

Stuffed Winter Squash with Rice and Sausage

serves 6

This stuffing is delicious baked in the bird or baked in a greased casserole dish, but love the look and taste of baking it in delicata squash halves. It also makes for very tidy serving. The stuffing can be made ahead a day or two and kept covered in the refrigerator or a couple of weeks ahead and kept in the freezer. Wait to stuff the squash halves until the day of baking. One of the squash boats is a generous serving, perfect if it is your main side dish. If you are serving it with many side dishes, such as on Thanksgiving, they neatly cut in half.

3 small delicata squash
2 cups chicken broth
1 cup dry wild rice blend
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon butter
1/2 pound Italian sausage (chicken or pork)
1 cup small-diced onion
1 cup small-diced celery
1 clove garlic
3/4 teaspoon poultry seasoning
1/3 cup white wine
1 handful parsley, minced
1 egg, lightly beaten
salt and pepper



Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Cut the delicata squash down the middle lengthwise. Use a spoon to scoop out the seeds and membrane. Save the seeds to roast! Set the squash boats aside.

Bring the chicken broth to boiling in a small pot. Add 1 teaspoon salt and the wild rice. Return to boiling, then cover and turn down to simmer until the rice has absorbed all the broth. Fluff with a fork and set aside.

Meanwhile in a large pan, heat the olive oil until it shimmers, then add the Italian sausage. Cook while breaking up with a spoon until the sausage begins to brown and is no longer pink on the inside. Add the onion, celery, garlic, and poultry seasoning. Cook until the vegetables soften, but do not brown. Pour the white wine over the pan and stir to deglaze the pan. Stir in the wild rice and parsley. Season with salt and pepper. Mix in the beaten egg.

Lay the squash halves open side up on a greased baking sheet. Prick the insides multiple times with a fork. Generously season the inside of the squash with salt and pepper.

Scoop the stuffing mixture into the prepared squash halves. Press the mixture into the hollows and neatly mound over the top. Pour 1/2 cup water into the bottom of the baking sheet. Loosely cover the squash with foil, then slide the baking sheet into the oven. After 30 minutes, remove the foil. Bake an additional 20 -30 minutes or until the squash is tender, but not mushy and the stuffing has browned a bit on top. Transfer the squash to the serving dish and garnish with a bit of parsley.