

# LOAVES & WISHES

Savory & sweet bread puddings to feed a crowd

BY KATIE PRICE WEBSTER & JESSIE PRICE

AS YOUNG GIRLS we couldn't have imagined ending up working on recipes professionally, but it must have started during the carefree years when we spent endless hours in the kitchen. Whenever Mom turned her back, often when she was busy making something fabulous for dinner, we would embark on extremely messy cooking projects of our own, mixing together huge bowls of flour and water or boiling lettuce to make "soup." When we were underfoot and shooed outside, we'd head for the sandbox where we would whip up "salads," "cakes" and "pies." Recently Katie came upon one of our earliest written recipes, entitled "Yor Own Pretzles," which had three ingredients—water, flour and salt—and plenty of misspellings.

For our first joint recipe venture as adults, we had no trouble agreeing on bread puddings. We've enjoyed them at family meals over the years, they're versatile, easy to make and underappreciated. Sweet bread puddings seem to be more common than savory versions—but they shouldn't be. Savory bread puddings are somewhere between a quiche and a stuffing; serve them with a green salad and you've got dinner. Pair them with some fresh fruit and a cup of coffee and you've got brunch. Or for a fancy occasion, try serving them with a roast pork loin or chicken.

We've created a master technique and four combinations with some of our favorite ingredients. Make a savory version with chicken sausage, arugula, artichoke hearts and fontina, or



*Arugula & Chicken Sausage Bread Pudding (page 56)*

one with ham, Gruyère, spinach and roasted red peppers. For dessert, the chocolate-cherry was a favorite here at EATINGWELL. Each time we tested it we were nearly trampled by people rushing to the kitchen for a taste. The strawberry-rhubarb with gingersnaps was a very close second.

There is a simplicity and spirit of fun in bread puddings, as well as the satisfaction of turning plain bread into something wonderful. Consider these recipes—a long way from Yor Own Pretzles—a starting point. Bread pudding is very forgiving, so if you're inclined to experiment, try customizing the seasonings or fillings and you may just end up with a favorite new creation of "yor own."



*Sisters Jessie Price and Katie Price Webster live in Vermont and work for EATINGWELL Magazine. They still like to wear Underoos around the office.*



Left to right: *Ham, Gruyère & Spinach, Strawberry-Rhubarb, and Chocolate, Cherry & Almond Bread Pudding*

### Bread Pudding Master Recipe

**TO MAKE AHEAD:** Prepare the pudding through Step 3; refrigerate overnight. Let stand at room temperature while the oven preheats. Bake as directed in Step 4.

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat an 11-by-7-inch glass baking dish or a 2-quart casserole with cooking spray.
2. To prepare **CUSTARD**: Whisk egg whites, eggs and milk in a medium bowl. Add **SEASONINGS**: whisk to combine.
3. Toss **BREAD & FILLING** in a large bowl. Add the custard and toss well to coat. Transfer to the prepared baking dish and push down to compact. Cover with foil.
4. Bake until the custard has set, 40 to 45 minutes. Uncover, sprinkle with **TOPPING** and continue baking until the pudding is puffed and golden on top, 15 to 20 minutes more. Transfer to a wire rack and cool for 15 to 20 minutes before serving.

### Arugula & Chicken Sausage Bread Pudding

Healthy  $\times$  Weight High  $\uparrow$  Fiber

**ACTIVE TIME:** 30 MINUTES | **TOTAL:** 1¾ HOURS

Chicken sausage comes in a variety of flavors these days. The flavor you pick will have a big impact, so make sure you pick one you like. We tried and liked sweet Italian, apple and Chardonnay sausage and sun-dried tomato and spinach sausage in this recipe.

#### CUSTARD

- 4 large egg whites
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup skim milk

#### SEASONINGS

- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ½ cup sliced fresh basil

#### BREAD & FILLING

- 4 cups whole-grain bread, crusts removed if desired, cut into 1-inch cubes (about ½ pound, 4-6 slices)
- 5 cups chopped arugula, wilted (see *Tip*, page 57)
- ¾ cup chopped artichoke hearts, frozen (thawed) or canned
- 1 cup diced cooked chicken sausage (5 ounces)

#### TOPPING

- ¾ cup shredded fontina cheese

Follow the steps for Bread Pudding Master Recipe (*left*).

**MAKES 6 SERVINGS.**

**PER SERVING:** 272 CALORIES; 11 G FAT (4 G SAT, 3 G MONO); 174 MG CHOLESTEROL; 24 G CARBOHYDRATE; 20 G PROTEIN; 5 G FIBER; 696 MG SODIUM; 435 MG POTASSIUM.

**NUTRITION BONUS:** Folate (29% DAILY VALUE), Calcium & Vitamin A (25% DV), Iron & Vitamin C (15% DV).

## Ham, Gruyère & Spinach Bread Pudding

Healthy  Weight

**ACTIVE TIME:** 30 MINUTES | **TOTAL:** 1¾ HOURS

High-quality smoked ham is worth the cost. It infuses the pudding with a smoky flavor that compliments the spinach, peppers, rosemary and Gruyère.

### CUSTARD

- 4 large egg whites
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup skim milk

### SEASONINGS

- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary

### BREAD & FILLING

- 4 cups whole-grain bread, crusts removed if desired, cut into 1-inch cubes (about ½ pound, 4-6 slices)
- 5 cups chopped spinach, wilted (see below)
- ½ cup chopped jarred roasted red peppers
- 1 cup diced ham steak (5 ounces)

### TOPPING

- ¾ cup shredded Gruyère cheese

Follow the steps for Bread Pudding Master Recipe (page 56).

**MAKES 6 SERVINGS.**

**PER SERVING:** 276 CALORIES; 10 G FAT (4 G SAT, 3 G MONO); 169 MG CHOLESTEROL; 25 G CARBOHYDRATE; 21 G PROTEIN; 3 G FIBER; 746 MG SODIUM; 422 MG POTASSIUM. **NUTRITION BONUS:** Vitamin A (70% DAILY VALUE), Folate (37% DV), Calcium (30% DV), Vitamin C (20% DV).

## Strawberry-Rhubarb Bread Pudding

**ACTIVE TIME:** 30 MINUTES | **TOTAL:** 1¾ HOURS

Gingersnaps add a sublime note to the classic spring combination of strawberries and rhubarb.

### CUSTARD

- 4 large egg whites
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup skim milk

### SEASONINGS

- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated orange zest

### BREAD & FILLING

- 4 cups whole-grain bread, crusts removed if desired, cut into 1-inch cubes (about ½ pound, 4-6 slices)
- 2 cups roughly broken gingersnaps
- 2 cups quartered strawberries, fresh or frozen (thawed)
- 1 cup diced rhubarb
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts, lightly toasted (see below)

### TOPPING

- ¼ cup chopped walnuts, lightly toasted, or Streusel Topping (see below)

Follow the steps for Bread Pudding Master Recipe (page 56).

**MAKES 8 SERVINGS.**

**PER SERVING:** 320 CALORIES; 10 G FAT (2 G SAT, 3 G MONO); 106 MG CHOLESTEROL; 46 G CARBOHYDRATE; 11 G PROTEIN; 4 G FIBER; 334 MG SODIUM; 374 MG POTASSIUM. **NUTRITION BONUS:** Vitamin C (43% DAILY VALUE), Folate (26% DV), Iron (20% DV).

## Chocolate, Cherry & Almond Bread Pudding

**ACTIVE TIME:** 25 MINUTES | **TOTAL:** 1¾ HOURS

This pudding's rich vanilla flavor plays perfectly with the luscious chocolate, cherries and almonds.

### CUSTARD

- 4 large egg whites
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup skim milk

### SEASONINGS

- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

### BREAD & FILLING

- 4 cups whole-grain bread, crusts removed if desired, cut into 1-inch cubes (about ½ pound, 4-6 slices)
- 2 cups pitted cherries, fresh or frozen (thawed)
- ¾ cup semisweet chocolate chips, preferably mini
- ¼ cup sliced almonds, lightly toasted (see below)

### TOPPING

- ¼ cup sliced almonds, lightly toasted, or Streusel Topping (see below)

Follow the steps for Bread Pudding Master Recipe (page 56).

**MAKES 8 SERVINGS.**

**PER SERVING:** 317 CALORIES; 12 G FAT (4 G SAT, 5 G MONO); 106 MG CHOLESTEROL; 45 G CARBOHYDRATE; 11 G PROTEIN; 4 G FIBER; 219 MG SODIUM; 348 MG POTASSIUM. **NUTRITION BONUS:** Magnesium (16% DAILY VALUE), Fiber (15% DV). 

### to wilt greens:

Rinse greens thoroughly in cool water. Transfer them to a large microwave-safe bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and punch several holes in the wrap. Microwave on high until wilted, 2 to 3 minutes. Squeeze out any excess moisture from the greens before adding them to the recipe.

### to toast nuts:

Spread walnuts on a baking sheet, place in a preheated 350°F oven and toast, stirring once, until fragrant and lightly browned, 7 to 9 minutes. Toast sliced almonds in a small dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until fragrant and lightly browned, 2 to 4 minutes.

### to make streusel topping:

Combine ⅓ cup flour, ¼ cup oats (preferably old-fashioned), 2 tablespoons brown sugar and 2 tablespoons canola oil in a small bowl. Spread the mixture on top of the pudding after the initial 40 to 45 minutes of baking (see Bread Pudding Master Recipe, Step 4).