

Delia's Roast Peppers

Inspired by Delia Smith's Piedmont Roast Peppers in her Summer Collection, we eat these all the time. She credits Elizabeth David, Franco Taruschio and Simon Hopkinson. As my mother would say 'there is no such thing as an original thought'.

We all make them. They always come out on the table in England, France and New Zealand.

These days I leave out the anchovy, but I sprinkle them with dried oregano or basil or Herbes de Provence or whatever is to hand, before putting them in the oven, so a great starter if you have vegetarians/vegans to feed.

I usually serve them hot, but Ma would serve them at room temperature, which is very handy for making them in advance of needing them. If you glug plenty of olive oil over them before roasting, you get loads of amazing juices to drizzle over the plate when serving.

Serve with bread so everyone can soak up all the delicious, oily, sweet peppery, garlicky juiciness. That's it, now my mouth is watering. (JoJo)

Alternatively, as one of many accompaniments to a summer BBQ spread (Olly)

Serves 4 or 8 as a starter.

Ingredients

4 large red peppers (either serve a whole or half a pepper each, maybe depending on who you are feeding, or how much else you are eating, or the size of the peppers).

4 medium tomatoes

8 salted anchovy fillets (or dried herbs see blurb above)

2 cloves of garlic (I think I'd happily use more)

8 tbsps olive oil (plus a few glugs more)

Salt and pepper

Fresh basil leaves to serve.

- If you don't have any fresh basil, don't give it a second thought. It's a nice idea, but I'm not sure I ever saw mother serve them with fresh basil and they are just as good without. And actually, now that I think about it, I'm pretty sure I've seen Becca serve them on a bed of a few rocket or mesclun leaves.

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C

Cut the peppers in half, from top to bottom, cutting the stalk in half lengthways. Leave the stalk intact but remove the seeds and pith. You can't eat the stalk, of course, but it looks good. Put the peppers skin side down in a pan. It's good if the sides of the pan are not too high as this will help the edges of the peppers to crisp up. However, too low and your juices will flow all over the oven. You'll work it out.

Cut the tomatoes into 6ths. And stuff 3 pieces into each half with the back of the tomato showing (it just looks nice when they are cooked, but you can put them in any old way if you like. You could also use cherry tomatoes if you felt so inclined).

Peel and thinly slice the garlic. Stuff most of the garlic in-between the pieces of tomato, and over the tomato, and sprinkle the rest in the pan.

Lay an anchovy fillet over the tomatoes, inside the pepper, or sprinkle with dried herbs, or go to town and do both. (Don't listen to the fussy eater – the anchovy fillets are a must as their saltiness is what makes the sauce so good)

Spoon a tblsp of olive oil over the tomatoes, into the pepper. And then glug a bit more around the pan. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Consider how salty your anchovies are when adding the salt.

Put the pan on a high shelf in the oven for about 45 to 50 mins. Check the oven with 10 mins to go and whack it up to 200°C if you think they need a little more crisping up around the edges.

Scatter with a few basil leaves and serve with the amazing juices and bread.

