

RUSTIC STUFFING WITH MUSHROOMS AND LEEKS

SERVES 8-10

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1 ½ pounds rustic whole wheat or white bread, hard crust removed
6 Tablespoons unrefined, cold-pressed extra-virgin olive oil
½ pound shiitake mushrooms, wiped clean, stems removed and discarded, caps sliced
½ pound cremini mushrooms, wiped clean, quartered
2 stalks celery, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
2 leeks, cleaned and sliced
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 ½ teaspoons fresh thyme, chopped
1 teaspoon dried sage or poultry seasoning or 2 teaspoons fresh sage, chopped
2 Tablespoons flat-leaf parsley, chopped
2 teaspoons sea salt or 3 teaspoons if using unsalted stock
½ teaspoon black pepper
3-4 cups chicken, turkey or vegetable stock (depending on if you like it wet or dry)
2 Tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small dice (optional)

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1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Place bread in a food processor and process into large crumbs or cut into ½-inch dice. (I like to do a combination.) You should have 10 cups. Spread bread over 2 large shallow baking pans and bake in upper and lower thirds of oven, stirring occasionally and switching position of pans halfway through baking, until completely dry, about 25 minutes. Transfer bread to a large bowl.
3. Increase oven temperature to 450 degrees and grease a 13x9-inch baking dish.
4. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add mushrooms, celery, onion, leeks, and garlic, and sauté, stirring occasionally until softened, 10 minutes.
5. Stir in thyme, sage, parsley, salt and pepper. Add vegetables to bread, tossing to combine.
6. Pour chicken broth over the bread mixture, tossing to coat evenly.
7. Spread stuffing in a baking dish, dot with butter and cover tightly with foil. Bake in upper third of oven until heated through, about 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake stuffing until top is browned, 10 – 15 minutes more. Stuffing can also be baked in a well-greased 12-cup muffin tin.

Bread crumbs can be prepared several days in advance.

Vegetables can be chopped the day before.

Entire casserole can be prepared up to the point of baking the day before and refrigerated or frozen and then thawed and baked according to the directions.