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Easter Ideas

By Susie Iventosch



Cooking eggs in the oven to a hard boiled stage
Photos Susie Iventosch

Easter Sunday is a great day for brunch and this savory bread pudding can be used as the main dish along with fresh fruit and bacon or sausage on the side, or as a side dish to accompany a roast, chicken, turkey or ham. The idea for this recipe is the combination of two different dishes I have enjoyed in recent years.

Though I had always thought of bread pudding as a sweet dish with raisins, cinnamon and maybe a little maple syrup, my friend, Carol, introduced me to a savory mushroom bread pudding she served as a dinner side dish. It was marvelous! Then, I discovered a spinach-artichoke bread pudding from Preservation Bread & Wine in Geneva, Illinois. This one was topped with browned feta cheese on top, and it, too, was divine.

So, I thought, why not combine these two ideas and that's how this spinach-mushroom-Gruyere bread pudding came to be! I would suggest that you could use your favorite cheese in this recipe. Gruyere happens to be one of my favorites, but sharp white cheddar, smoked gouda or even feta would be delicious! Also, bite-sized pieces of canned or frozen artichoke heart would be a great addition, and I would suggest roasting them with the mushrooms, or

even instead of mushrooms, if you prefer.

On another Easter note, a friend of mine sent me an email indicating eggs could be hard-cooked by baking them in the oven. I was skeptical, since we have always boiled them, but decided to give it a try. Voila! It worked. You simply place the raw eggs in your muffin tin, one egg in each cup, and bake at 325 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes. None of them cracked either, as they often do when boiling them in a pot! This might be a good idea for Easter egg coloring this year!

Easter Spinach-Gruyere Bread Pudding



Easter Brunch Spinach-Mushroom-Gruyere Savory Bread Pudding

INGREDIENTS

- 8-10 medium sized cremini (or baby bella) mushrooms, sliced or quartered
- 1-2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 3-4 ounces fresh spinach, chopped in food processor to about 1 1/4 cups, packed
- 1 large shallot, chopped
- 4 large eggs
- 1 1/2 cups milk (or half & half)
- 1 1/2 cups grated Gruyere cheese (1 cup inside and 1/2 cup for sprinkling on top)
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Dash Worcestershire sauce
- Dash nutmeg
- 4 cups bite-sized cubes of French bread

DIRECTIONS

Cut or slice mushrooms and toss in just a little bit of olive oil and sea salt. Place on greased baking sheet and roast at 400 degrees for about 10-12 minutes, or until beginning to brown and liquid is evaporated.

Meanwhile, chop about half of a 6-ounce bag of fresh spinach in your little food processor until finely chopped. Place spinach in a bowl along with eggs, shallots, mushrooms, milk, 1 cup of the grated Gruyere, S&P, nutmeg and Worcestershire. Mix well.

Toss bread cubes into mixture and stir so that all of the bread is moistened by the egg mixture. Let sit for about 15 minutes for bread to start to absorb egg mixture. Pour into a greased 8x8 inch baking dish (or a dish of

comparable volume) and sprinkle remaining cheese evenly over top.

Bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes, and cheese is browned and bubbly on top. Serve warm.

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