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How to Make Bread Stuffing (or Dressing) for Turkey

Stuffing (aka "dressing") is tradition at Thanksgiving and Christmas alongside the turkey! Here's an easy way to make the best stuffing you've had! Fully illustrated, step-by-step recipe and directions you can print out and put on the counter while you make it!

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup butter or margarine
- 2 large celery stalks, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped (1/2 cup)
- 9 cups soft bread cubes (about 15 slices) Slightly dried out works best. If you leave the bread spread out on a tray or cutting board overnight, that dries it out just right. Or warm the oven, turn it off and put the bread in there for 30 minutes.
- 1 & 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme leaves or 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt (I like Himalayan Pink salt)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground sage
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Turkey broth or chicken broth (2 cups)

Optional: My guests rave when I make the stuffing with these three added, in addition to the above:

- Diced, peeled, cored apples (2 large or 3 medium)
- 1 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans (or walnuts. I prefer pecans)

Equipment:

- Sauce pot
- 1 turkey sized oven bag
- Large bowl (biggest mixing bowl you have)
- Spatula to mix and stir
- Food processor or knives to chop



Step 1 - Chop the onion and celery

Carefully wash the celery (sand and gritty dirt sticks to the inside surfaces of the stalks).

Then dice the celery finely (I used a food processor or chopper). You should use the leaves, as well as the stalks.

Peel and chop the onion.



Step 2 - Cook the celery and onion

Melt the butter in medium pot (say, 4-quart). Add the chopped celery and onion and cook over medium heat until they are tender, about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. (you can chop the bread while it is cooking). Then remove from the heat.



Step 3 - Dice the bread into 1/2 (1.25 cm) cubes.

I use a large serrated knife to take stacks of 5 or so slices of bread at a time and slice them first one way, the rotate 90 degrees and cut the other way to get cubes.





Step 4 - Dice the apples

Peel and core the apples, then gently slice or dice them into roughly 1/2 inch (1 cm) cubes) and add them to the bread crumbs



Step 5 - Mix the all the ingredients

Gently toss the celery/onion mixture, the bread cubes, spices and all remaining ingredients (including the raisins, chopped nuts and diced apples), using a spoon or large spatula, until it is evenly mixed.



Step 6 - Stuff da Bird? Or cook separately?

Most food experts (whether they are chef's, like Wolfgang Puck, or food safety scientists) do NOT recommend stuffing the stuffing inside the turkey. Safety is the primary reason - it is difficult to ensure that all parts of the turkey and =stuffing reach at least 165 F to kill salmonella. Taste and practicality are also factors. The meat will tend to be overcooked, if the stuffing is cooked to 165 F in the center. And an unstuffed turkey takes much less time to cook!

So, I recommend baking the stuffing separately, and I have a simple, foolproof, no-cleanup method for you! All it takes is a large casserole pan or rectangular baking dish, 13x9x2 inches or so; and a large oven cooking bag. I use a turkey cooking bag like the one shown at right.

Simply put the stuffing into the bag (set the bag in the baking dish), add the 2 cups of turkey broth (or chicken broth) and close the bag. I don't tie the end super-tight, that allows pressure to escape.

Step 7 - Cooking the stuffing

Place stuffing in the bag in the baking dish in the oven and bake at 350 degrees F for about 90 minutes, until a meat thermometer reads 165 F to 175 F in the center.



Step 8 - You're done!

When you get to at least 165 F in the center, it's done.

Now, on to the [fat-free, but super-tasty gravy!](#)

- Looking for [simple apple pie directions](#) ?
- How about a [pumpkin pie](#) ?
- And for even more detailed turkey instructions see [Clemson University's page!](#)

<http://pickyourownchristmastree.org/TurkeyStuffing.php>