



Roast Chicken with Pear and Cornbread Stuffing

This cornbread recipe will make about twice as much as you need for the stuffing, but it is delicious by itself. The stuffing recipe can easily be doubled for use in a Thanksgiving turkey. It's also great combined with fresh oysters instead of pears for a holiday side dish.

Cornbread

- ½ cup flour
- ½ cup cornmeal
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons buttermilk
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 3 tablespoons melted butter

Cornbread Stuffing

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ cup diced carrot
- ½ cup diced onion
- 2 very ripe pears, peeled, cored, and cut into ½-inch dice (about 2 cups)
- 2 cups cubed cornbread (1/2-inch cubes)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage leaves
- ½ cup chicken stock
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

- 1 roasting chicken (3 ½ to 4 pounds)
- Olive oil for roasting

To prepare the cornbread: Preheat the oven to 350°. In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, cornmeal, salt, sugar, and baking powder. In another bowl, whisk the eggs. Blend in the buttermilk, sour cream, and melted butter. Combine the wet and dry ingredients with a few quick strokes. You only need to break up the largest lumps! Pour into a buttered 8 by 4 by 2-inch loaf pan and place in the oven. Bake until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Cool.

To prepare the stuffing: In a sauté pan over medium heat, heat the olive oil. Add the carrot and onion. Cook until lightly golden brown, about 15 minutes. Add the pear and toss together. Remove from the heat and combine with the cornbread, sage, and chicken stock. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To roast the chicken: Preheat the oven to 400°. Wash the chicken thoroughly inside and out and pat dry with a towel. Season the inside of the chicken with salt and pepper and fill with the stuffing. Tie the legs together. Rub the outside of the chicken with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Place on a rack in a roasting pan (I use a ceramic oval baking dish) with an inch of hot water in the bottom of the pan. This will help keep the bird moist while it roasts. Place in the oven. Reduce the heat to 350° and roast for about 1 hour and 15 minutes, or until the juices run clear when you poke a thigh with a sharp knife. (Getting the oven good and hot before adding the bird allows the fat on the skin to begin basting the bird right away.) Because the inside cavity is filled, the bird will have to cook entirely from the outside in. This may take a little longer.

To serve, remove the stuffing from the chicken and divide among 4 plates. Carve the breast meat and legs off of the chicken. Place a serve of chicken on top of the stuffing. Serve immediately.