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# Queso-Filled Mini-Peppers

*The Essential Southern Living Cookbook*

Servings: 10

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Start to Finish Time: 1 hour

**2 packages (16 ounce) mini sweet peppers**  
**1 tablespoon canola oil**  
**3/4 teaspoon Kosher salt**  
**8 ounces 2 cups) Pepper Jack cheese, shredded**  
**1/2 cup evaporated milk**  
**2 ounces cream cheese, softened**  
**1/4 cup chopped pickled pimientos**  
**2 tablespoons unsalted butter**  
**1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs**  
**1/4 teaspoon black pepper**  
**2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro**

Preheat the broiler on HIGH with the oven rack five inches from the heat. In a bowl, toss the peppers with oil and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt. Arrange the peppers in a single layer on a rimmed aluminum foil-lined baking sheet. Broil until the tops are lightly charred, 3 to 5 minutes. Let cool to room temperature, 30 minutes.

Reduce the oven temperature to 425 degrees.

Flip over the peppers so the charred side is on the bottom. Cut and remove the top 1/3 of each pepper (from stem end to tip). Discard the cut off part, or reserve for another use. Scoop out and discard the membranes and seeds.

In the top of a double boiler over simmering water over medium heat, whisk together the Pepper Jack cheese and the milk. Whisk until smooth, 5 minutes. Remove from the heat. Stir in the cream cheese, jalapenos and remaining 1/4 teaspoon of salt. Spoon a heaping teaspoon of the cheese mixture into each pepper. Place on a baking sheet. Bake until the tops are golden, 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, melt the butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add the panko and pepper. Cook, stirring, until golden brown, 3 more minutes. Sprinkle the peppers with panko mixture and cilantro.

(MAKE AHEAD: Place the filled peppers in a baking dish. Cover and chill for one day. Bake, covered, at 425 degrees for 5 minutes; uncover and bake for 3 more minutes. Top with panko mixture and cilantro.)

## **Appetizers**

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*Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 69 Calories; 7g Fat (84.3% calories from fat); 1g Protein; 1g Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 16mg Cholesterol; 171mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 0 Lean Meat; 0 Non-Fat Milk; 1 1/2 Fat.*