

Devin Alexander

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Good-Enough-For-Thanksgiving Sausage-Cranberry Stuffing

From *The Most Decadent Diet Ever!*

Save: 309 calories, 34 g fat, 7 g sat. fat

Around Thanksgiving time, I tend to get inundated with fan letters asking if I have a recipe for low-carb stuffing. My response is always the same: my idea of low-carb stuffing is eating plenty of turkey, plenty of salad, coleslaw (see Colorful Coleslaw, page 189), or other healthy, low-carb sides, then eating just a little bit of stuffing made with real bread. Here, I lower the carbs even further by adding plenty of homemade sausage, and I help fill you up by using wheat bread instead of white. Just be sure to pick a fluffy wheat bread, not a grainy one.

Though this stuffing is amazing made according to the recipe, I do actually put it in the turkey on Thanksgiving. When it's baked in the turkey, I truly believe that it is better than any stuffing I've ever had. In fact, I'm so convinced, I served it to one of the producers of Seinfeld and his family when he hired me to cook his Thanksgiving dinner for the first time in my early days of catering. He tipped me more than I'd ever been tipped before and his family kept raving.

Note that I recommend lower-sodium (or reduced-sodium) chicken broth, not low-sodium. Made with truly low-sodium broth, this dish is not worth making. This stuffing can be made up to one day in advance. If you're putting it in a turkey, do not stuff the turkey until just before you are ready to cook it.

- Butter-flavored cooking spray
- 12 slices whole-wheat bread (about 70 calories per slice)
- Olive oil spray
- 1 recipe Sweet and Slim Italian Sausage (recipe follows), uncooked and unshaped
- 1-1/2 cups finely chopped sweet onion
- 1 cup finely chopped celery
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh garlic
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh sage
- 1-1/4 to 1-1/2 cups fat-free lower-sodium (not low-sodium) chicken broth, divided

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Preheat the oven to 300°F. Lightly mist a 2-1/2 to 3-quart ovenproof ceramic or glass casserole dish with butter-flavored cooking spray.

Place the slices of bread side by side in a single layer (they should not overlap) on a large nonstick baking sheet. Toast in the oven for 14 to 16 minutes per side, until the slices are dry (not at all soft in the center), but not more than very lightly browned.

Meanwhile, place a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. When the skillet is hot, lightly mist it with olive oil spray and put in the sausage mixture. Cook, breaking the sausage into bite-sized chunks, until no longer pink, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer the sausage to a large mixing bowl.

Turn the heat to medium, respray the pan, and put in the onions. Cook for 5 minutes, and then add the celery and garlic. Continue cooking until the celery is bright green and starts to soften slightly, 7 to 10 minutes. Add the celery mixture to the sausage.

Increase the oven temperature to 350°F.

When the bread is cooled enough to touch, cut each slice into 9 squares.

Add the bread, cranberries, and sage to the sausage mixture and stir until well combined. Drizzle 1 cup broth slowly over the top and stir it in until the liquid is absorbed. Slowly drizzle the butter over the top and stir that in.

Makes about 7 cups; 10 servings or 20 portions

Each portion (slightly heaping 1/3 cup) has: 102 calories, 8 g protein, 14 g carbohydrates, 2 g fat, <1 g saturated fat, 16 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 269 mg sodium

Each serving (heaping 2/3 cup) has: 205 calories, 15 g protein, 29 g carbohydrates, 4 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 32 mg cholesterol, 4 g fiber, 538 mg sodium

Traditional serving: 514 calories, 16 g protein, 27 g carbohydrates, 38 g fat, 8 g saturated fat, 56 mg cholesterol, 2 g fiber, 924 mg sodium

*Recipe taken from Devin Alexander's THE MOST DECADENT DIET EVER!
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Sweet and Slim Italian Sausage

From *The Most Decadent Diet Ever!*

Save: 184 calories, 22 g fat, 7 g saturated fat

Have you ever read the label on a package of sausage? What about turkey sausage? You may be shocked to read how much fat is contained in many sausages you find in grocery stores or have ordered from restaurant menus. And my problem is that I love it.

This is one of those recipes that I developed for myself years ago because I craved sausage. You'll notice that I use actual ground pork in this recipe. With only about 3.5 grams of fat for 4 ounces, there's no reason not to use it. I flavor the pork with the seasonings used in traditional sweet Italian sausage and create a similar texture by adding moisture with the combo of bread crumbs and egg substitute.

I wouldn't trade this for the world. True, it contains more salt than I'd like, but I did cut as much as I could without sacrificing that authentic taste. In the end, it has even 44 fewer calories and 7 fewer grams of fat than the leanest chicken or turkey sausage found in my local grocery store, and way less than that as compared to real pork sausage.

- Olive oil spray (must use real olive oil not Pam)
- 1 pound extra-lean ground pork or pork tenderloin, ground
- 1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon egg substitute
- 1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon plain dried bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1-1/2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

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Sweet and Slim Italian Sausage

From *The Most Decadent Diet Ever!*

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Lightly mist a small nonstick baking sheet with spray.

Mix the pork, egg substitute, bread crumbs, fennel seeds, garlic powder, Italian seasoning, onion powder, salt, cayenne, and black pepper in a medium mixing bowl. Divide into 8 equal amounts (about a heaping 1/4 cup each). Shape each into a log about 4 inches long and 1-1/2 inches thick. Place the logs side by side, not touching, on the prepared baking sheet. Mist them lightly with spray. Bake for 9 to 11 minutes, until no longer pink inside. Serve immediately.

Makes 8 links; 8 servings

Each portion (1 link) has: 96 calories, 14 g protein, 4 g carbohydrates, 2 g fat, <1 g saturated fat, 37 mg cholesterol, <1 g fiber, 293 mg sodium

Traditional serving (1 link): 280 calories, 12 g protein, 3 g carbohydrates, 24 g fat, 8 g saturated fat, 55 mg cholesterol, trace fiber, 980 mg sodium

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