

Jitterbug's Bread Pudding with Rum Crème Anglaise

MAKES 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

Both Angie and Rose agree, as did their regular customers, that this bread pudding is quite different from many others. Jitterbug made a rich custard that was added to toasted bread cubes, which resulted in a lighter and moister pudding. It was never cut into squares like most bread puddings were; rather, it was spooned out into small dessert bowls and doused with Jitterbug's custard-like rum sauce. This can be served either warm or chilled.



6 slices white bread, cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 4 cups)
8 tbsp (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
4 large eggs
1/2 cup sugar
1 tbsp dark rum
1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract
1/4 tsp grated nutmeg
1/4 tsp salt
2 cups whole milk, scalded
2 cups Craisins (dried and sweetened cranberries) or fresh bing cherries if they are still available
1 cup chopped or crushed canned pineapples, drained, liquid reserved
1 recipe Rum Crème Anglaise (recipe follows)

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Toss the bread cubes with the melted butter in a large bowl, spread on a large baking sheet, and bake until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a 7 x 11-inch baking dish and set aside.

Beat the eggs in a large bowl. Add the sugar, rum, vanilla, nutmeg, and salt and whisk to combine.

Slowly add the milk, whisking constantly.

Pit the cherries with the pitter provided and cut them in half; otherwise use the Craisins

Arrange the fruit over the toasted bread cubes. Pour the custard evenly over the mixture, dot with the sliced butter, and bake until the custard sets, about 35 minutes. Let rest for 15 minutes.

Spoon the pudding into dessert bowls, ladle 3 to 4 tablespoons of the rum sauce over each serving, and serve.

Rum Creme Anglaise
MAKES ABOUT 1 1/2 CUPS

4 large egg yolks
2 tbsp cornstarch
6 tbsp sugar
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 cups milk, scalded
1/4 cup dark rum
1 drop yellow food coloring, optional

Whisk together the egg yolks, cornstarch, sugar, and vanilla in a medium saucepan. Slowly whisk in the warm milk and cook, stirring constantly, over medium- low heat until the mixture thickens, 3 to 4 minutes.

Strain through a fine- mesh strainer into a medium bowl (instead of straining use the immersion blender) and stir in the rum and food coloring, if desired.

Place in the ice machine to chill it.