

VARIOUS TYPES OF BREAD

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BASIC STUFFING

12 cups 1/2-inch cubes homemade style white or whole wheat bread (about 1 pound)

2 cups chopped onion

1 cup chopped celery

6 tablespoons butter

1 teaspoon rubbed sage

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1 1/2 cups chicken broth

In a preheated 400 degree F oven, toast bread cubes 5 to 7 minutes or until barely golden.

In a large skillet, melt butter and cook onion and celery over medium heat for 3 minutes or until softened.

Transfer to a bowl and add bread cubes, herbs, salt, pepper, and chicken broth. Toss well and adjust seasoning. Transfer to baking dish and bake in Bake at 325 degrees F for 20 minutes until heated through and crust forms on top.

Variations:

Oyster-bacon stuffing:

12 cups 1/2-inch cubes homemade style white or whole wheat bread (about 1 pound)

1/2 pound bacon

2 cups chopped onion

1 cup chopped celery

24 oysters, shucked and chopped

2/3 cups fresh parsley

1 teaspoon rubbed sage

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1 1/2 cups chicken broth

In a preheated 400 degree F oven, toast bread cubes 5 to 7 minutes or until barely golden.

In a large skillet, cook the bacon over moderately low heat, stirring, until crisp. Transfer with slotted spoon to paper towels to drain. Pour off all but about 4 tablespoons of fat, cook onions and celery in bacon fat over medium heat for 3 minutes or until softened. Transfer to a bowl and add bread cubes, oysters, herbs, salt, pepper, and chicken broth. Toss well and adjust seasoning and bake.

Cornbread Stuffing:

12 cups 1/2-inch cubes cornbread (about 1 pound)

1/2 pound andouille, cut into 1/3-inch pieces

2 cups chopped onion

1 cup chopped celery

1 teaspoon rubbed sage

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1 1/2 cups chicken broth

In a preheated 400 degree F oven toast bread cubes 5 to 7 minutes or until barely golden.

In a large skillet, cook the sausage over moderately low heat, stirring, until cooked through. Add onions and celery and cook for 3 minutes or until softened. Transfer to a bowl and add bread cubes, herbs, salt, pepper, and chicken broth. Toss well and adjust seasoning and bake.

Apple-Pecan Stuffing:

12 cups 1/2-inch cubes homemade style white or whole wheat bread (about 1 pound)

1/2 cup butter

2 cups chopped onion

1 cup chopped celery

2 Golden Delicious apples, peeled, cut into 1/2-inch dice

1 teaspoon rubbed sage

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1 cup chopped roasted pecans

1 1/2 cups chicken broth

In a preheated 400 degree F oven, toast bread cubes 5 to 7 minutes or until barely golden.

In a large skillet, melt 6 tablespoons butter and cook onion and celery over medium heat for 3 minutes or until softened.

In another skillet, melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter, add apples, and saute until softened. Transfer onion mixture, apples, bread cubes, herbs, salt, pepper, pecans, and chicken broth. Toss well and adjust seasoning and bake.

Cheddar and Chive Bread

1 loaf baguette or French bread, split lengthwise, then cut in 1/2

2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese

10 blades fresh chives, chopped

Heat broiler. Lightly toast bread under hot broiler. Remove bread from broiler and cover with shredded cheddar cheese. Sprinkle cheese liberally with chopped chives and set aside. When you are ready to serve your meal, return bread to broiler to melt cheese. When cheese is bubbly and lightly browned, remove bread from broiler and cut into 2-inch chunks.

Classic Club Sandwich

12 slices white bread

3/4 cup mayonnaise

8 romaine lettuce leaves

16 slices vine-ripened tomatoes

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

16 slices crispy cooked bacon

16 ounces sliced roasted turkey

16 frill picks, or plastic cocktail swords

Serving suggestions:

Potato chips

Sweet Pickles

Toast the bread in a toaster, or under a broiler on both sides. Cut the lettuce leaves in half crosswise and form into 8 neat stacks.

To make a double-decker club: On a clean work surface, arrange 3 bread slices in a row. Spread 1 tablespoon mayonnaise over 1 side of each bread slice. Place a lettuce stack on top of the first bread slice, top with 2 tomato slices, and season with salt and pepper, to taste. Place 2 slices bacon over the tomatoes (broken to fit neatly if necessary) and top with 1/8 of the turkey (without letting any hang over the sides). Season the turkey with salt and pepper, to taste. Repeat with the second bread slice. Carefully place the second layered bread slice on top of the first layered bread, turkey side-up. Cover with the third bread slice, mayonnaise side-down. Pin the sandwich's layers together by piercing them with 4 frill picks or cocktail swords through the top bread slice, in 4 places in a diamond-like pattern, all the way to the bottom bread slice. Repeat entire process with the remaining ingredients to form 3 more sandwiches. Using a serrated knife cut each sandwich, diagonally, into 4 triangular pieces (each piece should be secured in the center with a pick or sword). Serve with potato chips and pickles.

Garlic Bread - A

4 cloves garlic, crushed
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 loaf crusty bread, split
3 tablespoons grated cheese, Parmigiano or Romano, optional
Chopped fresh parsley

Combine garlic, butter, and oil in a microwave safe dish or in a small saucepan. Heat garlic and butter and oil in microwave for 1 minute or in a small pot over moderate-low heat for 3 minutes.

Toast split bread under broiler. Remove bread when it is toasted golden brown in color. Brush bread liberally with garlic oil. Sprinkle with cheese, if using, and parsley. If you added cheese, return to broiler and brown 30 seconds. Cut into chunks and serve.

Garlic Bread - B

6 large garlic cloves, chopped
1/4 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
1/4 cup chopped fresh oregano leaves
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup good olive oil
1 loaf ciabatta bread
2 tablespoons unsalted butter

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Place the garlic in the bowl of a food processor and process until minced. Add the parsley, oregano, salt and pepper and pulse twice.

Heat the olive oil in a medium saute pan and add the garlic mixture. Remove the pan from the heat.

Slice the ciabatta bread in half horizontally, and spread the butter on 1 half. Spread the garlic mixture on the other half of the bread, and put the halves together. Wrap the bread in aluminum foil. Place the bread in the oven and bake for 5 minutes. Open the foil, and continue baking for an additional 5 minutes.

Grilled Bread (Pane alla Grillia)

1 loaf ciabatta bread
1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 large cloves garlic
1 tomato, halved crosswise
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat a grill pan over medium-high heat. Slice ciabatta in half lengthwise. Then cut each half into 1-inch slices. In batches as needed, grill the ciabatta slices, cut side down until they are golden and crisp, about 2 minutes. Working quickly, drizzle the toasted sides with extra-virgin olive oil. Rub the garlic cloves over the grilled bread, then rub the cut side of the tomatoes over the grilled bread. It's important to do this while the bread is still hot or warm, otherwise the garlic won't melt into the bread. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, and serve warm.

Grilled Garlic Bread

1/4 cup virgin olive oil
1 clove garlic, mashed and diced
1 teaspoon dried basil
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
8 slices (3/4-inch thick) French bread
1/2 cup shredded mozzarella
1/2 cup grated Parmesan

Preheat the grill until the coals are somewhat gray with ash; the flame should be low. Meanwhile, combine the olive oil, garlic, basil, and oregano in a small bowl. Brush both sides of the bread with the olive oil mixture and sprinkle 1 side of the bread with the cheeses. When the coals are ready, place the bread, cheese side up, on the grill. Cover and cook the bread until the cheese melts and the underside of the bread is toasted, 1 to 2 minutes. Serve warm.

Stuffed Garlic Bread

1 loaf French or Italian bread, about 22-inches in length
12 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup grated Parmesan
1 1/2 teaspoons Essence, recipe follows
2 teaspoons minced garlic
1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
3/4 pound fresh mild or spicy Italian sausage, removed from the casing
1 cup thinly sliced yellow onion
1/2 cup thinly sliced green bell pepper
Pinch crushed red pepper

1 tablespoon chopped garlic

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F and line a large baking sheet with aluminum foil.

Using a serrated bread knife, cut the bread in half lengthwise. Lay the two halves of bread cut-side up on the lined baking sheet.

In a small mixing bowl combine the butter, olive oil, grated Parmesan, Essence, garlic, parsley, and salt and mix well with a rubber spatula or fork. Spread the butter mixture evenly onto the two halves of bread. Place on the baking sheet and bake until just starting to get bubbly but not brown, about 10 minutes. Remove from the oven.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the sausage and cook, stirring and breaking up with a large wooden spoon, until cooked through and the fat is rendered, about 5 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.

Add the onions, peppers, and red pepper, and cook, stirring, until soft, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Remove from the heat, add the sausage back to the pan, and stir well. Spread the sausage mixture evenly over the bottom half of the French bread and cover with the top half. Wrap in aluminum foil and return to the oven to warm through and for the flavors to blend, 5 to 6 minutes. Remove bread from the oven, slice and serve immediately.

Essence (Emeril's Creole Seasoning):

2 1/2 tablespoons paprika

2 tablespoons salt

2 tablespoons garlic powder

1 tablespoon black pepper

1 tablespoon onion powder

1 tablespoon cayenne pepper

1 tablespoon dried leaf oregano

1 tablespoon dried thyme

Combine all ingredients thoroughly and store in an airtight jar or container.

Yield: about 2/3 cup

Louisiana Garlic Bread

4 ounces (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature

2 teaspoons chopped garlic

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 large loaf French bread, halved lengthwise

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. (Bread can also be done on the grill or in a barbeque pit.)

Combine the butter, garlic, lemon juice, parsley, and black pepper in a small mixing bowl. Stir to blend well. Spread both halves of the bread with the mixture. Put the halves together, wrap in a sheet of aluminum foil, and place in the oven or on the grill until bread is heated through, about 15 minutes. Serve warm.

Olive Ladder Bread (Fougasse)

2 1/2 cups lukewarm water

1 teaspoon dry yeast

6-7 cups unbleached all purpose flour

2 tablespoons olive oil plus extra for oiling surfaces

2 teaspoons salt
1 1/2 cups pitted and chopped black olives (Nyons or Kalamata)
1/4 cup buckwheat flour

You will need a large bread bowl, four 10- by 15- inch or larger baking sheets that will fit in pairs side-by-side in your oven, a sharp knife or razor blade, and a pastry brush.

Place water in a large bowl, sprinkle on yeast, then stir in 2 1/2 cups of the all purpose flour. Stir 100 times in the same direction (one minute) to develop the gluten, then leave this sponge covered with plastic wrap for 30 minutes or up to two hours. Stir in olive oil, salt, olives, and buckwheat flour. Mix in remaining flour, a cup at a time, stirring always in the same direction, until dough becomes too stiff to stir. Turn dough out onto a well floured working surface. Using floured hands, knead gently until the dough has an even consistency (apart from the olives), then knead 5 minutes longer. Clean bread bowl, oil it lightly, place dough in the bowl, then cover with plastic wrap. Let rise for 2 to 3 hours. It will have almost doubled in volume.

Oil two 10 by 15 inch (or larger) baking sheets. Flatten dough down gently with your hands, then turn out onto floured working surface. Cut dough in half, return half to the bread bowl and cover. Divide remaining half in two. Knead each half into a ball and then flatten gently with the palm of your hand. Let stand five minutes to rest. Working with each piece in turn, flatten out with your palms into a rectangle or oval about 10 inches long and 5 to 6 inches wide. It will be about 1/2 to 3/4 inch thick. Transfer each to a lightly oiled baking sheet at least 14 inches long. Let loaves rise for 20 to 30 minutes, covered with a damp towel or plastic wrap. Preheat oven to 400 degrees and set rack at the center of the oven or just above. (If your baking sheets do not fit side-by-side on one rack, place two racks in oven, one just above the center and one just below. One bread can go on each rack; about halfway through baking (after 10 to 12 minutes), switch the two around.) Just before placing in the oven, use a sharp knife or razor blade to make cuts through the breads: Starting two inches from the top and about an inch from the side, cut across the bread to within an inch of the other side. Make two more cuts, parallel to the first, at about 2 inch intervals (the cuts should go all the way through the dough). The dough will separate at each cut, so that the bread looks like a kind of fat-runged ladder; you can pull dough apart even more if you wish and if your baking sheets are long enough, by pulling gently on each end of the breads to make the slits gape more. Brush each loaf lightly with olive oil all over, place in the oven, and bake for 20 minutes. Breads will be golden when done.

Once first two loaves are in the oven, oil two more baking sheets, then flatten remaining dough, divide into two, and repeat steps required to form loaves. Breads should almost have finished rising by the time the first batch comes out of the oven.

Pita Bread

Fresh homemade pita - made with half white, half whole wheat flour - are easy to make and delicious. They are best when baked on a baking stone or unglazed quarry tiles; you can also place them on a baking sheet.

1 teaspoon dry yeast
2 1/2 cups warm water (approximately 105 degrees F)
2 cups whole wheat flour
About 4 cups unbleached all-purpose or bread flour
1 tablespoon salt
1 to 2 tablespoons olive oil

You will need a large bread bowl, a rolling pin, and unglazed quarry tiles or several baking sheets, or alternatively a castiron or other heavy skillet or griddle at least 9 inches in diameter.

Sprinkle the yeast over the warm water in a large bread bowl. Stir to dissolve. Add whole wheat flour, one cup at a time, then 1 cup white flour. Stir 100 times (one minute) in the same direction to activate the gluten in the flour. Let this sponge rest for at least 10 minutes or as long as 2 hours.

Sprinkle salt over the sponge and stir in the olive oil. Mix well. Add white flour, one cup at a time. When the dough is too stiff to stir, turn it out onto a lightly floured bread board and knead for 8 to 10 minutes, until dough is smooth and elastic. Return the dough to a lightly oiled bread bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Let rise until at least double in size, approximately 1 1/2 hours. Gently punch down. Dough can be made ahead to this point and then stored, covered, in the refrigerator for 5 days or less.

If at this time you want to save the dough in the refrigerator for baking later, simply wrap it in a plastic bag that is at least three times the size of the dough, pull the bag together, and secure it just at the opening of the bag. This will give the dough a chance to expand when it is in the refrigerator (which it will do). From day to day, simply cut off the amount of dough you need and keep the rest in the refrigerator, for up to one week. The dough will smell slightly fermented after a few days, but this simply improves the taste of the bread. Dough should be brought to room temperature before baking.

This amount of dough will make approximately 16 pitas if rolled out into circles approximately 8 to 9 inches in diameter and less than 1/4-inch thick. You can also of course make smaller breads. Size and shape all depend on you, but for breads of this dimension the following baking tips apply:

Place unglazed quarry tiles, or a large baking stone or two baking sheets, on a rack in the bottom third of your oven, leaving a one inch gap all around to allow air to circulate. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Divide dough in half, then set half aside, covered, while you work with the rest. Divide dough into eight equal pieces and flatten each piece with lightly floured hands. Roll out each piece to a circle 8 to 9 inches in diameter. You may wish to roll out all eight before starting to bake. Cover rolled out breads, but do not stack.

Bake 2 at a time (or more if your oven is larger) directly on quarry tiles or baking sheets. Bake each bread for 3 or 4 minutes, until the bread has gone into a full "balloon" or until it is starting to turn lightly golden, whichever happens first. If there are seams or dry bits of dough - or for a variety of other reasons - your bread may not go into a full "balloon". Don't worry, it will still taste great. The more you bake pitas the more you will become familiar with all the little tricks and pitfalls, and your breads will more consistently "balloon." But even then, if you're like us, it won't always "balloon" fully and you won't mind because the taste will still be wonderful. When baked, remove, place on a rack for about five minutes to let cool slightly, then wrap breads in a large kitchen towel (this will keep the breads soft). When first half of the dough has been rolled out and baked, repeat for rest of dough, or store in refrigerator for later use, as described above. You can also divide the dough into more, smaller pieces if you wish, to give you smaller breads.

Seven Onion Soup with Parmesan-Garlic Bread

4 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 slices bacon, chopped
1 1/2 cups sliced yellow onions
1 1/2 cups sliced red onions
1 1/2 cups sliced white onions
1 cup sliced shallots

1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 bay leaf
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1 cup sliced leeks, bottoms only, well rinsed in several changes of water
1 cup sliced scallions (white parts only)
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
2 quarts chicken stock
1 cup cream
Salt and pepper
3 teaspoons snipped chives, for garnish
Shaved Parmesan, for garnish
Parmesan-Garlic Bread, recipe follows

In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Add the bacon and cook until the fat is rendered and the bacon is crisp, about 7 minutes. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon, drain on paper towels, and set aside for garnish.

To the fat remaining in the pan, add the yellow, red, and white onions, shallots, salt, pepper, bay leaf, and thyme and cook, stirring, until very soft and starting to caramelize, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the leeks and scallions and cook until soft, 3 to 4 minutes. Dust flour over, and stir and cook until flour turns light golden. Add the stock and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer uncovered for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the cream, stir well to incorporate, and cook for 15 minutes.

Remove the bay leaf and pulse soup with an immersion blender. Return to the pot, stir to combine, and heat gently.

Divide the soup into bowls and garnish each serving with bacon, chives, and a little shaved Parmesan. Serve slices of the Parmesan-Garlic bread on the side and serve immediately.

Parmesan-Garlic Bread:

8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 1/2 teaspoons freshly chopped parsley leaves
1 teaspoon freshly chopped chives
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (about 1 1/2 ounces)
1 (12 to 14-inch long) French baguette, ends trimmed and cut in 1/2 lengthwise

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line a large baking sheet with aluminum foil and set aside. Cream the butter, garlic, parsley, chives, salt, pepper, and half of the cheese in a small bowl using a wooden spoon or rubber spatula. Spread both halves of the bread evenly with the garlic butter and top with the remaining grated cheese. Place the bread halves on the prepared baking sheet, cut sides up, and bake until fragrant and lightly golden around the edges, 12 to 15 minutes. (Alternatively, broil until golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes.) Cut crosswise on the diagonal into 1 1/2-inch slices. Serve hot.

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

Sweet Potato Bread with Pecans

2 1/3 cups sugar

2/3 cups water

2/3 cup oil

4 eggs

2 cups mashed sweet potatoes

3 1/3 cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking soda

1 1/2 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1 cup coarsely chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Combine sugar, water, oil, eggs, and sweet potatoes and mix thoroughly. Add dry ingredients and mix to combine. Add pecans and mix well. Divide between 2 greased loaf pans and bake for 50 minutes. Cool in pan to room temperature.