



# PERFECT BREAD STUFFING

## Preparing the Bread

You've got to have bread before you can have stuffing. And (with the notable exception of cornbread) that bread's got to be dry in order to adequately absorb the flavors of all the other add-ins inside your stuffing. Firstly, you want to cut your bread into  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch pieces. The amount of bread you use will correspond to how many people you will be serving, but aim to fill approximately 8-10 cups. NOTE: If you will be using the bread the same day, you want to dry the bread out in a 275F oven, stirring it every 10 minutes until crisp. While white or whole wheat bread can obviously be used, you might want to try out some of these alternative options:

- ❖ Any type of crusty, Artisan-style Bread
- ❖ Cornbread
- ❖ French Bread
- ❖ Italian Bread
- ❖ Sourdough Bread
- ❖ Raisin Bread
- ❖ Pumpernickel Bread

## Preparing the Add-Ins

The cardinal sin of stuffing is skimping on the add-ins. They're what make your stuffing pop and keep your guests coming back for more. You want to combine ingredients that not only taste good together, but that compliment each other – both in flavor and texture. Play with soft and crunchy, savory and sweet. A combination of 2-6 of any of the add-ins listed below (for a total of 6 total cups) will definitely give your “same-old, same-old” stuffing the flavor kick it needs:

- ❖ Celery: 2 cups, finely diced
- ❖ Onion: 2 cups, finely diced
- ❖ Leeks: 1 cup, finely diced
- ❖ Shallots:  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup, finely diced
- ❖ Garlic: 4 large cloves, finely diced
- ❖ Bell Pepper: 1 cup, finely diced
- ❖ Carrots: 1 cup, finely diced
- ❖ Fresh Mushrooms: 2 cups, sliced
- ❖ Dried Mushrooms (rehydrated): 1 cup, finely diced
- ❖ Fennel: 2 cups, sliced
- ❖ Apple: 2 cups, finely diced
- ❖ Sausage (fully cooked): 2 lbs, finely diced
- ❖ Bacon (fully cooked): up to 2 lbs, finely diced
- ❖ Ground Turkey (fully cooked): 1 cup, finely diced
- ❖ Dried Fruit: 1 cup, chopped
- ❖ Nuts: 1 cup, chopped or sliced
- ❖ Fresh Shucked Oysters: 2 cups, finely diced
- ❖ Oil-Packed Sundried Tomatoes (drained): 1 cup, finely diced
- ❖ Pitted Olives:  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup, chopped
- ❖ Canned Water Chestnuts (drained): 1 cup, finely diced

- ❖ Spinach: 2-3 cups, finely diced
- ❖ Broccoli Rabe: 2-3 cups, finely diced
- ❖ Kale: 2-3 cups, finely diced
- ❖ Cranberries: 1 cup, finely diced
- ❖ Raisins: 1 cup
- ❖ Currants: 1 cup, finely diced
- ❖ Dried squash or pumpkin: 1 cup, finely diced
- ❖ Pine Nuts: 1 cup, finely diced
- ❖ Pomegranate Seeds: 1 cup

## Seasoning

Frequently, fresh herbs such as sage and fresh parsley are used to round out the flavor medley in a good batch of stuffing. Some tips to remember when using the seasonings listed below: slice or chop your herbs and toast your spices before adding them into the stuffing.

- ❖ Fresh flat-leaf Parsley: ½–1 cup, chopped
- ❖ Fresh Sage: up to 5 Tbsp, sliced or chopped
- ❖ Fresh Thyme: up to 3 Tbsp, sliced or chopped
- ❖ Fresh Rosemary: up to 2 Tbsp
- ❖ Fresh Oregano: up to 1½ Tbsp
- ❖ Scallions or chives: up to 1 cup
- ❖ Chili Powder: up to ½ tsp
- ❖ Cumin seeds: up to ½ tsp
- ❖ Caraway seeds: up to ½ tsp
- ❖ Fennel seeds: up to 1 tsp
- ❖ Orange or lemon zest: up to 2 tsp
- ❖ Cinnamon (fresh ground): ½ tsp
- ❖ Nutmeg (fresh ground): ½ tsp, freshly ground
- ❖ Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper: to taste

## Moistening the Stuffing

The more dense the bread, the more liquid you'll need to use during the moistening process. Most breads will take 2 cups of liquid. If you need to add more (as you would with cornbread, for example) make sure it does not exceed 3 cups or you run the risk of your stuffing becoming a soggy mess. Here are some suggestions for liquids to moisten your bread:

- ❖ Turkey Broth (Low Sodium): 1-3 cups
- ❖ Chicken Broth (Low Sodium): 1-3 cups
- ❖ Vegetable Stock: 1 cup
- ❖ Apple Juice: 1 cup
- ❖ Soaking liquid from dried mushrooms: ½ - 1 cup
- ❖ Dry white wine: ½ cup

## **Taste & Enrichment**

As a finishing touch before baking, you can add salt and pepper as needed. You may also choose to stir in one of the following if the stuffing isn't rich enough for your taste: extra virgin olive oil, melted unsalted butter or 2 large beaten eggs.

## **Baking**

Preheat oven to 350F. The bottom of your stuffing will brown better if you use a foil-lined Pyrex baking dish versus a ceramic one. Grease dish with oil or cooking spray before filling with stuffing. Cover tightly with aluminum foil.

Bake for 35 minutes, remove foil then bake for another 25-35 until the top is lightly browned and crisp.