

WILD MUSHROOM STUFFING

SOURCE: FOOD & WINE 11/01

INGREDIENTS:

1 2 lb loaf peasant bread (crusts trimmed), cut into 1 1/2" cubes	
1/3 C extra virgin olive oil	Salt & freshly ground pepper
1/2 C dried porcini mushrooms (1 oz)	1 C boiling water
1 1/2 C hazelnuts (about 6 oz)	2 sticks unsalted butter (1/2 lb)
1 medium onion, chopped	2 celery ribs, finely chopped
2 large shallots, minced	2 tsp chopped sage
2 lbs mixed wild mushrooms (tough stems trimmed & the rest finely chopped)	
3 C rich turkey stock (see recipe)	1 C dried cranberries (4 oz)
1/4 C chopped parsley	1 TBS chopped thyme

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 375° F. Butter 2 large baking dishes. On 2 large rimmed baking sheets, toss bread cubes with olive oil & season with salt & pepper - bake till golden (about 20 minutes). Let cool. Reduce oven temperature to 350° F.

In heatproof bowl, soak dried porcini in the boiling water till softened (about 20 minutes). Rub porcini to remove any grit, then remove from water - coarsely chop - slowly pour the soaking liquid into small saucepan, leaving behind any grit. Boil liquid over high heat till reduced to 1/4 C (about 5 minutes).

Spread hazelnuts on a rimmed baking sheet & toast 12 minutes or till richly browned - transfer to a kitchen towel & let cool completely. Rub hazelnuts in the towel to remove skins, then coarsely chop.

Melt 4 TBS butter in large skillet. Add onion & celery - cook over moderately low heat till softened (about 10 minutes). Scrape mixture into very large bowl. In the skillet, melt remaining 1 1/2 sticks of butter over moderately high heat. Add shallots & cook, stirring, till softened (about 3 minutes). Add fresh mushrooms, porcini & their reduced soaking liquid - season with salt & pepper. Cook over high heat till liquid evaporates (about 15 minutes). Add mushrooms to onion mixture in bowl, along with toasted bread, turkey stock, chopped hazelnuts, dried cranberries, parsley, thyme & sage. Toss well & season with salt & pepper.

Spread stuffing in prepared baking dishes & cover with foil. Bake about 30 minutes or till heated through. Uncover & bake till crusty (about 25 minutes more). [Unbaked stuffing can be refrigerated overnight - bake it slightly longer than called for above if chilled]