

Italian Baked Stuffed Tomatoes

Servings : 6

Amount	Measure	Ingredient - Preparation Method
18		ripe plum tomatoes
1/3	cup	medium grain white rice
1/2	pound	ground beef
5	cloves	garlic - minced
1/2	cup	flat-leaf parsley - finely chopped
1/4	cup	basil - thinly sliced
5	tablespoons	extra virgin olive oil
		kosher salt
		freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 325. Cut across tomatoes horizontally, leaving the top half smaller than the bottom to create a lid. Set a strainer over a medium bowl. Using fingers, scoop out tomato seeds in the strainer; press on the seeds to extract juice. Using a small spoon or melon baller, scoop out the center of the tomatoes and coarsely chop them. Add the chopped centers to the juice in the bowl. Add the rice, beef, garlic, parsley, basil, 2 teaspoons of kosher salt, 1/4 teaspoon of pepper and 2.5 tablespoons of the olive oil and knead to combine.

Set the tomatoes in a large baking dish and season with salt. Spoon the filling into the tomatoes, cover with the lids and drizzle the remaining 2.5 tablespoons of olive oil. Bake for about 1.5 hours, basting occasionally, until the tomatoes are soft and the rice is cooked. Let tomatoes stand for 15 minutes before serving.