



# Pumpkin French Toast Casserole

Makes: 12 servings

Prep Time: 4 hours Bake Time: 50 minutes

Total Time: 8 hours

## Ingredients

- 1 (12-14 ounce) loaf french bread, sourdough bread, or challah\*
- 1 cup pumpkin purée
- 3/4 cup packed light or dark brown sugar
- 2 & 1/2 tsp store-bought or homemade pumpkin pie spice\*
- 6 large eggs
- 2 & 1/3 cups whole milk
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract

## Crumb Topping:

- 1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour (spoon & leveled)
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 6 tbsps unsalted butter, cold and cubed
- 3/4 cup roughly chopped pecans\*
- for serving: pure maple syrup

## Instructions

Slice and cut the bread into 1-inch cubes. Let the cubed bread sit out uncovered for a few hours or up to 1 day. (If you don't have enough time, see Bread note below.) Grease a 9×13 inch (or any 3.5-4 quart) baking dish or spray with nonstick spray. Spread cubes of bread in the dish.

Whisk pumpkin, brown sugar, pumpkin pie spice, eggs, milk, and vanilla extract together in a large bowl. Pour evenly over bread. Cover the pan tightly and place in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours and up to 1 day. This gives the bread a chance to soak up the pumpkin custard and is a key step in this recipe.

### Crumb Topping:

Mix the brown sugar, flour, and cinnamon together. Add the cold butter and using a pastry cutter or fork, cut butter into the brown sugar mixture until pea-size crumbles form. You can also use your hands to mix it together. Stir in the pecans. Cover and refrigerate (separately, do not add to soaking casserole) until ready to use. Can be refrigerated for just 15 minutes or up to 1 day. The colder it is, the less likely it will sink down and get lost in the casserole.

Remove casserole the refrigerator and preheat oven to 350°F. Sprinkle crumb topping evenly over casserole and bake uncovered for 20 minutes, and then cover with aluminum foil and bake for an additional 25-35 minutes or until center appears set and is no longer runny. The total time this casserole takes is 45-55 minutes.

Remove from the oven and cool for 5 minutes before serving. Casserole deflates slightly as it cools. Feel free to drizzle maple syrup on top of entire casserole or on individual servings. Cover leftovers tightly and store in the refrigerator for 2-3 days.

### Chef's Notes:

**Make Ahead & Freezing Instructions:** You can prepare the casserole up to 1 day in advance before adding the crumb topping. You can prepare the crumb topping separately 1 day in advance, cover tightly, and store in the refrigerator. Sprinkle over the soaked bread right before baking.

For freezing, prepare the recipe through adding the egg mixture to the bread and freeze for up to 2 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator, make the crumb topping, sprinkle on top, and then bake the casserole as instructed. You can also freeze the leftover baked and cooled casserole for up to 3 months. Thaw in the refrigerator, then reheat to your liking in the microwave or cover and bake in a 300°F (149°C) until warm throughout, at least 20 minutes.

**Bread:** Crusty, somewhat stale bread is best for French toast casseroles. When all is cut into cubes, you'll have around 12 cups (slightly more or less is fine). If you're in a rush and don't have time to let the bread sit out as instructed, spread the cubes in a single layer on baking sheet and bake in a 300°F (149°C) oven for 10 minutes.

*Recipe from Sally's Baking Addiction*