

Roasted Red Pepper Soup

1 kg of **red** bell peppers, about 4 large peppers - washed and cut in half, seeds and white membranes removed
spray oil or mild vegetable oil
One head garlic, peeled
One medium onion, peeled, shallowly quartered (not cut all the way through)
three carrots peeled and cut into large chunks
3 tablespoons canola or mild vegetable oil
One small potato scrubbed with peel left on and shallowly quartered (not cut all the way through)
4 large white mushrooms, cleaned and left whole
Pinch of pepper
1 teaspoon dried thyme
3 bay leaves
2 teaspoons dried parsley
Half a tablespoon of salt
pinch black pepper
7 cups (1656 ml) water
Sour cream to garnish (optional)

Directions:

Preheat your oven to 420 F/220 C and take halved red peppers and place into oiled baking pan cut side down and lightly oil tops (spray oil or regular. Do NOT use olive oil for this it will overwhelm the delicate pepper flavor). Place peppers in preheated oven and set timer for about 40 minutes or till peppers brown and sink somewhat. When done, you will put them in a container with a tight lid to steam. However, while they roast, you will prepare your broth.

In pot large enough to hold 7 cups liquid and all the vegetables (except peppers) place the 3 tablespoons oil and the onion, garlic and thick cut carrots. Sauté lightly till slightly browned and add the potato and the mushrooms off the fire as well as the bay leaves, thyme, parsley, salt and pepper and all the water. Put on the fire and bring to the boil, lower to simmer and cook 30-40 minutes or till vegetables are very soft. Your peppers should be steaming in the closed container while you let the broth cool a bit. Take out your blender/food processor and while broth cools, peel the steamed peppers. Place peppers in blender and add as much broth as blender safely holds, making sure you get the onion, garlic and carrots in the container. If you have additional liquid that doesn't fit, you will add manually after blending by stirring in. Remove the potato and mushrooms. (I highly recommend eating the mushrooms then and there, they are delectable). The potato can be used in a different dish or eaten with a bit of butter and salt on the side. Blend the peppers with the broth, onion, garlic and carrots till fairly smooth. If the soup isn't hot enough for you as is, it reheats beautifully. Serve with or without the optional sour cream.