



French Toast Bread Pudding with Crunchy Almond Streusel

YIELD: Serves 8

Talk about a brunch dish worthy of company! This over-the-top bread pudding is the perfect item to impress friends coming over for breakfast; that said, it's just as fantastic savored on an indulgent, lazy morning with the family. If you prefer, you can cut the recipe in half and bake the bread pudding in an 8- or 9-inch square baking dish.

PREPARATION METHOD

Make the streusel:

1. In a large bowl, stir together the flour, almonds, brown sugar, granulated sugar, cinnamon, and salt.
2. Stir in the butter and then use your fingertips to blend the streusel until it forms uneven clumps.
3. Set aside.

Make the bread pudding:

1. Preheat the oven to CONVECTION/BAKE 350°F.
2. Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with the softened butter.
3. Place the bread chunks in the baking dish in an even layer and set aside.
4. Whisk together the milk, cream, eggs, maple syrup, brown sugar, vanilla extract, cinnamon, allspice, salt, nutmeg, and almond extract (if using) in a large bowl, then pour it over the bread.
5. Gently press the challah down until submerged, then let the mixture stand for about 10 minutes.
6. Sprinkle the streusel evenly over the top.
7. Bake until puffed and golden brown, about 40 minutes.
8. Remove from the oven and set aside for 10 minutes before serving.

Make the buttered maple syrup:

1. While the bread pudding cools, combine the maple syrup, butter, brown sugar, and salt in a 2-cup heat-safe measuring cup.
2. Microwave on high for 15-second intervals, stirring in between, until the butter is melted.
3. Serve the bread pudding with the buttered maple syrup.

Variations:

Raspberry -Omit the streusel. Omit the nutmeg and almond extract. Just before baking, sprinkle 2 cups fresh raspberries over the top of the bread pudding, pressing some of them into the custard. Sprinkle $\frac{3}{4}$ cup coarse raw sugar (such as turbinado) over the berries before baking. Increase the baking time to 50 minutes.

For the syrup, substitute 1 cup seedless raspberry jam for the maple syrup and omit the brown sugar.

Vanilla - Omit the streusel. Increase the vanilla extract to 4 teaspoons and omit the cinnamon, allspice, and nutmeg. Substitute 1 tablespoon finely grated orange zest and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon orange oil for the almond extract. Sprinkle $\frac{3}{4}$ cup coarse raw sugar (such as turbinado) over the top before baking.

Pro Tips:

Like most bread puddings, you can also assemble this one the night before, then just sprinkle it with streusel before baking.

For the best results when baking, be sure the rack is in the middle position. If you're working with a tall pan, such as a Bundt pan, use the bottom position.

INGREDIENTS

STREUSEL

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup sliced almonds
- 1/2 cup lightly packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 stick (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter, melted

BUTTERED MAPLE SYRUP

- 1 cup maple syrup
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons light brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

BREAD PUDDING

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, softened
- 1 loaf challah or brioche (about 12 ounces), torn into uneven chunks
- 3 cups whole milk
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 8 large eggs
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1/4 cup lightly packed light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon almond extract (optional)