



Country-Bread Stuffing with Parmesan & Dried Cherries

Makes: 10 servings

Prep Time: 20 minutes Cook Time: 2 hours

Total Time: 2 hours & 20 minutes

Ingredients

For Bread:

- 2 (15-ounce) loaves country-style white sourdough bread (about 16 cups), sliced 1/2 inch thick and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 8 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 1 & 1/2 cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 4 & 1/2 ounces), divided

For the Stuffing:

- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 2 large red onions, coarsely chopped (about 1 & 1/2 pounds)
- 3 & 1/2 cups coarsely chopped celery
- 2 large red bell peppers, coarsely chopped
- 8 garlic cloves, chopped
- 4 tsp chopped fresh rosemary
- 4 tsp dried oregano
- 3/4 cup dried cherries or raisins
- 3/4 cup pine nuts, toasted
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup thinly sliced fresh basil
- 4 large eggs, beaten to blend
- 1 & 1/4 cups low-salt chicken or vegetable broth, plus more if necessary

Instructions

Bread:

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray 2 large rimmed baking sheets with nonstick spray. Place half of bread pieces in bowl. Add 3 tablespoons oil and toss to coat, then add 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, and toss. Spread bread on one prepared sheet. Repeat with remaining bread,

3 tablespoons oil and 1/2 cup sheet; spread on second sheet.

Bake bread until golden, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes. Cool on sheets. Transfer to very large bowl.

Stuffing:

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Melt 1/4 cup butter with remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil in a heavy large pot over medium-high heat. Add onion, celery and bell peppers; sauté until vegetables are almost tender, about 15 minutes. Add chopped garlic, rosemary and oregano; stir 1 minute. Add cherries and pine nuts; stir and cook for 2 minutes. Transfer to bowl with bread. Stir 1/2 cup basil and remaining 1/2 cup Parmesan into stuffing. Season generously with salt and pepper. Mix eggs into stuffing.

Generously butter 15x10x2-inch glass baking dish. Add enough broth to stuffing to moisten (at least 1 & 1/4 cups). Transfer stuffing to prepared dish. Cover with buttered foil, buttered side down. Bake until heated through, about 40 minutes. Uncover and bake until top is slightly crunchy and golden, about 20 minutes longer.

Sprinkle remaining 1/4 cup basil over stuffing and serve.

Chef's Note:

For a vegetarian stuffing, use vegetable broth instead of chicken broth.

The stuffing can be made ahead of time and frozen. Because it has eggs in it, I wouldn't freeze it longer than 2 months. Freeze it uncooked. Cover it in plastic wrap and then aluminum foil. To bake it from frozen, cook it covered for one hour in a preheated oven at 350°F. Uncover, increase the temperature to 400°F, and bake for 15 to 20 minutes more, until hot throughout and golden-brown and crispy on top.