

Biber Dolmasi (Turkish Stuffed Peppers)

Turkish · Main Course · Medium · 90 min total · Serves 4

Biber dolmasi are sweet peppers stuffed with spiced beef and rice, set upright in a tomato sauce and baked until the walls are meltingly soft. Serve warm or at room temperature with yogurt.

Ingredients

- 8 small small green bell peppers (or Turkish frying peppers, about 4 oz (115 g) each)
- 0.5 lb ground beef (80% lean; ground lamb also works)
- 0.5 cup short-grain rice (rinsed; it finishes cooking inside the peppers)
- 1 medium onion (finely chopped)
- 2 tbsp olive oil (divided)
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp pul biber (Aleppo pepper or sweet paprika)
- 1 tsp dried mint
- 1 tsp salt (divided: 0.5 tsp for the filling, 0.5 tsp for the sauce)
- 0.5 tsp ground black pepper
- 0.25 cup flat-leaf parsley (finely chopped)
- 1 can crushed tomatoes (14 oz (400 g))
- 1 cup water (for the sauce)

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Slice off the tops of the peppers and keep the caps, then scoop out the seeds and white membranes and rinse the peppers inside.
2. Heat 1 tbsp of the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat, cook the onion for 5 minutes until soft, add the beef and cook 5 to 6 minutes, breaking it up, until no pink remains.
3. Take the pan off the heat and stir in the rice, tomato paste, pul biber, dried mint, parsley, 0.5 tsp salt and black pepper; the mixture should be loose and cool enough to handle.
4. Fill each pepper about three-quarters full, since the rice will swell, replace the caps, and stand the peppers snugly upright in a deep baking dish.
5. Stir the crushed tomatoes, water, the remaining 1 tbsp olive oil and 0.5 tsp salt together, pour it around the peppers until it reaches halfway up their sides, cover with foil and bake 60 to 70 minutes until the walls wrinkle, the peppers feel soft when pinched and the rice is tender.
6. Rest for 10 minutes, spoon the sauce over the peppers and serve warm or at room temperature with yogurt.