New England Dressing

4 cups white bread cubes
1 large onion
½ pound butter
1 tablespoon fresh thyme
½ cup fresh chopped sage
½ cup chopped parsley
½ teaspoon powdered bay leaf
1½ teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon white pepper
2 celery stalks, plus leaves
2 apples
1 cup hazelnuts or 10 ounces chestnuts
½ cup white raisins

Preheat the oven to 350°.

Remove the crusts, and cut unsweetened white bread into small cubes. Place the cubes on a baking tray, and toast in the oven until very lightly browned. Remove and let cool. This can be done a day before you make the dressing.

Mince the onion. Melt 12 tablespoons of the butter in a large kettle over low heat, and cook the onion, stirring frequently, until it's transparent. Add the thyme, sage, powdered bay leaf, salt, and white pepper, and stir to blend.

Dice the celery stalks and chop the leaves. Peel, core and dice the apples. Coarsely chop the hazelnuts or the roasted chestnuts.

Add the celery, celery leaves, apples, hazelnuts or chestnuts, parsley, and white raisins. Cook for 3-5 minutes, stirring frequently. The cooking time is dependent on your desire for crispness. Taste for seasoning.

Turn off the heat, and stir in the bread cubes, mixing well.

This should be enough to stuff a 10-pound turkey.

To bake separately from the turkey, butter a large casserole or baking dish. Place the dressing in the dish, and dot the top with the remaining 4 tablespoons of butter. Cover the dish with foil and bake in a 350° oven for a half hour. Then uncover the dressing and bake another 10-15 minutes until it is lightly browned on top.

Note: This produces a slightly dry stuffing, which is perfect when served with gravy. If you prefer a moister dressing, you can add a bit of water to the mixture before baking. If you cook the stuffing inside the turkey, it will become moister even without the added water.