**Roasted Red Peppers with Chicken, Shiitake Mushrooms and Zephyr Squash**

by Kelly Clark, Carrboro Farmers’ Market Community Advisory Board Member and Shopper

The peppers and chicken take center stage in this recipe. Substitute Cremini mushrooms if you can’t find Shiitake mushrooms at the Market. Make the full complement of this recipe, as the leftovers freeze well. Wrap individually for freezing.

**Ingredients:**

2 cups shredded poached chicken – all white meat, all dark meat or a mix of both

6 medium-sized sweet red peppers suitable for stuffing – make sure they “stand” up (substitute four 7-9 inch Italian sweet red peppers, suitable for stuffing – make sure they are straight, not crooked)

5 Zephyr squash, about 5 inches long and 1 inch in diameter (substitute zucchini or yellow squash or a combination of the two)

11 ounces small to medium sized Shiitake mushrooms

1 yellow onion about 3 inches in diameter

2 Tablespoons olive oil

2 Tablespoons butter

2 small cloves garlic, finely minced

1 cup ricotta cheese

½ cup grated parmesan cheese + 2 tablespoons for garnish

2 Tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

¾ teaspoon salt, divided

¼ teaspoon black pepper

1 medium tomato

**Procedure:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Wash the peppers and carefully slice off the stem end, removing the seeds and veins. Rinse inside. In a large pot, with a vegetable steaming rack set inside and water in the pan to just below the rack height, bring the water to a boil. When the water is boiling, add the peppers cut side down and steam for 3 minutes. Carefully remove the peppers and place in a 10 x 15 inch casserole. Set peppers aside.

Grate the squash in a food processor, or by hand, to equal 4 cups. Put the squash in a colander, and sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon of salt, then toss to distribute. Set aside.

Chop onion to equal 1 cup.

Remove the stems from the mushrooms, and clean with a damp cloth. Slice into 1/8 inch slices.

Put olive oil in a 12 inch sauté pan over medium heat, add the onions and sauté until translucent. Add the butter to the pan allowing the butter to melt, turn the heat to medium high, and then add the mushrooms. Toss to mix the onions and mushrooms and to coat with the oils. All the oil will be absorbed. Keep tossing until the mushrooms begin to release their juices and continue until the mushrooms begin to soften. Turn off the heat, spread out the mushrooms and onions in the pan and set aside.

Squeeze the squash to remove as much water as possible. Place the squash in the mixing bowl with the chicken. Add the mushrooms and onions, along with the garlic, ricotta, parmesan, parsley, salt and black pepper. Mix well. Adjust salt and pepper according to taste.

Stuff each pepper with the chicken mixture, pressing it firmly into the pepper without tearing. Thinly slice the tomato and place one slice on top of each pepper and sprinkle with parmesan cheese. If any pepper is having a hard time ‘standing up’, placed a little tin foil roll underneath to balance. Pour 2 cups of water into the casserole.

(If using Italian sweet peppers, stuff carefully and make sure the stuffing is pushed to the bottom tip of the pepper. The skin of these peppers is thin, so if the pepper develops a tear, tie a little kitchen twine to snug it closed. Forgo the tomato and cheese topping. Take a length of tin foil and make a 9 inch crumbled tube, placing the tube on one long side of the casserole. Lay the peppers so that the top of the pepper is resting on the tube. Pour 2 cups of water into the casserole.)

Bake for 45 minutes. The tomato and cheese top should be brown, or the skin of the Italian peppers slightly charred.

Serves 6.