

Savory Bread Pudding

Serves 6 Generously

4 Tbsp olive oil

1 large shallot, thinly sliced

½ pound mushrooms, coarsely chopped

2 pounds mixed greens, thinly chopped-any combo of chard, kale, arugula, spinach, radicchio...

1/3 cup chopped fresh herbs-parsley, thyme, sage, basil...

1-1 pound loaf of artisan bread cut into 1" cubes

5 large eggs

4 cups whole milk (2% works too)

2 cups grated cheese-cheddar, fontina, Swiss, Monterey jack

Salt and pepper to taste

Start preparation the day before you plan to serve the bread pudding.

Heat a large skillet over high heat. Add olive oil and sauté shallots for 3 to 4 minutes. Add mushrooms and sauté until soft, 4 to 5 more minutes.

Stir in chopped greens and sauté until they begin to wilt. Remove the pan from the stove, stir in chopped herbs and taste for salt and pepper. Set aside to cool. Whisk eggs in a large bowl until well mixed. Whisk in milk and season with salt and pepper.

Butter or oil a 9" by 13" baking dish. Evenly distribute half of the bread cubes in baking dish. Add sautéed vegetables, half of the grated cheese, and half of the egg/milk mixture. Using clean hands, mix contents of baking dish. Add remaining bread cubes, cheese, and egg/milk mixture and mix well to thoroughly wet all ingredients. Using the palms of your hands gently press bread pudding into baking dish. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Remove baking dish from refrigerator when you preheat your oven to 350°. Once again, press lightly into the egg mixture to make sure all ingredients are moist. Bake bread pudding until nicely browned on top, about 50 to 60 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes before cutting.

Carrot and Fresh Herb Soup

Serves 6 to 8

1 pound carrots, roughly chopped into ½" pieces

1 rutabaga, peeled and chopped into ½" pieces

1 turnip, peeled and chopped into ½" pieces

2 to 2 ½ quarts water, vegetable, or chicken broth

2 cups finely shredded green cabbage

1 ½ cup finely chopped fresh herbs such as thyme, parsley, sorrel, lovage, tarragon, or chives

salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a heavy bottomed soup pot simmer carrots, rutabaga, and turnip in water or broth until soft. Remove from the heat and allow the soup to cool down before processing. Puree soup with an immersion blender or very carefully in a countertop blender. Return soup to pot and adjust consistency with more liquid if necessary-the soup should be on the thin side. Bring soup to gentle simmer, add cabbage and cook until tender. Remove from heat, stir in fresh herbs and taste for salt and pepper. Optional garnish: more chopped herbs and a spoonful of plain yogurt.

Date Prune Apricot Bars

Makes 1-9" by 13" pan

2 cups whole wheat pastry flour

½ tsp salt

½ tsp cinnamon

¼ tsp freshly grated nutmeg

¼ tsp ground cloves

2 sticks unsalted butter, softened

1 cup granulated sugar

¼ cup molasses

2 large eggs

1 tsp baking soda dissolved in ¼ cup hot water

1 pound combination of dried apricots, prunes, and dates, finely chopped

Preheat oven to 350°. Butter a 9" by 13" baking pan. Whisk together flour, salt, and spices. In an electric mixer on med-high speed, beat together butter, sugar, and molasses until light and fluffy, about 4 minutes. Reduce speed to low and add eggs 1 at a time, mixing well after each addition. Add baking soda mixture and mix until combined. Add flour mixture and dried fruit and mix until just combined.

Spread batter evenly in baking pan and bake in the middle of oven until a tester inserted in the center of cake comes out clean, 45 to 55 minutes. Allow bars to cool in the pan before slicing and serving.
