

Giving Thanks

Thanksgiving. It's like a giant stop sign right in the middle of our zany holiday coming and goings. Thanksgiving. Stop and reflect.

Businesses are closed, and stores are darkened. Folks are either in their kitchens stuffing the turkey or wedging the homemade pies into strategic spots of the car to ensure safe delivery to the aunt whose turn it is to play hostess.

And we each have a favorite part of the day: the parade, the meal, the football games, the nap, the sandwich afterward. But topping any and all of these things is our personal list of things to be thankful for. Everyone's list is different. Some may be longer than others. And some people might have a hard time starting a list. A dear friend of mine has had many health setbacks over the past few years. One might think, "The poor thing. What does she have to be thankful for?" But I assure you this woman's list would go around the block because she sees the goodness in the things most of us tend to overlook.

To not take things for granted is easier said than done for so many of us. Why is that?

Let's take a heads-up from the happenings around us and use this holiday as a means for sprinkling our thanks not only into the mound of mashed potatoes before us but also into our conversations with the brother we never got around to thanking for picking us up in the rainstorm the night our car died, the kid sister who always babysits on a minute's notice, or the elderly uncle who served in World War II.

This Thanksgiving let's broaden the focus of our thanks beyond the masterly concoctions gracing the cornucopia tablecloth. Let's include the people who are surrounding the table and even those loved ones who couldn't make it.

We are a bounty unto ourselves.

Celebrating one another is much less fattening than second helpings of pumpkin pie but can sweeten the occasion beyond belief. It's worth trying, and mark my words, everyone will give thanks.

~ Sharon Lee Riguzzi

Stuffing with Sage and Chives

PointsPlus Value - 3

Serves: 8

This stuffing is infused with the wonderful flavors of sage and chive. Whole wheat bread adds lots of healthy fiber.

| Ingredients |
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| 1 spray(s) cooking spray |
| 12 slice(s) whole wheat bread, cubed* |
| 2 tsp olive oil |
| 2 tsp light butter |
| 1 cup(s) uncooked onion(s), diced |
| 3 rib(s) (medium) uncooked celery, diced |
| 2 tsp dried thyme |
| 2 tsp dried sage |
| 1/2 tsp table salt |
| 1/4 tsp black pepper, freshly ground |
| 2 cup(s) canned chicken broth |
| 2 Tbsp chives, fresh, chopped |

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 4-quart shallow baking dish with cooking spray.
- Arrange bread cubes on a large ungreased baking sheet in a single layer (use 2 baking sheets if there's not enough room). Bake until lightly toasted, about 8 to 10 minutes. Remove bread from oven and set aside; leave oven set to 350°F.
- Meanwhile, in a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat oil and butter together for 1 to 2 minutes. Add onion and celery; sauté until soft, about 3 minutes. Add thyme, sage, salt and pepper; stir to coat. Cook until herbs are fragrant, about 1 minute.
- Transfer onion mixture to a large mixing bowl. Add bread, broth and chives; toss to combine. Spoon mixture into prepared baking dish and cover with foil; bake 20 minutes. Uncover and bake until top is golden brown, about 15 minutes more. Divide into 8 pieces and serve. Yields 1 piece per serving.

Notes

- *Leave the bread bag open and somewhat uncovered for 1 to 2 days (at room temperature) before making the recipe.

Feel free to substitute your favorite bread, such as whole grain, sourdough or a light variety (could affect **PointsPlus** values).

For added flavor, you can also add about 1 cup of diced Granny Smith or McIntosh apples to the stuffing (could affect **PointsPlus** values).

You can make this stuffing in advance and bake it just before serving. The stuffing will last up to 3 days in the refrigerator or 3 months in the freezer. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator

before baking as directed