

Asparagus Bread Pudding with Fontina and Herbs

Inspired by a recipe from Georgetanne Brennan



Servings: 12

1. Grease the bottom of the dish you're using (9x13 works, or similar 4-quart dish as long as it has 2" high sides). Place bread in a large bowl.
2. Mix half and half, cream, eggs, cayenne, lemon zest, salt and pepper until there are no streaks of egg yolk. Pour HALF of milk mixture over the bread and let sit for 15-20 minutes. Reserve remaining milk mixture.
3. While bread is soaking, trim leeks, and chop well. Saute leeks in butter for 1-2 minutes, then add water and steam (covered) until leeks are cooked through, 5-7 minutes. Remove leeks to the bowl leaving any fluid in the pan. Prep the asparagus: trim off woody ends and chop into 1/2 inch pieces. Add the asparagus to the pan and cook briefly, about 1-2 minutes, then add the asparagus to the bowl. Discard any remaining fluid in the pan.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F.
5. Sprinkle herbs over the bread mixture, then add about half the cheese and stir this mixture around so it's evenly distributed. Pour it all into the prepared baking dish and then pour remaining milk mixture over the top. Add the last of the grated cheese evenly on top.
6. Bake until top is crusty brown and a knife inserted in the middle comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Allow to sit for about 5 minutes before cutting into squares to serve.

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 whole leeks, ends cut off, sliced lengthwise, chopped, rinsed well

1 pound asparagus

CUSTARD:

5 eggs

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 dash cayenne

1/2 cup heavy cream

2 1/2 cups half and half

Zest of one large lemon

PUDDING:

5 cups bread (I used ciabatta) cut into 3/4" cubes, dried overnight

3/4 cup Pecorino-Romano cheese, freshly grated (or use Gruyere)

3/4 cup Fontina cheese, grated

1/2 cup fresh herbs, chopped - such as chives, parsley, and tarragon; or sage, thyme, and marjoram (I used fresh basil and rosemary)

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 454 Calories; 19g Fat (38.2% calories from fat); 15g Protein; 55g Carbohydrate; 3g Dietary Fiber; 135mg Cholesterol; 824mg Sodium. Exchanges: 3 Grain(Starch); 1/2 Lean Meat; 1/2 Vegetable; 0 Non-Fat Milk; 3 1/2 Fat.

Carolyn T's Blog: tastingspoons.com