

Baked Ricotta With Peppers and Olives

1 red pepper	1 pound ricotta
1 yellow pepper	2 tablespoons fresh oregano
1 tablespoon olive oil	¼ teaspoon peperoncino
½ cup green olives	1 cup, plus 1 tablespoon Parmigiano
2 large eggs	1 tablespoon heavy cream
Salt and black pepper to taste	

Chop the red and yellow peppers into small dice, and fry them in a skillet with the tablespoon of olive oil for about 5 minutes until barely tender. They will cook further in the oven. Salt and black pepper the sautéed peppers to taste. Remove the peppers to a small bowl with a slotted spoon, leaving behind the olive oil.

Coarsely chop the green olives. (I used marinated and herbed Castelvetrano olives because they are very flavorful.) However any green olive will do. Stir the olives into the peppers and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 400° and place a rack in the middle of the oven with a large tray on it.

In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs until very frothy and light. Beat in the fresh oregano and the peperoncino. Stir in the ricotta (whole-milk is preferable), 1 cup of grated Parmigiano, and the heavy cream. Mix until well blended.

Rub the insides of 1¼-cup oven-proof ramekins with a bit of olive oil. Divide the pepper-and-olive mixture evenly on the bottom of each ramekin. Evenly spoon the ricotta mixture on top of the pepper-and-olive mixture. Sprinkle the remaining tablespoon of parmigiano over the ricotta mixture.

Place the ramekins on the tray in the preheated oven. Bake for 25-30 minutes until the ricotta is puffed up, set, and very lightly browned. Remove the ramekins from the oven, and run a thin-bladed knife around the edges to loosen the ricotta. Invert the baked ricottas onto serving plates. Serve warm.

They can be set aside and reheated later in a 350° oven for ten minutes, but the ricotta mixture will not longer remain puffed up.