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One of our favorite recipes:



## Christmas Morning Bread Pudding

**Serves:** 6 hungry people |  
**Note:** Prep the night before,  
bake the morning of  
**Time:** approx. 1 hour

This recipe was kindly borrowed from  
*The Best American Recipes 2002–2003*  
which kindly borrowed the recipe from  
*The New York Times*. The credited cooks  
are Amanda Hesser and Rhonda Hesser.

### Ingredients

3/4 cup plus 2 TBSP sugar  
6 TBSP butter  
12–15 slices fresh challah bread (1/2" thick, 3" diam.)  
*Panettone or brioche works just as nicely.*  
8 large eggs  
1/4 cup mascarpone cheese  
1 cup milk (whole, please)  
1/4 tsp almond extract  
1/4 cup coarsely chopped toasted almonds  
3/4 cup fromage frais or fromage blanc for serving.  
*If you can't find, use sour cream or whole milk yogurt.*

### Directions

**1. Make the caramel:** Combine 3/4 cup sugar with butter in a small heavy saucepan, and place over medium-low heat. Melt the butter and dissolve the sugar, stirring occasionally. Boil for a few minutes or until the mixture begins to brown. Adjust the heat and stir once in a while to ensure

the mixture browns evenly. Once the mixture turns dark brown, immediately remove from heat and carefully pour into the bottom of a 9-inch ceramic or Pyrex deep-dish pie dish. Tilt dish to coat the base and 1 inch up the sides with caramel. Put dish in refrigerator and chill until caramel is cold.

**2. Arrange the bread slices:** After the caramel has chilled, you can begin assembling the bread slices in the dish. Place a heel in the center. Then place bread slices, standing against each other, around the center. The slices should fill the pie dish snugly. Put pie dish to the side.

**3. Prepare the custard:** In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, 2 tablespoons of sugar, and mascarpone until very smooth. Then whisk in the milk and almond extract. Slowly pour this mixture over the bread. Be sure to saturate every slice. Tightly cover the pie dish with plastic wrap and carefully place in the refrigerator to chill overnight.

**4. Bake the pudding:** Preheat oven to 375°F. Take pie dish out of refrigerator and throw away the plastic wrap. Bake the pudding for 15 minutes. Sprinkle chopped almonds over the top. Continue to bake for about 15 to 20 minutes more—until the pudding is moist but not wet in the center. Take the pudding out of the oven and carefully run a sharp knife around the edges. Place a large, round serving dish (preferably one with raised edges to prevent caramel from running over the sides) on top of the pie dish, bottom side up.

**5. Put on potholders for the next step!** Hold covered pie dish over the sink, and—in one fluid motion—flip the pie dish over—being sure to hold the pie dish away from your body. In doing so, you should invert the pudding onto the serving dish. Place serving dish on counter, lift up pie dish, and scrape any caramel from pie dish onto the pudding.

**6. Serve:** Cut into wedges at the table. Place a dollop of fromage frais on each plate before serving.

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