

Italian Sausage Stuffing

From Judi Gallagher

While I grew up with a traditional bread stuffing, my neighbor Bobbi makes a killer Italian sausage stuffing that we cannot get enough of.

Best yet- it freezes so I defrost some during December for easy stuffed mushrooms in a hurry.

1 (3/4- to 1-pound) Italian loaf, cut into 1-inch cubes (8 cups)

2 tablespoons olive oil,

2 pounds sweet Italian sausage, casings removed, divided

1 stick unsalted butter, cut into pieces

3 medium onions, chopped

4 large celery ribs, chopped

1 teaspoon poultry seasoning

5 garlic cloves, minced

4 large eggs, lightly beaten

3/4 cup heavy cream, divided

1/2 cup chicken broth

1 cup [grated Parmigiano-Reggiano](#)

1/2 cup coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley

Equipment: a 4-qt shallow ceramic or glass baking dish (14 by 10 by 2 3/4 inches)

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350°F with rack in middle. Generously butter baking dish.

Put bread in 2 shallow baking pans and bake, switching position of pans halfway through baking, until just dried out, about 10 minutes.

Heat oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Cook sausage, stirring and breaking it into small pieces, until golden brown, about 8 minutes. Transfer with a slotted spoon to a large bowl.

Pour off fat from skillet and wipe clean. Heat butter over medium heat until foam subsides, then cook onions, celery, garlic, and 1/2 teaspoon each of salt and pepper, stirring occasionally, until golden, 12 to 15 minutes. Add vegetables and bread to sausage and season with poultry seasoning.

Whisk together eggs, 1/2 cup cream, turkey stock, cheese, and parsley, then stir into stuffing and cool completely, about 30 minutes. Reserve 5 cups stuffing to stuff turkey and spoon remainder into baking dish, then drizzle with remaining 1/4 cup cream. Cover stuffing and chill.

About 1 hour before stuffed turkey is finished roasting, bring dish of stuffing to room temperature. When turkey is done, increase oven temperature to 425°F and bake stuffing, covered tightly with foil, until hot throughout, about 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake until top is golden and crisp, about 15 minutes more.