

- Prep time: 20 minutes (plus 30 minutes if making cornbread fresh)
- Cook time: 50-60 minutes
- Total time: 1 hour 20 minutes (or 1 hour 50 minutes including cornbread)
- Cornbread bake temperature: 400°F (205°C)
- Dressing bake temperature: 350°F (175°C)
- Oven rack position: Middle rack
- Yield: 10-12 servings
- Difficulty: Easy to moderate

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Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Make the Cornbread (Can Be Done 1-2 Days Ahead)

Preheat your oven to 400°F (205°C). Grease an 8×8-inch baking pan or a 10-inch cast-iron skillet.

In a large bowl, whisk together the cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. In a separate bowl, whisk the buttermilk, eggs, and melted butter until combined. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry and stir just until incorporated—don't overmix, or the cornbread will be tough.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 20–25 minutes, until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let it cool completely. If you're short on time, you can use store-bought cornbread, but homemade truly makes a difference. Intensity level: Low—this step is simple and forgiving.

Step 2: Toast the Bread Cubes

Once the cornbread is cool, cut it into 1-inch cubes and spread them on a baking sheet. Do the same with the white bread cubes. Toast in a 300°F (150°C) oven for 15–20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the cubes are dry and slightly crisp. This step is crucial for preventing mushy dressing. Intensity level: Low.

Step 3: Sauté the Vegetables

In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onion and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, for 8–10 minutes, until softened and translucent. Add the garlic and cook for another minute until fragrant. Stir in the sage, thyme, poultry seasoning, and black pepper. Remove from heat. Intensity level: Low to medium—just keep an eye on the

vegetables so they soften without browning too much.

Step 4: Combine Everything

In a very large bowl, combine the toasted cornbread and bread cubes, the sautéed vegetable mixture, and any optional add-ins like pecans or sausage. Toss gently to distribute evenly.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the broth and beaten eggs. Pour the mixture over the bread cubes, starting with 2½ cups. Gently fold everything together until the bread is evenly moistened. You want the mixture to be moist but not swimming in liquid. If it looks dry, add the remaining ½ cup broth. Season with salt to taste. Intensity level: Low—just be gentle so you don't crush the cubes.

Step 5: Bake the Dressing

Transfer the mixture to a greased 9×13-inch baking dish. Cover with foil and bake at 350°F (175°C) for 30 minutes. Then remove the foil and bake for another 20–30 minutes, until the top is golden brown and crispy and the center is set. If you like a crunchier top, broil for the final 2–3 minutes—but watch it closely, because it can go from golden to burnt in seconds. Intensity level: Low, with a brief moment of medium attention during broiling.

Step 6: Rest and Serve

Let the dressing rest for 10 minutes before serving. This allows the flavors to settle and makes it easier to scoop. Serve alongside roast turkey, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, and gravy.

Recipe Notes and Tips

- Make-ahead option: Prepare the dressing through Step 4, cover, and refrigerate up to 24 hours. Add an extra 10 minutes to the covered baking time.

- Broth matters: Use a good-quality, low-sodium broth. If using turkey drippings, skim the fat first and substitute for part of the broth for extra flavor.
- Texture preference: For a drier, crunchier dressing, use 2½ cups broth and bake uncovered longer. For a moister dressing, use 3 cups and keep covered a bit longer.
- Gluten-free: Use gluten-free cornbread and gluten-free bread cubes.
- Doubling: This recipe doubles easily in a larger pan; increase baking time by 10–15 minutes.

Nutrition Information (Per Serving)

Based on 12 servings, without optional add-ins:

- Calories: 310
- Total fat: 15g
- Saturated fat: 8g
- Cholesterol: 95mg
- Sodium: 480mg

- Total carbohydrates: 36g

- Dietary fiber: 2g

- Sugars: 6g

- Protein: 9g

- Calcium: 90mg

- Iron: 2mg