Classic Christmas Stuffing

Serves 8

Prep time: 20 minutes - Cook time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 loaf (about 450g) of crusty bread, cut into 2–3cm cubes (preferably a day old)
- 115g unsalted butter
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 3 celery sticks, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp fresh sage, finely chopped (or 1 tsp dried)
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme, chopped (or 1 tsp dried)
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 475ml chicken or vegetable stock (low salt if possible)
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten

Optional extras:

- *½ apple (chopped), a handful of dried cranberries, 225g cooked sausage meat, or a small handful of chopped nuts (pecans, chestnuts or walnuts all work well)*

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) / Gas 4. Lightly butter a large ovenproof dish.
2. **Dry the bread:** Spread the bread cubes on a baking tray and bake for 10–15 minutes until just crisp and dry.
3. **Cook the veg:** Melt the butter in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and celery and cook gently for about 8–10 minutes until soft but not browned. Add the garlic, salt, pepper, sage and thyme, and cook for another minute.
4. **Combine:** Tip the toasted bread into a large mixing bowl. Add the cooked vegetables and herbs, then stir through the parsley.
5. **Add the liquid:** Pour over the stock, a little at a time, tossing gently until the bread is evenly moistened but not soggy. Stir in the beaten eggs to bind everything together.