

Cranberry-Stuffed Cornish Game Hens

Yields: 6

INGREDIENTS:

8 ounces rye bread (about 1/2 loaf), trimmed of crust and cut into 1/4 inch dice
1/2 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 small leek, white, and pale green parts only, halved lengthwise, thinly sliced into half-moons, and rinsed well
3 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stemmed, wiped clean, and coarsely chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1 teaspoon coarse salt
1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage, plus leaves (optional), for garnish
1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
3/4 cup dried cranberries
3/4 cup reduced-fat, low sodium canned chicken broth
6 Cornish game hens (1 1/2 pounds each)
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, room temperature
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1/2 cup port

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spread out diced bread on a rimmed baking sheet; toast in oven, turning occasionally, until light brown and dry, 10 to 12 minutes. Set aside.

Raise oven temperature to 450 degrees. In a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat until hot. Add leek, mushrooms, garlic, and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring occasionally until softened, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a bowl; stir in bread, chopped sage, parsley, mustard, thyme, 1/2 cup dried cranberries, and 1/2 cup broth.

Spoon stuffing into bird cavities; tie legs together with kitchen twine. Rub birds with butter, then sprinkle with pepper and remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt.

Arrange birds on a roasting rack in a large roasting pan. Roast until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees, and continue roasting until thermometer inserted into thickest part of thighs registers 170 degrees, 15 to 20 minutes more. Transfer rack with birds to a rimmed baking sheet, and let rest.

Set roasting pan on top of stove across two burners; set heat to medium-high. Add port and remaining 1/4 cup broth; deglaze pan, scraping up any browned bits from bottom. Add remaining 1/4 cup dried cranberries; cook, stirring, until sauce reduces slightly, 2 to 3 minutes.

Place birds on a serving platter, and drizzle sauce over them. Garnish with sage leaves, if desired. Serve and ENJOY!