

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 ½ tsp.
Shallot, medium 1	MSG ½ tsp.
Garlic cloves 4	Salt ¾ tsp.
White wine OR chicken broth . . ¼ cup	Black pepper ½ tsp.
Cream cheese, softened 4 oz.	Red pepper flakes . ¼ tsp. (optional)
	Fresh parsley, chopped 2 Tbsp.

Directions

Preheat oven to $375^{\circ}F$ — Remove **mushroom** stems and finely chop; set aside — Clean **mushroom** caps with damp paper towel — Toast **bread** and process into coarse crumbs; set aside — Dice **shallot** and mince **garlic**; combine in *Small Bowl #1* (aromatics) — Soften **cream cheese** at room temperature; combine with 3 oz. grated **parmesan** in *Medium Bowl #1* (dairy) — Reserve 1 oz. **parmesan** for topping — Combine 1 tsp. **oregano**, ½ tsp. **thyme**, ½ tsp. **MSG**, ¾ tsp. **salt**, ½ tsp. **black pepper**, and ¼ tsp. **red pepper flakes** in *Small Bowl #2* (seasoning) — Chop **parsley**; set aside

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 1½ cups). Set aside.
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 set aside. Reserve 2-3 Tbsp. of rendered fat in the skillet, discarding excess.

4. Add **shallot** and **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*) to the skillet and sauté over medium heat until softened and fragrant, about *3-4 minutes*.
5. Add chopped **mushroom stems**. Cook, stirring occasionally, until mushroom liquid has evaporated, about *5-7 minutes*.
6. Add **breadcrumbs** 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**, **cream cheese** and 3 oz. **parmesan** (*Medium Bowl #1*), and 1 tsp. **oregano**, ½ tsp. **thyme**, ½ tsp. **MSG**, ¾ tsp. **salt**, ½ tsp. **black pepper**, and ¼ tsp. **red pepper flakes** (*Small Bowl #2*). 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** evenly over the tops.
10. Bake for *20-25 minutes* until **mushrooms** are tender and tops are golden brown.
11. Garnish with fresh **parsley** 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 (2)
- Medium prep bowl (1)
- Sharp paring knife
- Damp paper towels
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Mixing spoon or spatula

Mise en Place

- Small Bowl #1 — aromatics: diced **shallot**, minced **garlic**
- Small Bowl #2 — seasoning: 1 tsp. **oregano**, ½ tsp. **thyme**, ½ tsp. **MSG**, ¾ tsp. **salt**, ½ tsp. **black pepper**, ¼ tsp. **red pepper flakes**
- Medium Bowl #1 — dairy: softened **cream cheese**, 3 oz. grated **parmesan**
- Set aside separately: chopped **mushroom stems**, **breadcrumbs**, 1 oz. **parmesan** (topping), chopped **parsley** (garnish)
- Soften **cream cheese** at room temperature *30 minutes* before cooking

Ingredient Tips

- Choose **mushrooms** with intact caps, 2-2½ 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