

Pumpkin Bread Pudding

8 cups cubed bread. I used Challah, may use a Brioche or other soft white enriched bread.

Raisin layer:

1 cup golden raisins
¼ cup Brandy

Pumpkin Custard:

5 cups Half and Half
5 large eggs
4 large egg yolks
1 cup canned pumpkin
¾ cup brown sugar
½ cup white sugar
¼ tsp salt
¼ tsp ground nutmeg
¼ tsp ground clove
½ tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp vanilla extract

Candied Walnuts:

1 ½ cups walnut halves or pieces
Pinch salt
Pinch ground nutmeg
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ cup pure maple syrup

Whipped Cream:

2 cups whipping cream
½ cup powdered sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract or brandy

In a small bowl: Place the raisins and brandy. Allow to sit at least 30 minutes or up to overnight to macerate.

In a large bowl: Combine all the pumpkin custard ingredients and whisk until smooth.

To assemble:

Layer 4 cups of the bread cubes in a greased 9" x 13" pan. Drain the raisins, and add the liquid to the custard mixture and whisk. Place the drained raisins on top of the bread cubes. Layer the remaining 4 cups of bread cubes on top of the layered bread cubes and raisins. Gently and slowly, pour the custard mixture over the top of the bread cubes. Press down on the bread cubes to allow all the custard mixture into the pan. Let sit at least 30 minutes, or covered overnight in the refrigerator. When you are ready to bake. Heat the oven to 325°. Take a larger baking pan or cookie sheet with at least 1" sides, and put a dish towel in the bottom and cover this with hot water. Place the baking dish with the custard and cube mixture on/in the pan with the towel and hot water creating a "bath" for this mixture. Place these in the oven and bake uncovered for at least 45 minutes or longer until the center is set. Check like you would for a custard pie by piercing the center with a knife and if it comes out clean it is done.

Candied Walnuts:

In a bowl place all the ingredients and the walnuts and stir to mix and coat the walnuts evenly. Place the walnuts on a lightly greased cookie sheet and place in a 350° over for 10 minutes. Stirring after 5 minutes. After 10 minutes remove from oven and put walnuts on a piece of waxed paper to cool completely.

Whipped Cream:

Whip all ingredients together at high speed of a hand mixer until stiff. Add more sugar if you need to. You may also add a few dashes of pumpkin pie spice is desired.

To serve: cut into squares and serve each piece with a dollop of whipped cream and 3-4 candied walnuts.

