

# K's Kitchen: Stuffed bell peppers

By Kathryn Reed

Warm weather and the Tuesday farmers' market have propelled me out of my food funk. I had been in such a rut and uninspired in the kitchen. Not only was I ready for the outdoors to change seasons, but I was ready for what was on my plate to change, too.



The ingredients I found at last week's South Lake Tahoe market inspired the recipe below. (The market is open from 8am-1pm at the American Legion parking lot on Highway 50.)

Though I don't always practice what I preach, I am a firm believer in eating what is in season. Mother Nature tells us what we should be eating. If only we listened better.

Instead, we buy tomatoes and cantaloupe in the winter. Where did it come from? How many miles did it travel? What kinds of chemicals were applied?

Without thinking, most of us shop at grocery stores year-round for what we want, not what fruits and vegetables are in season. This is bad for the environment and more important, bad for our bodies. Our bodies know what they need – they need what is in season. It's up to us to listen to our bodies and not what grocery store marketing types tell us to buy.

For the Tahoe area, most farmers' markets started this month. Those living in more temperate climates get to have markets year-round.

All the ingredients for the peppers were bought at the market last week. As veggies at markets change, just use what appeals to you.

The peppers were bought at Costco. I like buying the six-pack of red, yellow, orange peppers there because of the price. (See, I don't always follow my buy in season, buy local rule. They came from Mexico.)

Peppers will be available at the markets later in the summer.

I prefer not to stuff green bell peppers because they are more bitter than the other colors – which all are much sweeter.

For the quantities like a bunch listed below – it's based on how they sell the produce at the market. And for the onions, I actually used a few small ones. I had olive oil at home, but it, too, is available at the Tuesday market in South Tahoe.

### **Farmers' Market Stuffed Peppers**

4 bell peppers, preferably not green

Olive oil

1 medium red onion, chopped

5+ cloves garlic, minced

1 bunch spinach

1 C yellow and green squash, chopped

$\frac{1}{2}$  bunch asparagus, chopped in  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch pieces

2 T fresh sage, minced

$1\frac{1}{2}$  T fresh rosemary, minced

Cheese, optional

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Coat bottom of pan with olive oil. On high heat, sauté onion and garlic until opaque. Add spinach, reducing heat to medium. Stir until spinach is completely wilted.

Add squash. Cook about 2 minutes. Add asparagus. Cook another 2 minutes.

Add herbs.

Add salt and pepper to taste.

Cook until asparagus is done.

Cut off tops of peppers. Try to make a small hole; don't lop off whole top; cut just where the stem is. Rinse peppers to get seeds out.

Stuff peppers with veggie mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. In the last five minutes add cheese if using it.