

# Italian Sausage Stuffed Mushrooms

## Ingredients

Mushrooms, medium 12 (about 1 lb.)	Parmesan, grated . . . . . 4 oz.
Gluten-free bread . . . . . 3-4 slices	Dried oregano . . . . . 1 tsp.
Sweet Italian sausage . . . . . 1 lb.	Dried thyme . . . . . 1/2 tsp.
Shallot, medium . . . . . 1	MSG . . . . . 1/2 tsp.
Garlic cloves . . . . . 4	Salt . . . . . 3/4 tsp.
White wine OR chicken broth . . 1/4 cup	Black pepper . . . . . 1/2 tsp.
Cream cheese, softened . . . . . 4 oz.	Red pepper flakes . 1/4 tsp. (optional)
	Fresh parsley, chopped . . . . 2 Tbsp.

## Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F — Remove **mushroom** stems and finely chop; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Clean **mushroom** caps with damp paper towel — Toast **bread** and process into coarse crumbs; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Dice **shallot** and mince **garlic**; combine in *Small Bowl #2* (aromatics) — Soften **cream cheese** at room temperature; combine with 3 oz. grated **parmesan** in *Medium Bowl #2* (dairy) — Reserve 1 oz. **parmesan** for topping in *Small Bowl #3* — Combine 1 tsp. **oregano**, 1/2 tsp. **thyme**, 1/2 tsp. **MSG**, 3/4 tsp. **salt**, 1/2 tsp. **black pepper**, and 1/4 tsp. **red pepper flakes** in *Small Bowl #4* (seasoning) — Chop **parsley**; set aside in *Small Bowl #5*

1. Place **mushroom caps** gill-side up on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes to release moisture. Remove and set aside.
2. Toast **gluten-free bread** until golden and crispy. Process in food processor or crush by hand into coarse crumbs (about 1 1/2 cups). Transfer to *Medium Bowl #1*.
3. In a large skillet, brown **Italian sausage** over medium heat, breaking into small crumbles, until fully cooked, about 8-10 minutes. Remove sausage with slotted spoon and transfer to *Medium Bowl #3*; set aside. Reserve 2-3 Tbsp. of rendered fat in the skillet, discarding excess.

4. Add **shallot** and **garlic** (*Small Bowl #2*) to the skillet and sauté over medium heat until softened and fragrant, about *3-4 minutes*.
5. Add chopped **mushroom stems** (*Small Bowl #1*). Cook, stirring occasionally, until mushroom liquid has evaporated, about *5-7 minutes*.
6. Add **breadcrumbs** (*Medium Bowl #1*) to the skillet and toast, stirring constantly, for *1-2 minutes* until golden and fragrant.
7. Add **white wine** or **chicken broth** and cook, stirring, until liquid is nearly evaporated, about *2-3 minutes*.
8. Remove skillet from heat. Add cooked **sausage** (*Medium Bowl #3*), **cream cheese** and 3 oz. **parmesan** (*Medium Bowl #2*), and 1 tsp. **oregano**,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. **thyme**,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. **MSG**,  $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp. **salt**,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. **black pepper**, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. **red pepper flakes** (*Small Bowl #4*). Stir until cream cheese is melted and mixture is well combined. Taste and adjust seasoning—the filling should be well-seasoned.
9. Fill each **mushroom cap** generously with the sausage mixture, mounding slightly. Sprinkle reserved 1 oz. **parmesan** (*Small Bowl #3*) evenly over the tops.
10. Bake for *20-25 minutes* until **mushrooms** are tender and tops are golden brown.
11. Garnish with fresh **parsley** (*Small Bowl #5*) and serve hot.

## Equipment Required

- Rimmed baking sheet
- 12-inch skillet (oven-safe preferred)
- Food processor or rolling pin (for breadcrumbs)
- Slotted spoon
- Small prep bowls (5)
- Medium prep bowls (3)
- Sharp paring knife
- Damp paper towels
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Mixing spoon or spatula

## Mise en Place

- Small Bowl #1 — chopped **mushroom stems**
- Small Bowl #2 — aromatics: diced **shallot**, minced **garlic**
- Small Bowl #3 — 1 oz. **parmesan** (topping)
- Small Bowl #4 — seasoning: 1 tsp. **oregano**, 1/2 tsp. **thyme**, 1/2 tsp. **MSG**, 3/4 tsp. **salt**, 1/2 tsp. **black pepper**, 1/4 tsp. **red pepper flakes**
- Small Bowl #5 — chopped **parsley** (garnish)
- Medium Bowl #1 — **breadcrumbs** (about 1 1/2 cups)
- Medium Bowl #2 — dairy: softened **cream cheese**, 3 oz. grated **parmesan**
- Medium Bowl #3 — cooked **sausage** (set aside after browning, about 2 cups)
- Soften **cream cheese** at room temperature *30 minutes* before cooking

## Ingredient Tips

- Choose **mushrooms** with intact caps, 2-2 1/2 inches in diameter
- **Cremini** or **baby bella** mushrooms work well for deeper flavor
- Use quality **Italian sausage** with good fat content (not lean)

- Fresh **parmesan** (Parmigiano-Reggiano) preferred over pre-grated
- **White wine**: dry varieties like Pinot Grigio or Sauvignon Blanc work best
- Any gluten-free **bread** works; day-old bread yields better crumbs

## Preparation Tips

- Pre-baking **mushroom** caps prevents watery filling
- Pat **mushroom** caps dry after pre-baking
- Don't overcrowd **sausage**—brown in batches if needed
- Rendered **sausage** fat adds flavor; don't discard all of it
- Toasting **breadcrumbs** in the fat adds richness
- Filling should be generously seasoned—it will mellow when baked
- Mound filling slightly; it will settle during baking

## Make Ahead & Storage

- Prep **mushrooms** and make filling up to *24 hours* ahead
- Store filled **mushrooms** covered in refrigerator
- Add extra *5 minutes* baking time if starting from cold
- Leftovers keep *3-4 days* refrigerated
- Reheat at *350°F* for *10-15 minutes*
- Not recommended for freezing (texture suffers)

## Serving Suggestions

- Serve immediately while cheese is bubbly
- Excellent as appetizer (serves 4-6) or side dish (serves 3-4)
- Pairs well with roasted meats or grilled steaks

- Drizzle with balsamic glaze for presentation
- Serve alongside arugula salad with lemon vinaigrette
- Can be served room temperature for parties