



Spanish Piquillo Peppers Stuffed with Formage Blanc and Salsa Verde

Piquillo peppers are from the Navarre region of Spain, and can easily be found in specialty food stores in the United States. The possibilities for fillings, preparations and presentations are endless for these perfectly roasted triangular peppers. The Spanish traditionally serve these peppers warm, stuffed with creamy bacalo. I have stuffed these peppers with everything from luscious tuna confit to simple hard-boiled eggs. Because you don't have to roast, peel and clean these peppers yourself, these stuffed peppers are a perfect addition for a tapas party or light lunch with friends.

8 each Piquillo peppers
1 1/2 cup formage blanc (or other creamy goat cheese)
1 tsp lemon zest (about 1 lemon)
2 tablespoons chopped chives
2 tablespoons lemon oil or fruity extra virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and pepper to taste
Salsa Verde

Salsa Verde:

1 bunch finely chopped Italian parsley
3 finely chopped garlic cloves
2 tablespoons chopped capers, drained of brine
1 tsp lemon zest (about 1 lemon)
1/4 – 1 cup fruity extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Serves 4-8 as an appetizer

In a medium mixing bowl, combine formage blanc with lemon zest, chives, lemon oil and salt and pepper to taste. Carefully stuff each pepper with 1-2 tablespoons of the formage blanc mixture, being careful not to split the pepper. Sprinkle the peppers with kosher salt and pepper.

For the salsa verde, combine all of the ingredients in a small mixing bowl.

To serve, place the peppers on a serving dish, and drizzle the tops of the peppers with salsa verde. Serve at room temperature.



Sidebar:

Salsa verde, or “green sauce”, is an Italian sauce traditionally used to accompany meats. Don’t confuse it with the Mexican tomatillo-based salsa verde! The Italian sauce is extremely versatile. For example, we drizzle it on top of our grilled porcini-rubbed New York steaks, as a garnish on our grilled vegetable platters, and over seared tuna. You can also create your own version of salsa verde as well, by adding garlic, anchovies, and whatever inspires you that particular day. Don’t add lemon juice, however, as it will turn the parsley greenish-gray.