Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 25–30 minutes | Total Time: 50 minutes
Yield: 8 servings | Intensity Level: Easy–Moderate

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Introduction

Cheesy Ground Beef Stuffed Bread is the ultimate crowd-pleaser — a golden, crusty loaf stuffed to the brim with seasoned ground beef, melted cheese, and savory onions, then

baked until the bread is crisp and the filling is bubbling hot. Think of it as a calzone’s easier cousin: instead of fussing with dough from scratch, you hollow out a rustic loaf (or use a store-bought pizza dough), fill it with a rich, saucy beef mixture, and bake it until the cheese oozes out the sides. It slices beautifully into hearty wedges that are perfect for game day, potlucks, or a fun Friday-night dinner. The filling is deeply savory, with garlic, tomato paste, and Italian herbs, and you can customize it endlessly — add mushrooms, bell peppers, or swap in sausage. Best of all, it’s an impressive-looking centerpiece that takes under an hour and requires no special skills. Serve it with marinara for dipping and watch it disappear.

Ingredients

For the Filling

- 1 lb (450 g) lean ground beef (85/15 recommended)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, finely diced (about ¾ cup)
- 1 small green bell pepper, finely diced (optional)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp dried oregano

- 1 tsp dried basil
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- ¼ tsp red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 can (8 oz / 225 g) tomato sauce
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1½ cups (170 g) shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
- ½ cup (60 g) shredded sharp cheddar or provolone

For the Bread

- 1 large round rustic loaf (about 1 lb / 450 g), such as sourdough or Italian, or 1 lb pizza dough
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

- 2 cloves garlic, minced (for the garlic butter)
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 2 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley, for garnish

For Serving

- Warm marinara sauce, for dipping
- Extra red pepper flakes (optional)

Equipment

- Large skillet
- Baking sheet
- Parchment paper
- Serrated knife

- Pastry brush
- Spoon or ice cream scoop

Time & Intensity Breakdown

Stage	Time	Intensity	What's Happening
Prep ingredients	8 min	Low	Dice onion, garlic, bell pepper; shred cheese
Brown the beef	6–7 min	Moderate	Sear until browned; drain excess fat
Build the filling	5–6 min	Moderate	Bloom spices; simmer with tomato sauce
Prep the bread	5 min	Moderate	Hollow out the loaf, keeping the lid
Fill & top	4 min	Low	Layer beef, cheese, and bread lid
Bake	20–25 min	Low (passive)	Bread crisps; cheese melts
Rest & serve	5 min	Low (passive)	Filling sets; slice cleanly

Total active time: ~28 minutes | Total passive time: ~22 minutes

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Instructions

Step 1: Prep the Ingredients (8 minutes | Low Intensity)

Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Dice the onion and green bell pepper (if using) finely, and mince the garlic. Shred the cheeses if not pre-shredded. Measure out your spices into a small dish so the filling comes together quickly once the beef is browned.

Step 2: Brown the Beef (6–7 minutes | Moderate Intensity)

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add the ground beef and cook for 6–7 minutes, breaking it into small crumbles with a wooden spoon, until no pink remains and some edges are browned. Let the beef sit undisturbed for a minute at a time so it develops a flavorful crust. If there's excess fat pooling, spoon most of it off, leaving about 1 tablespoon for flavor.

Step 3: Build the Filling (5–6 minutes | Moderate Intensity)

Reduce the heat to medium. Add the diced onion and bell pepper to the beef and cook, stirring, for 2–3 minutes, until softened. Add the minced garlic, tomato paste, oregano, basil, smoked paprika, red pepper flakes (if using), salt, and pepper. Stir constantly for 1 minute — the tomato paste will darken and the spices will bloom. Pour in the tomato sauce and Worcestershire sauce, stir to combine, and simmer for 2–3 minutes, until the mixture thickens slightly. Remove from heat and stir in ½ cup of the mozzarella. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

Step 4: Prep the Bread (5 minutes | Moderate Intensity)

Using a serrated knife, slice off the top ¼ of the loaf to create a "lid" and set it aside. Hollow out the bottom of the loaf, leaving a ½-inch-thick shell all around — pull out the soft interior in chunks, leaving the crust intact so the bread holds its shape. (Save the torn bread for breadcrumbs or croutons.) If using pizza dough instead, roll it into a large rectangle on parchment paper, pile the filling down the center, and fold the dough over, pinching the seams to seal.

Step 5: Fill and Top (4 minutes | Low Intensity)

Spoon the beef filling into the hollowed loaf, packing it gently. Top with the remaining mozzarella and the cheddar or provolone. Place the bread lid back on top. In a small bowl, stir together the melted butter, minced garlic, and Italian seasoning, then brush the garlic butter generously over the entire loaf — including the lid and sides. Sprinkle with the grated

Parmesan.

Step 6: Bake (20–25 minutes | Low Intensity, Passive)

Transfer the stuffed loaf to the prepared baking sheet. Bake on the middle rack for 20–25 minutes, until the bread is golden and crisp and the cheese is melted and bubbling (some may ooze out the sides — that's a good sign). If the top is browning too quickly, tent loosely with foil for the final 5 minutes. For an extra-crisp crust, broil for the last 1–2 minutes, watching closely.

Step 7: Rest and Serve (5 minutes | Low Intensity, Passive)

Let the loaf rest for 5 minutes before slicing — this allows the filling to set so the wedges hold together. Use a serrated knife to cut into thick slices or wedges. Garnish with chopped fresh parsley and serve with warm marinara for dipping.

Flavor Variations

- Philly Cheesesteak: Swap the mozzarella for provolone and add sautéed mushrooms and bell peppers.
- Mexican: Use taco seasoning, pepper jack cheese, and add black beans and corn; serve with salsa.
- Pizza Stuffed Bread: Stir ½ cup pepperoni slices and 1 tsp Italian seasoning into the filling; serve with marinara.
- BBQ Beef: Replace the tomato sauce with BBQ sauce and use cheddar; add pickled

jalapeños.

- Sausage Version: Substitute Italian sausage for the ground beef.

Serving Suggestions

Serve with warm marinara sauce for dipping, a crisp green salad, or roasted vegetables on the side. It’s also excellent sliced into smaller pieces as an appetizer for game day or parties. Leftovers reheat beautifully in the oven.

Storage & Reheating

- Refrigerator: Store cooled slices in an airtight container for up to 3 days.
- Freezer: Wrap individual slices tightly and freeze for up to 2 months. Thaw overnight in the fridge.
- Reheating: Reheat in a 350°F (175°C) oven for 8–10 minutes, or in an air fryer at 350°F for 4–5 minutes, to re-crisp the bread. The microwave works but softens the crust.

Nutrition Information (Per Serving, Based on 8 Servings)

Values are estimates and will vary by bread size, beef leanness, and cheese brands.

Nutrient	Amount per Serving
Calories	~425 kcal
Total Fat	~22 g
— Saturated Fat	~10 g
Cholesterol	~70 mg
Sodium	~820 mg
Total Carbohydrates	~32 g
— Fiber	~2 g
— Sugars	~4 g
Protein	~24 g