



THE FRONT BURNER

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Baked Plum Tomatoes with Herbed Rice Stuffing

Serves 8

Stuffed with brown rice, shallots, and fresh herbs, these tomatoes make a hearty and well-seasoned side dish for chicken or fish. They are also substantial enough to be the main course of a vegetarian lunch or light supper, served with a mixed-green salad. Here, the rice is boiled for ten minutes before being combined with the stuffing ingredients, to ensure it will be tender after baking. (Soaking the rice in water overnight would serve the same purpose.)

1/4 cup brown rice

8 large plum tomatoes (about 1-3/4 pounds)

Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh basil, plus more, coarsely chopped, for garnish

2 tablespoons minced shallots

2 teaspoons grated parmesan cheese

1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil

1/4 cup dry white wine

1. Preheat oven to 375° F. Bring a saucepan of water to a boil. Add rice, stir once, and return to a boil. Cook 10 minutes, then drain. Using a sharp knife, cut a very thin slice from the bottom of each tomato so it can stand upright. Trim 1/8 inch from stem ends. Use a melon baller or small spoon to scrape the flesh, seeds, and juice from 6 of the tomatoes into a bowl. Repeat with the remaining 2 tomatoes, scraping pulp into a separate bowl.

2. Stand tomatoes in a small baking dish, sprinkle a pinch of salt into each. Add 1 teaspoon salt to reserved pulp of the 6 tomatoes along with finely chopped basil, the shallots, and rice; mix to combine. Fill tomatoes with rice mixture, gently tapping tomatoes to distribute evenly. Sprinkle parmesan over the tops and drizzle with the oil.

3. Add wine to the reserved pulp of 2 tomatoes, mix to combine, and pour into the bottom of the baking dish. Bake tomatoes until tops are golden brown and rice is tender, 45 to 60 minutes. Remove from oven. Serve immediately, garnished with coarsely chopped basil.

Per Serving: 50 calories, 2 g saturated fat; 7 g unsaturated fat; 4 mg cholesterol; 8 g carbohydrates; 1.3 g protein; 304 mg sodium; 9 g fiber