# Sage & Butternut Squash Stew with Golden Stuffing Dumplings



Holiday Leftovers Reinvented Series | A Cozy Post-Christmas Dutch Oven Dinner

Leftover herb stuffing deserves more than another turn in the microwave. Transform it into savory, golden-topped dumplings and serve them over a comforting butternut squash and white bean stew.

Sweet butternut squash, creamy cannellini beans, fresh sage, and tender greens create a hearty winter base. Meanwhile, leftover Christmas stuffing becomes soft, herb-filled dumplings that steam gently over the stew and develop lightly crisp tops under the broiler.

It's a creative way to turn two familiar holiday favorites into a completely different meal.

Recipe at a Glance

- Servings: 4–6
- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Cook Time: 35–40 minutes
- Total Time: 50–55 minutes
- Oven Temperature: Broiler setting, optional
- Equipment: Large oven-safe Dutch oven with lid, mixing bowl, wooden spoon, measuring cups and spoons

## YOU'LL NEED

**For the Sage & Butternut Squash Stew**

- 2 tablespoons olive oil or unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage leaves, finely chopped (or 1 teaspoon dried rubbed sage)
- 4 cups peeled, cubed butternut squash (about 1½ pounds)
- 1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups baby spinach or chopped kale

**For the Leftover Stuffing Dumplings**

- 2½ cups leftover cooked herb stuffing, loosely packed
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- ⅓ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 2–4 tablespoons chicken or vegetable broth, as needed

## ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

**1. Build the stew base**

Heat the olive oil or butter in a large Dutch oven over medium heat.

Add the diced onion and cook for about 5 minutes until softened.

Stir in the garlic and chopped sage. Cook for another 30-60 seconds until fragrant.

**2. Simmer the squash and beans**

Add the cubed butternut squash, drained cannellini beans, broth, salt, and black pepper.

Bring the mixture to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low. Cover and simmer for approximately 15-18 minutes, or until the squash is fork-tender.

Use the back of a wooden spoon to gently mash a few squash cubes against the side of the pot. This naturally thickens the broth while leaving plenty of squash pieces intact.

Stir in the spinach until wilted. If using kale, allow a few extra minutes for it to soften.

**3. Prepare the stuffing dumpling mixture**

While the stew simmers, place the leftover stuffing in a medium mixing bowl and crumble it into smaller pieces.

Add the beaten egg, flour, and baking powder. Mix gently until combined.

Add the broth one tablespoon at a time, using only as much as needed. The mixture should hold together when pressed into a mound without becoming wet or runny.

Shape into approximately 8 evenly sized dumplings.

**4. Steam the stuffing dumplings**

Make sure the stew is at a gentle simmer. Arrange the stuffing dumplings evenly over the surface, leaving a little space between them.

Cover the Dutch oven tightly with its lid and cook over low heat for approximately 10-12 minutes. Avoid lifting the lid during the first 10 minutes, as the trapped steam helps cook the dumplings.

Check the center of a dumpling to make sure it is cooked through. If needed, cover and cook for another 2-3 minutes.

**5. Give the dumplings a golden finish (optional)**

For lightly crisp tops, remove the lid and carefully place the uncovered Dutch oven under a preheated broiler for approximately 1-2 minutes.

Only do this if your Dutch oven, handles, and lid components are broiler-safe. Watch continuously because the dumplings can brown quickly.

**6. Rest and serve**

Remove the pot from the oven and allow the stew to rest for about 5 minutes.

Ladle the warm squash and white bean stew into deep bowls, placing one or two stuffing dumplings on top. Serve immediately.

## Before You Begin: Using Christmas Leftovers

This recipe is designed for already-cooked herb or sage bread stuffing. Remove any unusually large pieces of bread crust and crumble the stuffing before measuring. If the stuffing is very dry, it may need a little extra broth. If it is already moist, use less liquid so the dumplings hold their shape.
The stew itself is made with fresh vegetables and canned beans, so you don't need additional Christmas leftovers to prepare it.

## Flavor Profile, Pairings & Kitchen Notes

Flavor and Texture: Naturally sweet butternut squash, creamy white beans, and fragrant sage create a comforting stew. The stuffing dumplings bring familiar holiday herb flavors, with soft centers and lightly crisp tops.

**What to Serve With It:**

- A simple apple and arugula salad
- Warm crusty sourdough bread
- Roasted Brussels sprouts
- A little grated Parmesan on top, if desired

**Make-Ahead Tip**: Prepare the stew base up to 3 days ahead and refrigerate it separately. Reheat until simmering, then prepare and add freshly mixed stuffing dumplings just before serving. This gives the dumplings their best texture.

**Storage**: Refrigerate leftover stew and dumplings in an airtight container within 2 hours of cooking. Store for up to 3–4 days. The dumplings will soften as they sit in the stew.

**Reheating**: Reheat gently in a covered saucepan over medium-low heat until the stew and dumplings reach 165°F. Add a little broth if the stew has thickened. Avoid vigorous boiling, which can break apart the dumplings.

**Easy Substitutions:**

- No butternut squash? Use peeled, cubed sweet potatoes instead.
- Using pumpkin? Replace the squash with 1 can (15 ounces) of plain pumpkin puree and reduce the broth to approximately 2 cups. Add the puree with the beans and simmer until heated through.
- No cannellini beans? Great Northern beans or butter beans work well.
- Want extra protein? Add 1½ cups shredded cooked leftover turkey to the stew just before arranging the dumplings. Heat the turkey thoroughly.
- No fresh sage? Use dried rubbed sage, but start with the smaller quantity listed in the ingredients.

**Cook's Confidence Cue:** Leftover stuffing varies in moisture depending on how it was prepared and stored. Add broth gradually to the dumpling mixture. It should form soft mounds that hold their shape rather than spread into the stew. Always check that the centers are fully cooked before serving.