Chicken and Stuffing Supper Bake

One 9×13 in (23×33 cm) dish, at least 3.5 qt/3.3 L; 6 main-dish portions · Active 40 min · Total 1 hr 45 min

Ingredients

• About 8 cups firm white bread in 3/4-in/2-cm cubes (250 g before drying)

• 4 tablespoons butter (60 g), divided equally between sauce and topping

• 1 medium onion, finely chopped (150 g), for sauce

• 2 medium carrots, cut in 1/4-in/6-mm dice (180 g prepared)

• 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour (18 g)

• 1 1/2 cups milk (360 ml)

• 3/4 cup low-sodium chicken stock (180 ml), for sauce

• 1 lb fully cooked plain chicken, safely chilled and short-shredded (450 g)

• 1 cup frozen peas (140 g)

• 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

• 1 small onion, finely chopped (100 g), for topping

• 2 celery stalks, finely diced (100 g), for topping

• 1 teaspoon dried rubbed sage

• 1 1/4 cups low-sodium chicken stock (300 ml), for topping

Set out

Oven, 9×13 in (23×33 cm) baking dish, at least 3.5 qt/3.3 L, Large rimmed tray for bread, 12-in/30-cm deep skillet, Small skillet, Large bowl, Whisk, Rimmed baking sheet under dish, Food thermometer, Suitable foil if the topping colors before the center finishes

Allergens

Wheat, Milk, Celery; check bread, chicken and stock labels for egg, soy or other allergens. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat oven to 300°F (150°C). Spread bread cubes on their tray and bake 12–15 minutes, turning once, until the surfaces feel dry but are not hard. Transfer to the large bowl. Raise oven to 400°F (205°C) and put the baking dish on its rimmed sheet.

2. Meanwhile melt 30 g butter in the deep skillet over medium-low heat. Cook the 150 g sauce onion and carrots 10–12 minutes until carrots are nearly tender. Stir in flour for 1 minute, then gradually whisk in milk and 180 ml sauce stock. Simmer 3–4 minutes until lightly thickened. Fold in chicken, peas and pepper and simmer 5–6 minutes, or the pea packet time if longer, until filling reaches 165°F (74°C). Keep hot over low heat.

3. In the small skillet melt remaining 30 g butter. Cook topping onion and celery 8–10 minutes until soft. Stir in sage, then add to the bread with 300 ml topping stock. Turn gently and stand 5 minutes so stock distributes.

4. Spread hot chicken filling in the dish. Scatter moistened bread over it loosely without packing down. Bake 25–35 minutes until bread corners are golden and both the center of the stuffing layer and the filling reach 165°F (74°C) in several places. Shield the surface loosely with foil if needed while the center finishes.

5. Rest 5 minutes and divide into six portions.

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Check two centers

Probe the damp middle of the bread layer and then the chicken sauce in several places. Keep the probe from touching the pan, which can give a misleading reading.

A useful detail

The 105-minute total overlaps bread drying with sauce preparation and allows time for the topping vegetables, full bake and rest. Separate chicken cooking from raw is additional. No added salt is required because bread, stock and ready-cooked chicken vary.

Keep it well

Divide into shallow portions and refrigerate within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F (32°C), at 40°F (4°C) or below. Use within 3 days of the chicken’s original cooking or opening, or an earlier deadline. Reheat both stuffing and filling to 165°F (74°C). Freeze promptly cooled portions for up to 1 month for quality only within the chicken’s original safe window; thaw in the refrigerator.