**EXTRA Holiday E-Mail**

**Wednesday Nov 27 OR Friday, Nov 28, 2013
Maple Caramel French Toast Casserole**

**with Crème Anglaise Sauce**

**Images:**

IMG 9222 – Ingredients

IMG 9232 – Caramel Sauce Ingredients in Saucepan

IMG 9239 – Smooth Caramel Sauce

IMG 9241 – Caramel Sauce in Baking Dish

IMG 9258 – Cubing Bread

IMG 9262 – Bread in Dish

IMG 9268 – Top Layer of Bread in Dish

IMG 9253 – Soaking Mixture

IMG 9282 – Covered Dish

IMG 9304 – Baked Dish

IMG 9316 – Baked Dish (Close-up)

FINAL IMG 9324 – Whole Casserole

FINAL IMG 9372 – Plated Casserole – Use for Top Intro

Custard:

IMG 9294 – Custard Ingredients

IMG 9300 – Milk and Yolks

IMG 9337 – Cooking the Custard

IMG 9340 – Coating the Utensil

IMG 9346 – Straining Custard and Ice Bath

Bacon for a Bunch:

IMG 9630 – Bacon Ready to Bake

IMG 9637 – Baked Bacon

**INTRO PHOTO:**

**IMG 9372**

**Caption: Brunch for a Bunch!**

**INTRO TEXT:**

***Wednesday, Nov 27th Version***

Thanksgiving is upon us! It’s such a great time of year for remembering all the good our lives hold, and for spending time with family and friends.

If you’re hosting overnight guests these days, or are planning a brunch event in the coming weeks, you’ll find this recipe the perfect dish for the occasion. The best part , it can be prepared ahead of time the day before, and simply baked in the morning. It’s a lovely holiday presentation that everyone will rave about!

***Friday, Nov 29th Version***

It’s official! Thanksgiving is over, and the holiday season is underway! It’s a great time of year for spending time with family and friends and offering gifts with a spirit of gratitude and love.

If you’re hosting overnight guests these days, or are planning a brunch event in the coming weeks, you’ll find this recipe the perfect dish for the occasion. The best part , it can be prepared ahead of time the day before, and simply baked in the morning. It’s a lovely holiday presentation that everyone will rave about!

**HOURS block:**

We’re ready to celebrate with you and to assist in easily fulfilling your gifting list. We greatly appreciate your support of our independent, locally-owned store. Stop in this weekend – we look forward to seeing you!

Black Friday – Nov 29: 10am – 7pm

Small Business Saturday – Nov 30: 10am – 6pm

Sunday – Dec 1: 12pm – 5pm

**BLACK FRIDAY – Nov 29th – HEADER graphic** (their specials inserted below)

**BODY:**

**Maple Caramel French Toast Casserole**

**with Crème Anglaise Sauce**

Makes 1 large casserole (3.75 quart dish) – Serves 8-10

Enjoy this breakfast casserole without any morning hassles; it’s all done the day before, leaving you free to enjoy a leisurely morning with family and guests. Our version of this French Toast Casserole is spiked with raspberries and topped with a delicious vanilla sauce, Crème Anglaise. Pair the casserole with “Bacon for a Bunch,” freshly squeezed orange juice, and hot coffee. Yum! A great way to start the day!

***Casserole Ingredients:***

Assemble the casserole in three steps, then wrap and place it in the refrigerator until ready to bake.

**FIRST LAYER:**

***Maple Caramel Layer***

8 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 cup brown sugar, packed

2 tablespoons pure maple syrup

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. In a medium saucepan, combine the butter, brown sugar, maple syrup, and vanilla. Over low heat stir the ingredients frequently while heating and until combined. When the sauce is smooth and the sugar dissolved (or nearly dissolved) , remove from heat. Do not allow the mixture to boil. (Molten sugar is hotter than it looks, don’t be tempted to taste it when it is hot).

2. While still hot, pour the maple caramel sauce into a greased casserole dish (3-4 quart capacity), and spread evenly across the bottom. Set aside.

**SECOND LAYER:**

***Bread & Raspberries***

12 cups of cubed bread – (1 large loaf)

 (choose a heartier, more rustic bread for this dish)

2 cups fresh (or frozen) raspberries, divided

1. Cut a large loaf of bread into one-inch cubes with a serrated knife. For a more tender casserole, we cut away the crustiest portions of the loaf, but this is a matter of preference. (A rustic loaf of bread will return a better texture than soft white sandwich bread.)

2. Place half of the cubed bread in the casserole on top of the caramel sauce. Sprinkle half (1 cup) of the raspberries on top of the bread. Top off the casserole with the remaining bread cubes.

**THIRD LAYER:**

***Soaking Mixture***

6 eggs

2 cups half –and-half

2 cups milk

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1 tablespoon Chambord (raspberry liqueur, optional)

1/2 teaspoon salt

1. Whisk together in a medium bowl, the eggs, half-and-half, milk, vanilla, salt, and Chambord (if using).

2. Pour the soaking milk mixture over the bread cubes and raspberries that have already been placed in the casserole dish. With the back of a spoon or spatula, press the bread down into the liquid.

3. Cover the casserole tightly with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator overnight. The bread will continue to soak up all of the liquid.

**BAKE :**

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Place the unwrapped casserole in the oven for 40 minutes or until the center is set. Check baking progress after 30 minutes. If the top is browning too quickly, tent a piece of aluminum foil loosely on top for the remaining time. The center of the casserole should be set, but will still have a wet appearance; it should have an internal temperature of 160°F.

**SERVE:**

This casserole is delightful on its own when simply served with warm maple syrup, but for the holidays, this vanilla custard sauce with additional raspberries makes it a bit more special. The sauce may be made a day ahead of time and gently warmed at the time of serving.

***Crème Anglaise Sauce Ingredients:***

6 egg yolks

1/2 cup sugar

2 cups whole milk

1/2 tablespoon vanilla bean paste

 (or the one vanilla bean scraped, or 1/2 tablespoon pure vanilla extract)

1/8 teaspoon salt

***Directions:***

1. In a medium saucepan, warm the milk, sugar, and salt until hot, just shy of simmering. (Do not allow it to reach a boil.)

2. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg yolks until smooth.

3. Ladle a quarter cup of the hot milk mixture into the egg yolks slowly while continuously whisking. (This tempering of the egg yolks will allow the eggs to gradually increase in temperature and not curdle in the process.)

4. Continue adding the hot milk to the egg yolks until half has been transferred and added.

5. Return the milk mixture to the stovetop on medium heat, and gradually add the tempered yolks to the saucepan, again continuously whisking.

6. Over medium heat, stir the mixture continuously until the sauce thickens and coats the back of the stirring utensil.

7. Once thickened, transfer the sauce through a strainer into a bowl inserted in an ice bath (a larger bowl with ice). Stir occasionally as the custard sauce cools. Stir in the vanilla extract. If not serving right away, wrap tightly and place in the refrigerator for up to three days.

8. Serve the Crème Anglaise on the side, warmed slightly in a saucepan, (not microwave), and top each serving with the additional raspberries.

**BONUS TIP: Bacon for a Bunch!**

If you’re like us, you enjoy a little bacon every now and then. This brunch casserole is accompanied nicely with a side of crispy bacon strips. When cooking breakfast for a group, consider making the bacon in the oven.

Line a large rimmed baking sheet with a single piece of parchment paper. Lay the bacon strips in a single layer on the lined pan. Bake in a 400°F oven for about 15 minutes, turn the strips over and bake for another 5-10 minutes or until the desired level of crispiness is achieved. Remove the baked bacon strips to a plate lined with paper towels. When baked, the bacon stays flat – no unmanageable curling!

Clean-up is easy! Allow the pan and bacon grease to cool, then dispose of the grease and parchment paper in one move!