

Dave's Flour-Free Stuffing (Dressing) Good stuffing was always my favorite part of holiday meals!

For the last couple of years, I've enjoyed making something that has the scents and flavors of holiday dressing (stuffing), but without the flour from the bread. So I've replaced the *refined* grain with a cooked, *whole, intact* grain. The same results could probably be achieved with similar grains, like wheat berries, kamut, farro, or barley. And for gluten-free options, one could use whole oat kernels (aka "groats"), brown or wild rice, or any other gluten-free grain.

The first time I made this was with kamut on my desk at work during the evening of Wednesday, November 13, 2019. The second time was at work again on Monday, December 9th, 2019 and the kamut was undercooked. The third time was at home on Monday, December 23rd, 2019. The fourth time I used **farro** at home on Saturday, November 28, 2020.

The process is four parts: 1) prep, 2) cooking the grain, 3) sauteing the rest, and 4) combining and baking all of it.

I began with cooking the grain. This could be done a day (or more) in advance.

I used our 8-cup rice cooker. I combined and cooked the following on "brown rice" mode.

- 1 cup (dry) **whole, intact grain** (Some larger grains, like kamut, may need pre-soaking for best results.)
- 3 cups of **vegetable broth** (or **water** with a **vegetable stock paste** or **bullion**.)
- 1 ½ tsp. **ground sage**
- 1 tsp. **all-purpose seasoning** (like Mrs. Dash[®], Bragg[®], or Trader Joe[®] brands)
- generous splash of Bragg[®] **liquid aminos** (or soy sauce)
- 1 tsp. **garlic powder**
- 3 sprigs of fresh **rosemary** (I stuff them into a small cloth bag that is easily removed after cooking.)

While the grain cooked, I prepared the following ingredients as described below.

- 2-3 medium-sized **carrots**, finely chopped
- 6-8 oz. package of **mushrooms**, chopped
- 1 medium-large **onion**, chopped
- 2-3 cloves of **garlic**, finely chopped/minced
- 4-6 medium-sized **celery** stalks, finely chopped
- 1 crisp **apple**, chopped (any variety that holds up to cooking – Honeycrisp, Pink Lady, Granny Smith...)
- ½ cup **dried/sweetened cranberries**
- ½ cup **hazelnuts/filberts** broken/crushed
- generous splash of **Tawny Port** (a very sweet wine)
- **water chestnuts** (OPTIONAL... I haven't used these yet, as so many other ingredients already provide crunch.)

After the above ingredients were prepared, I gave a generous splash of Tawny Port to the pan and watched for it to heat to a good medium sauté temperature. I began with the carrots. As they became tender, I added the mushrooms. After the mushrooms shrunk, I added the onions and garlic. When the onions began to turn glassy, I added the celery, apples, cranberries and nuts. No extra liquids were needed, just the moisture from the ingredients themselves.

Once everything was hot, I removed the pan from the heat and stirred in the following:

- the **cooked grains**
- some **ground black pepper** to taste
- some **parsley** (fresh or dried) to taste
- some **all-purpose seasoning** to taste

Finally, I poured everything into a large baking pan again, and baked it uncovered at 350° for at least 30 minutes before serving. It was so good!!! My sons had seconds without being asked, and even my wife liked it!

Here's something I particularly like about this recipe: as a leftover, when warmed up, it isn't soggy, like bread-based dressings/stuffings usually are. The whole grains give it the same flavor and mouthfeel it had the day it was made.