

Cornbread, Cranberry and Orange Stuffing



Bread Stuffing With Sausage, Pecans and Dried Apricots

Turkeys are turkeys...but stuffings make the holiday meal.

What kind of stuffing one serves says a lot about the host. Many stuffing recipes have been passed down from generation to generation. They are an expression of family heritage, and the cook would not dare stray from tradition. Others are expressive

of the cook's personality...daring to try new things.

Basically, Thanksgiving stuffing is simply a mixture of breads, vegetables and spices used to stuff poultry. This bland base invites embellishment, both traditional and original. With the addition of ingredients such as sausage, rice, nuts, fruit, mushrooms and shellfish, the possible permutations are countless.

SAVORY STUFFINGS — Recipes to Add Personality to Your Holiday Table

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CORNBREAD, CRANBERRY AND ORANGE STUFFING

From *Feast: Food to Celebrate Life*
by Nigella Lawson

Serves 8 to 10

For the Cornbread:

- Butter for greasing the pan
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 3/4 cup plus 2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup superfine sugar
- Fat pinch of salt
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- 1 cup milk
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted and cooled

Preheat the oven to 400° F, then grease a square 9-inch pan (2 inches deep) with butter.

Mix the cornmeal, flour, sugar, salt and baking powder in a large bowl. In a large measuring cup, beat together the milk, egg and cooled, melted butter. Then pour the wet ingredients into the dry, stirring with a wooden spoon until just combined. Pour into the greased pan, and bake 15 to 20 minutes. When ready, the cornbread should be just pulling away from the sides.

Crumble when cooled.

For the Stuffing:

- 1 large orange
- 12-oz. package fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1/3 cup honey, optional
- 1 stick plus 1 tbsp. butter
- 5 cups cornbread crumbs

- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- Salt and pepper to taste

Zest and juice the orange. Put the cranberries into a heavy-based saucepan with the orange juice and zest. Bring to a simmering point on moderate to high flame, add the honey if you're going for that option, then cover; turn down the heat slightly and simmer for about 5 minutes. Add the butter in slices or spoonfuls and stir, off the heat, until it melts, then add the crumbled cornbread—and here's where you can leave it (for a day or so in a refrigerator) until you want to bake it. At which time, beat in the eggs and season with salt, pepper and cinnamon.

If you want to stuff the turkey with this, do so. If you don't want to stuff the turkey, butter a suitable receptacle and bake, covered with aluminum foil, underneath the turkey for 30 to 35 minutes, taking the foil off for the last 10 minutes.

WILD RICE DRESSING

Serves 8

- 1 1/2 cups wild rice
- 6 cups 1-inch cubes of crusty white bread, such as French or sourdough
- 1/2 lb. bacon, coarsely chopped
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 4 celery ribs, cut into thin slices
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf Italian parsley
- 1 tsp. finely chopped fresh thyme leaves
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 cup chicken stock

Preheat oven to 325° F.

Prepare rice as per package directions. Drain in a colander, and cool to room temperature.

While the rice is cooking, toast the bread on a rimmed baking sheet in the middle of the oven until dry and lightly browned, about 30 minutes.

Cook the bacon over medium heat until crisp. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon and let drain on paper towels. Sauté the onions in the bacon grease until softened. Add the celery and cook, stirring, 1 minute.

In a large bowl, place the rice, bacon, onions, celery, bread, parsley and thyme. Gently toss to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Raise the oven temperature to 385° F.

Butter a large casserole dish. Transfer the dressing to the prepared dish, and drizzle the chicken broth over the dressing. Bake, covered, for 20 minutes; then uncover and bake 20 minutes more.

Stuffing 101

It is important to make sure that you are extra safe when stuffing poultry.

Stuff your turkey just before putting it in the oven, and cook it to a minimum of 165° F. Be sure to take the temperature of both the bird and the stuffing. If the turkey is done but the stuffing isn't, remove the turkey, transfer the stuffing to a casserole dish and return the stuffing to the oven to finish cooking. It is critical that the stuffing reach a minimum temperature of 165° F to kill all bacteria that can cause food-borne illnesses.

If you want to play it extra safe, don't stuff your bird at all. Instead, make a traditional "dressing," which is simply stuffing that is cooked in a buttered casserole dish.

BREAD STUFFING WITH SAUSAGE, PECANS AND DRIED APRICOTS

From *The New Best Recipe* by the Editors of *Cook's Illustrated*

Makes 12 cups

- 1 lb. sweet Italian sausage, removed from the casings and crumbled
- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 medium ribs celery, chopped
- 1/2 tsp. each dried sage, dried thyme and dried marjoram
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley leaves, chopped fine
- 2 cups pecans, toasted and roughly chopped
- 1 cup dried apricots, cut into thin strips
- 1 tsp. salt
- 12 cups dried French or other white bread cubes
- 1 cup homemade turkey or chicken stock
- 3 large eggs, slightly beaten

Cook the sausage in a large skillet over medium heat until browned, about 10 minutes. Transfer the sausage to a large bowl with a slotted spoon. Discard the fat; in the same pan, melt the butter.

Add the onion and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, over medium heat until soft and translucent, 6 to 7 minutes. Add the dried herbs and pepper, and cook for another minute. Transfer to the bowl with the sausage; add the parsley, pecans, apricots and salt, and mix to combine. Add the bread cubes to the bowl.

Whisk the stock and the eggs together in a small bowl. Pour the mixture over the bread cubes. Gently toss to distribute the ingredients evenly. Stuff the bird or bake the stuffing, covered with foil, at 400° F until hot throughout, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove the foil; continue to bake until a golden brown crust forms on the stuffing, about 15 minutes longer.

WILD MUSHROOM, ROSEMARY AND HAZELNUT DRESSING

Serves 8 to 10

- 8 cups 1/2-inch cubes rosemary bread
- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 3/4 lb. button mushrooms, trimmed
- 3/4 lb. fresh shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and quartered
- 3/4 cup chopped yellow onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 1/2 tsp. dried rosemary
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup dry white wine

- 2 cups hazelnuts, toasted, skins removed and coarsely chopped
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups chicken broth

Preheat the oven to 325° F.

Toast the bread on a rimmed baking sheet in the middle of the oven until dry and lightly browned, about 30 minutes. Set aside to cool.

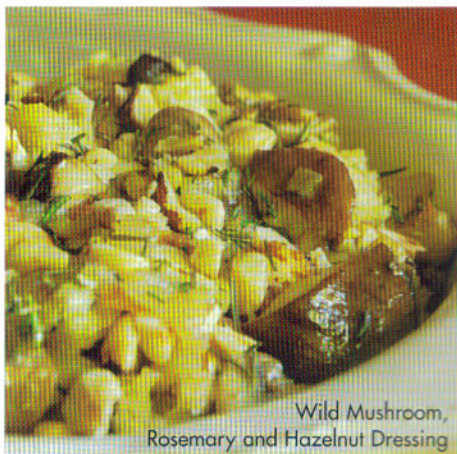
Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the button mushrooms, the shiitake mushrooms and the onion, and sauté until softened and lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic and rosemary. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add the wine, and deglaze the pan by boiling and scraping up any brown bits, until the liquid is almost evaporated, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl.

Add the bread and hazelnuts, and toss to combine.

In a medium-sized bowl, whisk together the eggs and the chicken stock. Stir into the bread mixture until evenly coated.

Place the stuffing in a large buttered casserole dish. Bake, loosely covered with foil, for 30 minutes; then remove the foil, and bake until the top is browned, about 15 minutes more. ●

Accessories provided by Babcock Gifts.



Wild Mushroom, Rosemary and Hazelnut Dressing

Wild Rice Dressing



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