. Cut the pepper into 2-3 pieces, and peel off the loosened skin with a paring knife. The bowl collects the pepper juices, which can be used to store the peeled peppers up to 2 days, if you wish. Or, drain the skinned and seeded peppers on a rack. If you have a gas stove, you could also char the peppers over the flame, or you can use an open grill.

Andy's Gypsy Pepper Note: **The Gypsy pepper** (photo above) is a sweet pepper, not unlike a small Bell pepper. Gypsies are yellow at first, gradually turning orange, then red, and they're never spicy. I like to take Gypsies and slice them very thin into slivers and cook them alone or with onions. When they're red they roast well over coals, but when they're yellow I have more success cooking them in a skillet. As they cook, the Gypsies caramelize, and they go well with tacos, eggs, fajitas, potatoes, rice, or beans. Later in the year we will have Gypsies that are multicolored, and then they're a feast for the eyes even before dinner is made.

NUTRITION NOTES (from *The Wellness Encyclopedia of Food and Nutrition*, Sheldon Margen, M.D.): Perhaps the most surprising feature of peppers is their nutritiousness: They are excellent sources of many essential nutrients, especially vitamin C - by weight, green bell peppers have twice as much as citrus fruits (red bells have three times as much.) Hot peppers contain even more vitamin C, 357 percent more than an orange. Moreover, red peppers are quite a good source of beta carotene. Red peppers are higher in beta carotene than green peppers: A sweet red pepper provides nearly 11 times as much beta carotene as a sweet green one; hot red peppers contain nearly 14 times as much as their green counterparts. Furthermore, sweet red peppers have one and a half times as much Vitamin C as sweet green peppers; the vitamin C content of red and green hot peppers is the same.

Sweet Pepper and Lentil Soup

inspired by a recipe in *Not Your Mother's Slow Cooker Cookbook* by Hensperger and Kaufmann

2 Tablespoons olive oil

1 onion, or 2 leeks, chopped

3-5 cloves of garlic, chopped

1 teaspoon freshly purchased paprika or smoked paprika

1-3 sweet peppers, depending on their size, seeded and finely chopped

1 cup dried brown or black lentils, picked over and rinsed

5 cups broth or water

S & P to taste (at least an entire teaspoon of salt for this one)

1-2 Tablespoons champagne or sherry or rice vinegar to finish the soup

Cook the onion in 1 Tablespoon oil over medium heat in a skillet until the onion/leeks begin to soften. Stir in paprika and allow it to cook for about a minute more.

Add the chopped sweet pepper and cook for another 2-3 minutes, until everything begins to soften. Scrape all this into a slow cooker. Add the lentils and broth (or

water) and stir to combine. Cover and cook on low until the lentils are completely soft, 7-9 hours.

Season the soup with S & P (more salt if you used water, less if you used purchased broth), and last Tablespoon olive oil. Stir in 1 Tablespoon of one of the vinegars,

adding more if needed. Serve hot.

Romesco Sauce for Crostini, Pasta, or as a vegetable dipper

4 large roasted yellow, orange, and or red peppers

1/2 cup toasted almonds

2 cloves garlic

1 ripe tomato

1 tsp salt

2 thick slices from a baguette

1 tsp paprika

1/2 cup or less olive oil

Fresh basil leaves if available

2-4 Tablespoons sherry vinegar

Whirl everything in a food processor.

Multi Pepper Salad with Fontina

adapted from *From the Cook's Garden* by Ellen Ogden

1.5 pounds Sweet peppers, roasted and cut into 1/4 inch strips

12 black olives, such as kalamata, pitted and coarsely chopped

6 ounces Fontina cheese, cut into 1/2 inch cubes (about 1.5 cups)

2 Tablespoons heavy cream

1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon dijon mustard
1 teaspoon finely chopped cutting celery OR tarragon OR parsley
1/4 cup best extra virgin olive oil
S & P to taste

Combine the peppers, olives, and cheese. Mix the cream, lemon juice, mustard, and herb in a small bowl. Gradually whisk in the oil. Season with the S & P. Pour over the peppers and mix. Serve immediately.

pinch of cayenne pepper

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the beets and onions and cook, stirring often, until the onions soften, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 1-2 minutes. Add the wine and bring to a boil over high heat. Cook until the wine is reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Add the apple juice, spices, and return to the boil. Reduce heat to medium low and cover. Cook until the beets are tender, about 45 minutes. Remove the cinnamon stick and bay leaf. Stir in the sourcream or yogurt.

Transfer to a bowl and cool. Cover and refrigerate until chilled, at least 2 hours.

Meanwhile make the pistachio mousse. Process all of the ingredients in a blender or food processor until smooth. Transfer to bowl, cover, and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Serve the soup cold, seasoning with the salt and pepper and garnishing each bowl with a spoonful of the mousse.

ROASTED PEPPERS STUFFED WITH CHERRY TOMATOES, ONION, AND BASIL

4 red & yellow bell peppers
1 pint cherry tomatoes
1 medium onion
1 cup packed fresh basil leaves
3 garlic cloves
about 3 tablespoons olive oil

Preheat oven to 425F and lightly oil a large shallow baking pan.

Halve bell peppers lengthwise and discard seeds and ribs. Arrange peppers, cut sides up, in baking pan and lightly oil cut edges and stems. Halve tomatoes and chop onion and basil. Finely chop garlic and in a bowl toss with tomatoes, onion, basil, 2 tablespoons oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Divide mixture among peppers and roast in upper third of oven until peppers are tender, about 20 minutes.

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Ten Minute Stir Fried Chicken with Nuts adapted from *The Minimalist Cooks at Home* by Mark Bittman

1 Tablespoon peanut or vegetable oil
2 cups sweet pepper strips, onion slices, or a combination of the two
1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1/2 inch chunks
1 cup halved walnuts, whole cashews, or other nuts
3 Tablespoons hoisin sauce

1) Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet and heat on high for one minute. Add the veggies in a single layer and cook, undisturbed, until they begin to char a little on the bottom, about one minute. Stir and cook one minute more.
2) Add the chicken and stir once or twice. Cook one minute until the bottom begins to char. Cook and stir another minute or two, then check a chicken piece to make sure it's done. Lower heat to medium.
3) Stir in the nuts and the hoisin sauce. Cook about 15 seconds then add 2 T water. Cook, stirring, until it's bubbly and glazes all the chicken and veggies. Serve with rice.

Tomato and Sweet Pepper Salad adapted from *The Vegetable Market Cookbook* by Robert Budwig

3 sweet peppers
4 ripe tomatoes
1/4 preserved lemon (or 2 teaspoons grated zest with some of the lemon's juice)
2 cloves garlic peeled and crushed pinch sweet paprika
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 t black pepper

Grill or roast peppers, remove skins, cut into small cubes and set aside. Blanch tomatoes for 15-20 seconds in boiling water. Drain and remove skins and stems. Cut

in half and remove seeds. Cut into small cubes. Rinse the preserved lemon under running water and remove the pulp. Cut the rind into fine dice. Arrange peppers, tomatoes and lemon in a dish. Mix remaining ingredients to make a dressing and pour over the salad. Mix well.

VEGETABLE KEBABS WITH MUSTARD BASTING SAUCE

16 baby carrots (about 8 ounces), peeled
16 baby yellow scallop squash* (about 8 ounces) or 3/4
pound yellow squash
16 baby zucchini (about 6 ounces) or 3/4 pound zucchini
16 red or white pearl onions (about 6 ounces)
1 1/2 tablespoons white-wine vinegar
1 1/2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons olive oil
2 large red bell peppers (about 9 ounces), cut into sixteen
2-by-3/4-inch pieces
eight 12-inch bamboo skewers, soaked in water to cover 1
hour

In a large saucepan of boiling salted water cook carrots 1 minute. Add yellow squash and zucchini and cook vegetables 5 minutes. Transfer vegetables with a slotted spoon to a large bowl of ice and cold water to stop cooking and drain well in a colander. Transfer vegetables to a bowl. (If using larger yellow squash and zucchini cut them into a total of thirty-two 3/4-inch pieces.) In boiling water remaining in pan cook onions 4 minutes and transfer with slotted spoon to bowl of ice and cold water. Drain onions well in colander and peel, leaving root ends intact. Vegetables may be boiled 1 day ahead and chilled in sealable plastic bags.

In a small bowl whisk together vinegar, mustard, oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Basting sauce may be made 1 day ahead and chilled, covered.

Prepare grill.

Thread vegetables, alternating them, onto skewers. Brush one side of kebabs with about half of sauce and grill, coated side down, on an oiled rack set 5 to 6 inches over

glowing coals 5 minutes. Brush kebabs with remaining sauce and turn. Grill kebabs 5 minutes more, or until squash is tender. (Alternatively, kebabs may be grilled in a hot well-seasoned ridged grill pan over moderately high heat.)

Serves 4.

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Stuffed Colored Bell Peppers I've tried many different grain/nut/herb combinations, nearly all successful. (The whole millet didn't work out too well...) Here's a loose recipe you can easily adapt to what you have on hand...

A little oil
2-3 cloves garlic
2 cups chopped onions
3 cups raw brown rice
6 cups water, stock or tomato juice
1/2 teaspoon allspice
1 cup chopped tomatoes
1/2 cup grated hard cheese, such as cheddar
1/2 cup chopped, toasted almonds
1 cup thinly sliced basil leaves: Napolitano or Genovese
Salt and Pepper
18 Pimiento Peppers or 9 Gold Bell Peppers, tops cut off, seeds removed

Heat oil in large skillet; add and saute garlic and onion. Add rice and brown about 5 minutes. Add desired liquid and allspice. Cover and cook until rice is done, about 40 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, cheese, almonds, basil, salt and pepper to taste. Blanch peppers in boiling water one minute (I sometime skip this step.) Stuff peppers with rice mixture. Bake at 350 degrees 30 minutes. Nine servings.

Pastel de maiz - this is a recipe from CSA member Angela U. who was taught "by feel" from a friend from Guadalajara. Works best with Poblano Peppers

10 ears of corn, cut from the cob and processed briefly in a food processor. You want it chopped but not pureed. (You can use frozen corn but you'll need to add some milk or cream to get the right consistency.)
5 eggs, beaten
1 1/2 cups flour
1/2 cup melted butter

salt, to taste

cheese, grated (monterey jack, pepper jack, cheddar...) peppers, seeded and sliced thinly (she always used poblanos)

Mix everything but cheese and peppers in a large bowl. Add a bit of milk if the mixture seems dry. You are going for a slightly-firmer-than-custard-like finished product something like quiche filling. Pour about half of the mixture into a well greased baking dish and then add a layer of cheese and peppers . Repeat layers. Bake at 350 until nearly set in the middle and beginning to brown on top. Cover with foil if it seems to be browning too fast. Time will depend on the depth of your dish. You can also make 2-3 smaller pasteles which would need less baking time. My friend always serves this with chicken mole.

Stuffed Poblanos - -similar to a dish served at Pajaro Street Grill in Salinas, from CSA member Angela U

Make a mixture of 2 parts grated sharp cheddar cheese, ~1 part raisins, coarsely chopped and `1 part slivered almonds. Cut generous caps off the stem end of poblano peppers, remove core, seeds and ribs, leaving peppers whole. Fill peppers with the cheese mixture and reattach "lids" with toothpicks. Broil or grill, turning to char all sides. Makes a great light dinner with a salad and maybe some rice. (If you cook them under a broiler, line the pan with foil for easier clean-up.)