



Savory Cornbread Dressing for the Holidays

My Grandmother's Secret

This dressing recipe is my grandmother's. She made it every Thanksgiving. I can still smell her kitchen. It was warm and full of laughter.

She taught me a big lesson. Food is more than eating. It is about sharing stories and time. That is why this recipe matters. It holds our family history.

Why We Dry the Bread

You must dry the cornbread first. It seems like a funny step. But it is

very important. Dry bread soaks up all the good broth.

Wet bread makes a mushy dressing. Nobody wants that. We want a dressing that is crisp on top and soft inside. The drying step gives us that perfect texture.

The Heart of the Dish

Now for the best part. We cook the sausage, onions, and celery. Doesn't that smell amazing? This is the flavor base. It makes the whole house feel like a holiday.

One year, my cousin Sam ate the sausage right from the pan. I still laugh at that. We had to cook more! What is your favorite smell from the holiday kitchen? Tell me, I would love to know.

Bringing It All Together

Next, we mix everything. The dry cornbread, the savory sausage, and the rich broth. Let it sit and get happy together. This wait is important. It lets the bread drink everything in.

Fun fact: The butter drizzled on top before baking makes that golden, crispy crust. It is the final magic touch. Do you like your dressing more soft or more crispy on top?

Your Turn in the Kitchen

This recipe has many steps. Do not worry. You can make the cornbread two days early. Breaking the work into parts makes it fun, not scary.

Cooking for others is a gift of love. That is why this matters. It is not just about a perfect dish. It is about the care you put into it. Will you be

trying this recipe for your next big meal? I hope you share it with someone you love.

Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Milk	2 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups	For cornbread
Vegetable oil	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	For cornbread
Large eggs	4	For cornbread
Cornmeal	2 cups	For cornbread (see note)
All-purpose flour	2 cups	For cornbread
Baking powder	4 teaspoons	For cornbread
Salt	1 teaspoon	For cornbread
Bulk pork sausage	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds	For dressing
Onions, chopped fine	2	For dressing
Celery ribs, chopped fine	3	For dressing
Unsalted butter	6 tablespoons	For dressing
Garlic cloves, minced	4	For dressing
Dried sage	1 teaspoon	For dressing
Dried thyme	1 teaspoon	For dressing
Low-sodium chicken broth	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	For dressing
Half-and-half	1 cup	For dressing
Large eggs	4	For dressing
Salt	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon	For dressing
Cayenne pepper	$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon	For dressing



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Instructions

Step 1: First, we make the cornbread. Heat your oven to 375 degrees. Grease your big baking pan. Whisk the milk, oil, and eggs in a bowl. Mix the dry stuff in another bowl. Combine them and whisk until smooth. Pour it all into the pan. Bake it until a toothpick comes out clean. Let it cool completely. (Greasing the pan well means your bread won't stick!)

See also [Spicy Andouille and Chipotle Cornbread Stuffing](#)

Step 2: Now, we dry the cornbread. Turn your oven way down to 250. Cut the cooled cornbread into little squares. Spread them on baking sheets. Bake them for almost an hour. This makes them nice and dry. It helps them soak up all the good broth later. Do you think dry bread soaks up flavor better? Share below!

Step 3: Time for the good smells! Cook the sausage in a big pan. Set the sausage aside on a paper towel. Now, cook the onions and celery in that tasty fat. Add the garlic and herbs. Doesn't that smell amazing? Stir in the chicken broth and take it off the heat.

Step 4: Let's mix it all together. Whisk the half-and-half, eggs, salt, and cayenne. Slowly whisk in the warm broth mixture. Now, gently fold in your dried cornbread and sausage. Let it sit and get happy for about 20 minutes. I still laugh at how it drinks up the liquid like a sponge.

Step 5: Finally, we bake! Heat your oven back to 375. Grease that same baking pan. Pour your mixture into the pan. Melt the last butter and drizzle it over the top. This makes the top so golden and crisp. Bake it until the top is beautifully browned. Let it rest for 15 minutes before serving. (Letting it rest makes it slice so neatly.)

Creative Twists

This recipe is like a favorite story. You can tell it a little differently each time. Try adding a cup of chopped apples for a sweet surprise. Use spicy sausage if your family likes a kick. For a cozy touch, mix in some dried cranberries. Which one would you try first? Comment below!

Serving & Pairing Ideas

This dressing is the heart of the plate. Serve it with simple roasted turkey and green beans. A spoonful of tart cranberry sauce on the side is perfect. For a drink, grown-ups love a glass of chilled apple cider. Kids and all can enjoy sparkling grape juice. Which would you choose tonight?

A Little Story from My Kitchen

My grandson once called this “the stuffing that’s not stuffed.” He was right. I always bake it in a pan. That way, everyone gets a piece of the crispy top. The sage and thyme smell like the holidays to me. It reminds me of my own grandmother’s kitchen.

See also [The Secret to Perfect Turkey Gravy](#)

Making the cornbread a day ahead is my secret. It gives you one less thing to do on the big day. The drying step is important. Trust me, I learned the hard way once. Soggy bread just won’t do. This recipe feeds a crowd with lots of love.



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Keeping Your Dressing Cozy for Later

Let's talk about storing this lovely dressing. First, let it cool completely. Then, cover it tight and pop it in the fridge. It will be happy there for three to four days. You can also freeze it for up to two months. Wrap it well in foil and a freezer bag.

To reheat, I like a warm oven. Cover it with foil and bake at 350 degrees. Add a splash of broth if it seems dry. I once reheated it in the microwave. It got a bit soggy, so I stick to the oven now.

Batch cooking matters. It saves you precious time on a busy holiday. Making the cornbread two days ahead is a wonderful trick. **Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!**

Simple Fixes for Common Hiccups

Sometimes our cooking needs a little help. Here are three common issues. First, dressing too dry. The cornbread must soak up that broth fully. Let it sit the full twenty minutes. I remember when I rushed this step once. The middle was too crumbly.

Second, dressing too wet. Be sure your cornbread cubes are truly dry. Bake them until they feel like little croutons. Third, a bland flavor. Do not skip the cayenne. It adds a tiny, important sparkle. *Fun fact: A little spice actually makes savory flavors taste richer!*

Fixing these issues builds your cooking confidence. It also makes sure every bite is full of flavor. **Which of these problems have you run into before?**

Your Quick Questions, Answered

Q: Can I make this gluten-free?

A: Yes! Use your favorite gluten-free flour blend. Make sure your cornmeal is certified gluten-free too.

Q: How far ahead can I make it?

A: You can assemble the whole dish a day ahead. Just cover and refrigerate. Add 10 minutes to the bake time.

Q: What if I don't have half-and-half?

A: Whole milk works fine. The dressing will still be wonderfully creamy.

Q: Can I halve the recipe?

A: Absolutely. Use an 8-inch square pan. Just watch the baking time closely.

See also Creamy Cashew Christmas Mac

Q: Any optional add-ins?

A: A handful of chopped pecans or dried cranberries is lovely. Stir them in before baking. **Which tip will you try first?**

From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope this recipe finds a place at your table. Food is about sharing stories and making memories. I would love to hear about your cooking adventure.

Tell me about your family's favorite holiday dish. Did you add your own special twist? **Have you tried this recipe?** Please share your thoughts in the comments below. Your stories are my favorite thing to read.



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Happy cooking!
—Elowen Thorn.



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Author: Elowen Thorn



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Cuisine: [American](#)



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Courses: [Side](#)



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Difficulty: **Beginner**



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Prep time: **45 minutes**



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Cook time:**2 hours**



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Rest time:**2 hours 35 minutes**



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Total time:**5 hours 20 minutes**



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Servings: **12 servings**



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Calories:**520 kcal**



Best Season: **Summer**

Description

Homemade Cornbread Dressing

Ingredients

Cornbread: 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups milk $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetable oil 4 large eggs 2 cups cornmeal (see note) 2 cups all-purpose flour 4 teaspoons baking powder 1 teaspoon salt

Dressing: 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds bulk pork sausage 2 onions, chopped fine 3 celery ribs, chopped fine 6 tablespoons unsalted butter 4 garlic cloves, minced 1 teaspoon dried sage 1 teaspoon dried thyme 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups low-sodium chicken broth 1 cup half-and-half 4 large eggs $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper

Instructions

1. **PREPARE CORNBREAD:** Adjust oven racks to upper-middle and lower-middle positions and heat oven to 375 degrees. Grease and flour 13- by 9-inch baking pan. Whisk milk, oil, and eggs in bowl; set aside. Combine cornmeal, flour, baking powder, and salt in large bowl. Add milk mixture, whisking until smooth. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake on lower-middle rack until golden and toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, about 30 minutes. Cool in pan on wire rack, about 2 hours. (Cornbread can be prepared up to 2 days in advance.)
2. **DRY CORNBREAD:** Heat oven to 250 degrees. Cut cornbread into 1-inch squares. Divide cornbread between two rimmed baking sheets and bake until dry, 50 to 60 minutes, switching and rotating baking sheets halfway through baking. Cool cornbread completely on sheets, about 30 minutes.
3. **SAUTÉ AROMATICS:** Cook sausage in large nonstick skillet over

medium-high heat until no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Transfer sausage to paper towel-lined plate and pour off all but 2 tablespoons fat from pan. Add onions, celery, and 2 tablespoons butter to fat in pan and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add garlic, sage, and thyme and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in broth, remove from heat, and let cool 5 minutes.

4. **SOAK CORNBREAD:** Whisk half-and-half, eggs, salt, and cayenne in large bowl. Slowly whisk in warm broth mixture until incorporated. Fold in dried cornbread and reserved sausage and let sit, tossing occasionally, until saturated, about 20 minutes.
5. **BAKE DRESSING:** Heat oven to 375 degrees. Grease 13- by 9-inch baking pan. Transfer soaked cornbread to prepared pan. Melt remaining butter and drizzle evenly over top. Bake on upper-middle rack until surface is golden brown and crisp, 30 to 40 minutes. Let cool 15 minutes. Serve.

Notes

Note on cornmeal: Use a medium or coarse grind for the best texture.

Keywords: Cornbread, Dressing, Sausage, Thanksgiving, Holiday