



Sticky Bun-Style Baked French Toast

Makes: 6-8 servings

Prep Time: 30 minutes Cook Time: 1 hour

Total Time: 1 hour & 30 minutes plus chill time 8 hours

Ingredients

French Toast Casserole:

- 1 (one-pound) loaf challah bread
- 7 large eggs
- 2 & 1/4 cup milk
- 1 & 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 2 tbsp dark brown sugar
- 1 tbsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 & 1/2 tsp cinnamon

Pecan Goo:

- 1 & 1/2 sticks (6 ounces) unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 2 cups dark brown sugar
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 2 cups pecan halves and pieces

Instructions

For the Baked French Toast Casserole:

Cut or tear the challah into 1-inch cubes. Divide onto two rimmed baking sheets and let sit uncovered overnight, or bake in a 325°F oven for 30 minutes, stirring halfway, until dried out and stale. Cool on baking sheets to room temperature.

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, cream, two tablespoons dark brown sugar, vanilla extract, and cinnamon.

Grease a 9" x 13" casserole. Pour the challah pieces into the casserole, then pour the egg and cream

custard evenly over the challah. Press the challah lightly to make sure all the bread is submerged. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill overnight in the refrigerator, or for at least 8 hours

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Unwrap the unbaked casserole and bake, uncovered, for one hour, until puffed and golden brown.

TIP: The challah will soufflé a bit at the end, but will settle back down once it is out of the oven.

For the Pecan Goo:

While the casserole is baking, make the gooey pecan topping. In a medium saucepan, heat the butter, corn syrup, heavy cream, dark brown sugar, and salt. Bring to a boil and cook, whisking very frequently, until the caramel coats the back of a spoon and holds a line when you drag a knife across it, about 15-18 minutes.

The caramel will thicken even further once it comes off the heat, so don't expect it to reach a gooey consistency while it's still bubbling away. Rather, dip a large spoon in the caramel and put it on a plate. Then, drag a line across the spoon with another utensil. If the caramel stays parted and the line does not close up again right away, you're good.

Remove from heat and stir in the pecans. Keep warm until the French toast comes out of the oven.

To Finish:

Remove the French toast casserole from the oven. Cool for 10 minutes. Pour the warm sticky bun goo all over the top of the casserole and serve.

Recipe from Unpeeled Journal