

Challah Dressing with Venison Sausage and Kale – Comfort du Jour

My enjoyment of this wild game meat is as old as any other food memory I have. With non-traditional flavors already at the center of our Thanksgiving table this year, I pulled venison sausage from the freezer and used it to flavor this dressing, which also included cubes of challah (also from the freezer) and kale with celery and onions. For a spicy kick, I added a few pinches of dried chipotle flakes. Butter and vegetable broth completed the dish, and—well, it was awesome.

INGREDIENTS

10 oz. ground venison or venison sausage
1 or 2 slices of uncured smoked bacon, cut into 1/2" pieces
1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1/2 medium onion, chopped
3 ribs celery, ribbed and chopped
Kosher salt and black pepper
1 fat handful kale leaves, washed and heavy stems removed
3 Tbsp. salted butter
2 1/2 cups vegetable broth (low sodium preferred)
4 cups challah cubes, dried in low oven
1 egg, lightly beaten

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Crumble venison sausage and cook it with bacon slices in the cast-iron skillet. When browned, transfer sausage to a bowl.
2. Heat olive oil in same skillet, and sauté onions and celery until slightly softened. Add chopped kale and continue to cook until wilted. Season with salt, pepper and chipotle flakes. Transfer mixture to the bowl with the sausage. Refrigerate if working ahead or proceed to the next step.
3. Place a large saucepan over medium heat. Melt butter, add vegetable broth and heat until butter is fully melted and liquid is warm.
4. In a large bowl, combine challah cubes with half of the buttered broth and toss to moisten bread cubes. Add remaining broth and toss again. Fold in beaten egg until mixture is uniform and fully moistened.
5. Fold in sausage mixture until evenly combined. Transfer dressing to a buttered casserole dish. Refrigerate until ready to bake.
6. Preheat oven to 350° F. Bake dressing, covered, for about 35 minutes. Remove cover and bake 15 minutes further, to crisp up the top.

Leftovers heat up nicely in the microwave. We crumbled leftover dressing into a bowl with a tablespoon of parm-romano blend cheese and put it in the waffle iron. Delish!