

Roast Stuffed Chicken

Serves 6 to 8.

By Dennis W. Viau; modified from a recipe in *The Fine Art of Italian Cooking* by Giuliano Bugialli.

This chicken is supposedly “made in the manner of suckling pig” according to Bugialli. The comparison is a bird “filled with a large quantity of herbs, spices, and *pancetta*.” So are many other stuffed geese, turkeys, chickens, and ducks—and, evidently, suckling pigs. I had been wanting to do a recipe for stuffed chicken; so this was where I started.



Ingredients:

For the Stuffing:

2 bagels, dried and cut into cubes
2 cups (473ml) chicken stock, preferably homemade
1 large (or 2 small) bay leaf
½ cup (2 ounces/57g) uncooked wild rice
½ pound (227g) pork sausage meat, regular or flavored with sage
2 ounces (57g) pancetta, coarsely chopped
1 to 2 tablespoons of olive oil for frying
2 ounces (57g) prosciutto, coarsely chopped
1 large (12 ounces/340g) yellow onion, coarsely chopped
8 to 10 large fresh sage leaves, coarsely chopped
10 juniper berries, chopped fine
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary leaves (needles), chopped fine
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the Chicken:

1 large chicken, 4½ to 5½ pounds (2 to 2.5kg)
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

Stale bagels work best, but fresh is okay. Slice each bagel into three slices and then cut into cubes. Arrange on a baking sheet and place in an oven heated to 275°F (135°F) for 45 minutes to 1 hour. When they start to brown they can be removed from the oven and set aside to cool.

While the bagels are drying, heat the chicken stock in a medium saucepan and add the wild rice with the bay leaf. Bring to a boil, cover the pan, and reduce the heat to low. Simmer 35 to 40 minutes until tender.

The bagels should be ready about the time the rice is done. Put the bagels in a heat-proof large bowl and pour the rice and stock into the pan. Remove and discard the bay leaf. Set aside, but stir the bagel cubes periodically until all the liquid is absorbed.

Place the pork sausage and pancetta in a skillet over medium heat and sauté until the meat is cooked. Add the prosciutto and cook an additional minute. Transfer the meat to a bowl, reserving the oil in the pan.

Sauté the chopped onion in the skillet until tender and translucent, 8 to 10 minutes.

Assemble the stuffing by adding the meat and onion to the bowl of bagel pieces. Add the chopped sage, juniper berries, rosemary. Mix well and taste for salt. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. You will have extra stuffing. The stuffing can be made a day in advance and refrigerated until needed.

Heat the oven to 375°F (191°C).

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If preferred (some say not to), rinse the chicken and pat dry with paper towels. Loosely fill the chicken cavity with stuffing (it will expand, so leave a little room) and stitch the skin closed to encase the stuffing. Place the extra stuffing in a baking dish. Truss the chicken with kitchen string (see the video). Season the bird all over with salt and pepper.

Place the chicken in a large casserole or enameled dutch oven with the olive oil. Cover and bake 1 hour. Remove from the oven and raise the oven temperature to 425°F (218°C). Remove the cover and return the chicken to the oven with the baking dish of extra stuffing. Bake an additional 30 to 45 minutes until the skin is golden brown and the internal temperature of the stuffing reaches 160°F (71°C).

Remove from the oven and let rest 10 to 15 minutes. (The temperature of the stuffing will rise an additional 10 degrees as the heat equalizes.) Carve and serve with your favorite vegetables.

The step-by-step photos were removed. See the video for the preparation.