

## Orange-Honey Bread Pudding

Recipe 344 of 365

This is the ideal Christmas breakfast. On Christmas Eve, after everyone's gone to bed, you take a few minutes to mix warm orange-scented milk, eggs, honey, and sugar together with a kiss of orange liqueur, pour it over cubed bread, and refrigerate it overnight. Pop it in the oven as you head to the Christmas tree in the morning; it cooks in just about the same amount of time it takes to get to the orange at the bottom of your stocking. Serve as is for breakfast, with a drizzle of cream or a dollop of yogurt, or for dessert, with vanilla or cinnamon ice cream.

If honey-orange bread isn't available in your area, use a rich egg-based bread like challah or brioche.

TIME: 20 minutes active time

MAKES: 8 servings

4 cups 2% milk  
1 teaspoon orange or tangerine zest  
1/4 cup honey (the orange blossom kind, if you have it)  
1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
3 tablespoons orange liqueur, such as Grand Marnier or Cointreau  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
2 teaspoons unsalted butter  
1 loaf (18 ounces) honey-orange rosette bread  
4 large eggs, whisked to blend

Combine the milk and the orange zest in a small saucepan, and place over high heat. Add the honey, sugar, salt, orange liqueur, and vanilla to a mixing bowl. When little bubbles begin to appear around the edges of the milk, pour it into the mixing bowl, and whisk slowly until all the sugar has dissolved. Set aside to cool.

Butter a 9" x 13" baking dish with the butter. Cut the bread into 1" cubes, and dump them directly into the baking dish.

When the milk is cool enough to touch, whisk the eggs in, and pour the liquid over the bread cubes. Use your hands to turn and mix the cubes around until evenly coated. Cover the baking dish securely with foil, and refrigerate overnight.

About 1 1/2 hours before breakfast time, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Poke a few holes in the foil with a fork, and bake the bread pudding for 40 minutes. Remove foil, and bake another 20 minutes, or until custard is set in the center. (If desired, you can broil the pudding, about 6" from the broiling unit, for about a minute before serving, to brown the cubes up a bit.) Let sit for about ten minutes, then slice and serve.

*Variation: Try adding a teaspoon of ground ginger, cardamom, or cinnamon to the milk/sugar mixture before adding it to the bread.*