

## **Don't Overthink GF Stuffing – It's an Easy Makeover**

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Gluten-Free Makeovers

Living Well Gluten Free

I just turned my calendar to October and it seems like we are already talking about the holidays, baking season and pulling out all the traditional family recipes. If you are like me, you are probably breaking into a sweat about now. Let's all take a deep breath. Holiday baking is not so difficult.

First, the days of making two separate recipes of everything are over. Thanks to the many gluten-free options available you can find substitutes for nearly everything.

Take stuffing. It's one of the easiest to make over. Start with that legendary family recipe and simply replace regular bread with gluten-free bread. (Be sure the broth is gluten free and check sausage ingredients, if using.) Pretty simple, huh?

Now that you know the basics, let's talk about some of the nuances: Type of bread, add-ins, and baking method (in the bird, outside the bird, a little of both, or baked in squash).

**Bread.** Lots of choices here from commercially-prepared bread, to stuffing mix, baking fresh bread from a mix or from scratch, or, my favorite, gluten-free cornbread (from scratch or from a mix).

Nothing tastes better than a freshly-baked loaf or freshly baked cornbread.

Flavor-wise, go for white bread rather than whole grain or rye-style breads. Cut the bread into ½ to ¾ -inch cubes and spread it out in a single layer on baking sheets. Toast in a 300-degree oven for 15 to 20 minutes so the bread dries out. \*

\* For extra flavor, toss toasted bread cubes with 2 tablespoons olive oil or melted butter. Coat with spices and toast 5 minutes longer.

For a 12 to 14-pound turkey, use 8 to 10 cups of bread cubes or 1 large loaf; or 1, 8 or 9-inch pan of cornbread.

**Add-ins.** Any or all of the following:

- ✓ Sauté about 2 cups
- ✓ Chopped or shredded carrots
- ✓ Chopped apples
- ✓ Chopped, cooked sausage (like apple chicken sausage)
  
- ✓ Sauté 1 cup each

✓ chopped onion and/ or celery

Add in 1 cup

✓ raisins, craisins or other dried or fresh fruit (chopped), as desired

**Liquids:** Chicken or vegetable broth, orange or apple juice (enough to moisten the bread but not saturate it.)

**Spices to taste:** Poultry spice, salt, pepper, onion and garlic powder, ground thyme, sage leaves.

### **Baking Method:**

So many ways to go with this: Bake the stuffing in the turkey imparts delicious flavor but you'll need to add extra roasting time. Do not stuff the turkey ahead of time.

Bake in a covered, buttered casserole dish. You can also do some of each.

Not just for turkey. Serve as a hearty main dish.

Stuff a Squash. Remove seeds and some of the pulp from a medium round squash, par-bake or steam for 20 minutes, just until slightly soft. Fill with stuffing, cover and bake 35 minutes.

### **Butternut Squash, Cranberry Sage Cornbread Stuffing**

#### **Makes enough stuffing for a 12-pound turkey**

Cornbread lends a sweet nutty flavor to the recipe. The presentation is show-stopping, too. If you have vegetarian guests, omit the sausage and bake outside the bird.

6 to 8 cups gluten-free cornbread, cut into cubes (8-x-8-inch pan)

4 tablespoons olive oil

3 cups diced butternut squash

3 stalks celery, chopped

4 large shallots, chopped

3 teaspoon minced garlic

1 ½ cups cranberries, washed, drained and halved

4 cooked chicken apple sausage, chopped\*

2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage leaves

4 teaspoons poultry seasoning

2 to 3 cups gluten-free chicken or vegetable stock

Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Spread cornbread cubes over two cookie sheets. Toast about 15 minutes or until dry, stirring occasionally. Let cool and transfer to a large

mixing bowl.

In a large skillet, heat olive oil. Add butternut squash, celery, onion, and garlic and cook until vegetables soften, about 10 minutes. Add cranberries and sausage, and sauté until cranberries begin to soften, about 3 minutes. Add seasonings and stir. Add to cornbread cubes and toss until well mixed. Add stock and stir well. Check seasonings and add salt and pepper to taste.

Use stuffing mixture to stuff a 12-pound turkey, or spoon into greased 9-x-13- inch baking dish. Cover with foil and bake stuffing in preheated 325 degrees F. oven 20 minutes. Remove foil and stir stuffing. Bake 25 minutes longer or until heated through and lightly browned on top.

Alternatively, stuff the cavity of a large oven roasting chicken or turkey and follow baking instructions on the poultry package. Bake remaining stuffing in a casserole dish per instructions above or, my favorite, bake in par-baked acorn squash as in the picture.

