

BOOZY BREAD PUDDING

MAKES 12 SERVINGS

I adapted this sinfully scrumptious bread pudding from a Tom Perini recipe my mother-in-law shared with me years ago. It's simple and divine and has ruined me forever on all other bread puddings in the universe. The kids can eat the bread pudding on its own, as it's perfectly wonderful . . . but since you've been so good all year long, you get to drizzle yours with a naughty, boozy rum sauce!

BREAD PUDDING

- 1 loaf crusty Italian bread or other artisanal loaf
- 3 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup half-and-half

- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) butter, melted, plus more for the pan
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pecans

BOOZY SAUCE

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick) butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy (whipping) cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dark rum



1. Preheat the oven to 325°F.



2. Cut the bread into 1-inch slices.



3. Then cut the slices into 1-inch strips and cut the strips into cubes.



4. In all, you should have 8 to 10 cups of bread cubes.



5. To make the custard mixture, whisk together the eggs, milk, and half-and-half . . .



6. Then add the vanilla . . .



7. And sugar.



8. Stir it around to combine.



9. Melt the butter in the microwave and whisk it into the mixture.



10. Generously butter a baking dish and add all the bread cubes to the pan.



11. Pour the egg mixture all over the bread cubes.



12. Then chop the pecans pretty finely . . .



13. And sprinkle the pecans all over the top. Pop it in the oven for 1 hour.



14. While the bread pudding is baking, make the boozy sauce: Combine the butter, sugar, cream, and rum in a medium saucepan over medium heat.



15. Bring the mixture to a boil, whisking constantly. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, then remove the pan from the heat and set aside.



16. To serve, pour the rum sauce into a small pitcher or gravy boat . . .



17. And drizzle a little bit over the bread pudding right when it comes out of the oven.

(Drizzle it over individual portions, too!)

This is truly delicious stuff. The perfect thing to finish off the very best night of the year.

Variations

- Sprinkle raisins on top of the bread pudding with the pecans before baking.
- Use whiskey or brandy instead of dark rum.

Merry Christmas,
Kitty Kitty!

