

Pumpkin Bread Pudding with Caramel Sauce

Ingredients

2 cups half and half
1 can pure pumpkin (15 ounces)
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons dark brown sugar (packed)
2 large eggs
1 ½ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
10 cups ½-inch cubes egg bread or challah (about 10-ounces; see note below)



Caramel sauce

1 ¼ cups dark brown sugar (packed)
½ cup unsalted butter (1 stick)
½ cup whipping cream

Instructions

For bread pudding: Preheat oven to 350°F. Whisk half and half, pumpkin, dark brown sugar, eggs, pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon and vanilla extract in large bowl to blend. Fold in bread cubes. Transfer mixture to 11x7-inch glass baking dish. Let stand 15 minutes. Bake bread pudding until tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 40 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare caramel sauce: Whisk brown sugar and butter in heavy medium saucepan over medium heat until butter melts. Whisk in cream and stir until sugar dissolves and sauce is smooth, about 3 minutes.

Serve warm with caramel sauce.

NOTES: If I can't find challah, I use King's Hawaiian bread. If you dry the bread cubes first, it will be better, but it is not required.

I ALWAYS double the caramel sauce part of the recipe—you just can't have too much, and there are so many uses!

Father Keith

Requesón Cheesecake

Ingredients

- 2 4.8-ounce packages of sugar-cinnamon graham crackers
(about 18 crackers)
- 8 tablespoons of unsalted butter, melted
- 1 (8-ounce) package of cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1 (14-ounce) can of sweetened condensed milk
- 15 ounces of fresh requesón cheese (can substitute ricotta)
- 1 tablespoon of pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon of grated orange zest
- 4 large eggs



Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees
2. Crush the graham crackers into small crumbs, preferably in a food processor. Aim for about 2 cups. Add the butter and until everything is thoroughly combined. Pat this mixture into the bottom of the pie or springform pan and apply it up to about an inch and a half on the sides. Put the pan on a baking sheet and bake for about 10 minutes or until the crust is golden. Let it cool completely (about 25 minutes). Keep the oven on while the crust is cooling so it is ready to go when the rest is set.
3. In a different bowl, beat the cream cheese and condensed milk until smooth, then add in the requesón, vanilla, and orange zest – again until everything is smooth. Then add in the eggs, one at a time, and continue to beat until smooth. Then pour the custard mix into the cooled crust.
4. Bake for about 50 minutes, until the cheesecake is puffed and golden and a test stick comes out clean.
5. Let the cheesecake cool on a rack at room temperature for about 35 minutes. Then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerator for at least two hours or overnight.
6. Best served at room temperature! Top with a favorite compote or the caramel sauce from Fr. Keith's recipe!

NOTES: Due to the inclusion of orange zest and the specification of **cinnamon** graham crackers, both common flavors in Mexican cooking, I call this the Mexican Cheesecake recipe. It comes from Marcela Valladolid and can be found online or in her cookbook, *Mexican Made Easy*.

This is my favorite way to make cheesecake. I am a cinnamon fiend, so I like that small addition. Also, it is a little less dense than typical cheesecake recipes. Enjoy!

Rev. Marisa