

Baked French Toast Casserole with Maple Syrup

Deborah G. Mullins (Granddaughter of Ruthie Reynolds Hylton)

1 loaf French bread (13 to 16 ounces)
8 large eggs
2 cups half-and-half
1 cup milk
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
Dash salt
Praline Topping, recipe follows
Maple syrup

Slice French bread into 20 slices, 1-inch each. (Use any extra bread for garlic toast or bread crumbs). Arrange slices in a generously buttered 9 by 13-inch flat baking dish in 2 rows, overlapping the slices. In a large bowl, combine the eggs, half-and-half, milk, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt and beat with a rotary beater or whisk until blended but not too bubbly. Pour mixture over the bread slices, making sure all are covered evenly with the milk-egg mixture. Spoon some of the mixture in between the slices. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight.

The next day, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Prepare Praline Topping and spread evenly over the bread. Bake for 40 minutes, until puffed and lightly golden. Serve with maple syrup.

Praline Topping

1/2 pound (2 sticks) butter
1 cup packed light brown sugar
1 cup chopped pecans
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl and blend well. Spread Praline Topping evenly over the bread.