



# In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee ~ September 2016

## Pepper Power

**Pick a Pepper:** sweet and chile peppers come in many varieties, sizes, shapes and heat level. They can be stuffed with all types of food.

### Chicken and Couscous Red Bell Peppers

2 medium skinless, boneless chicken breasts \*  
Sweet paprika  
Kosher salt and pepper  
4 large red bell peppers  
Cooking spray  
1½ cups Israeli couscous, cooked  
½ cup fresh Italian parsley, chopped  
2 tablespoons fresh mint, chopped  
3 tablespoons olive oil, divided

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, divided  
2 teaspoons honey, divided  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
⅛ to ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper  
2 ounces (about ½ cup) goat cheese, crumbled  
4 cups baby arugula  
4 grape tomatoes, cut in halves  
1 green onion, thinly sliced

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place chicken in a baking dish. Lightly rub the chicken with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Sprinkle with paprika, salt and pepper. Bake for 30 minutes or until done. Set aside to cool.

Place the oven rack in top third of the oven. Preheat broiler to high. Line a jelly-roll pan with foil. Cut peppers into halves. Remove stem, seed and membrane; discard. Arrange peppers cut side down on pan; coat with cooking spray. Broil 5 to 6 minutes or until lightly charred. Wrap peppers in foil and let set for 10 minutes; peel and discard skins.

Cut cooled chicken into bit size pieces. Combine chicken, couscous, parsley and mint in a medium-sized bowl.

In a small bowl, combine 1 tablespoon olive oil, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1 teaspoon honey, 1 teaspoon salt, cumin and crushed red pepper. Pour over the chicken mixture; toss to coat. Toss in the crumbled goat cheese.

Divide the chicken mixture among the 8 pepper halves. Place on the same jelly roll pan; broil 2 to 3 minutes until mixture is warm.

Whisk the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1 teaspoon honey, ½ teaspoon salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Add arugula, tomato halves and green onion; toss to coat. To serve: divide arugula on 4 plates; top with 2 pepper halves. *Makes 4 servings*

\* about 10 ounces

## Sweet Coconut Stuffed Hatch Peppers

4 large mild Hatch peppers  
1 cup sweetened shredded coconut  
1 teaspoon ground cardamom  
½ cup finely chopped dried apricots  
½ cup cashew nuts, coarsely chopped and toasted  
1 tablespoon honey  
1 tablespoon lime zest  
¼ cup canned coconut milk  
Coconut Crème (*see recipe below*)

Preheat the oven broiler. Move the oven rack to the top third of the oven. Place the whole peppers on a baking pan. Place under the broiler until the skins blister, turning as needed. Put the chiles in a bowl and cover with plastic wrap for about 10 minutes. Wearing gloves, peel and split the chiles, discarding the seeds, stem and skin.

In a bowl, mix together the coconut, cardamom, apricots, cashew nuts, honey, lime zest and coconut milk. Stuff the peppers. Return to a 350 degree oven for 5 minutes. Serve the warm peppers on a bed of the Coconut Crème (*see recipe below*) reserving some to drizzle over the top of each pepper. *Serves 8*

### Coconut Crème

¾ cup canned coconut milk  
½ cup cashew nuts, finely chopped and toasted  
1 tablespoon honey  
¼ teaspoon cinnamon

Blend the coconut milk, cashew nuts, honey and cinnamon until a smooth sauce is formed.

## Quinoa & Chorizo Stuffed Chiles

4 large mild or spicy chile peppers  
12 ounces fresh chorizo, crumbled and cooked  
1 cup cooked quinoa (may use rice)  
1 cup queso fresco cheese  
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro + more for garnish  
1 red jalapeño or Fresno chile, thinly sliced

Preheat oven to 400°F. Cut a long strip out of one side of the pepper, keeping the stem and tip intact. Carefully remove seeds. In a large bowl, combine the chorizo, quinoa, ½ cup cheese and ½ cup cilantro. Divide the filling among the 4 peppers; place on a baking sheet. Roast until the peppers are tender and the filling is lightly browned, about 20 minutes. Top with remaining cheese, sliced jalapeño and some cilantro. *Makes 4 servings*

## Crab Stuffed Mini Bell Peppers

12 mini multicolored sweet bell peppers, halved lengthwise and seeded  
3 tablespoons fresh chives, thinly sliced and divided  
¼ cup celery, finely chopped  
2 teaspoons lemon zest  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1 tablespoon sweet chili sauce  
½ cup pepper jack cheese, grated  
8 ounces lump crabmeat  
3 ounces whipped cream cheese, softened

Preheat grill to high. Coat grill rack with cooking spray. Arrange peppers, cut side up, on grill rack; cover and cook for 4 minutes. Remove peppers from the grill and set aside. Place celery, lemon zest, lemon juice, chili sauce, 2 tablespoons of chives, pepper jack cheese, crabmeat and whipped cream cheese in a bowl; mix together. Spoon mixture into pepper halves; sprinkle tops with remaining 1 tablespoon of chopped chives. Turn grill to low. Place stuffed peppers on the grill rack and heat for 4 minutes on the grill, covered. Serve warm. *Makes 24 appetizers or 8 main course servings*

