



ANSON MILLS

Brioche French Toast

Yield

2 servings

Time

Overnight to stale the bread, 10 minutes to prepare, 1½ hours to soak, at least 2 hours in the refrigerator to rest, and about 10 minutes to cook

Baking Notes

Sometimes you have just enough leftover bread to make French toast for one—or two. So we set up the recipe accordingly. It is easily increased to make four servings; you will need to use a larger baking dish for soaking and cook the French toast in batches (a 200-degree oven will keep the first batch warm until serving).

While this French toast wouldn't qualify as "eggy," the eggs are an important flavor contributor. Pursue good eggs.

Do offer the sliced brioche as much time as it needs to absorb the custard—it can baste passively while you do other things.

We use no sugar in the custard and instead like to sprinkle the bread lightly with sugar before frying it to exaggerate its outer crispness that much more. If maple syrup appeals to you more than our strawberry syrup option, you might choose to eliminate the sugared surfaces.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, a wire rack, a rimmed baking sheet into which the rack fits, an 8 or 9-inch square baking dish, a whisk, a medium-coarse sieve, a carving fork (optional), a small fine-mesh strainer for sifting, and a 9- or 10-inch cast-iron skillet.

Ingredients

2 (1-inch-thick) slices Brioche (each slice should weigh about 2.5 ounces)

2 large eggs

⅔ cup (5.5 ounces) half-and-half

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1½ tablespoons unsalted European-style butter

1 tablespoon sugar

Unsalted European-style butter, room temperature, for serving

Strawberry Syrup, for serving

Fresh strawberries, hulled and quartered, for serving

Directions

- 1.** Fit a wire cooling rack in a rimmed baking sheet pan and arrange the brioche slices in a single layer on the rack. Place the baking sheet in a cold oven and let the bread stale overnight.
- 2.** The next day, cut each slice of brioche diagonally in half to form triangles and arrange the slices fairly snugly in an 8- or 9-inch square baking dish.
- 3.** In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs until well combined. Add the vanilla and cinnamon and whisk again, and then whisk in the half-and-half. Pour the mixture through a medium-coarse sieve directly onto the bread; discard the bits that remain in the sieve. Let the bread soak for about 10 minutes. Using your fingers or a carving fork, turn the pieces over. Continue this process of resting and turning the slices at intervals, standing them up on their edges from time to time, until the brioche has completely absorbed the custard and the baking dish is essentially dry, about 1½ hours. Don't push on the slices, try to rush the soaking time, or refrigerate the bread as it soaks.
- 4.** Arrange the brioche slices in a single layer in the baking dish, cover them flush with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to overnight.
- 5.** When you're ready to cook the French toast, heat a 9- or 10-inch cast-iron skillet over low heat for 5 minutes. Using a small fine-mesh strainer, sift half of the sugar over the exposed side of the soaked brioche slices. Add the butter to the pan and swirl to coat. Add the brioche slices sugared-side down, sift the remaining sugar onto the raw surfaces, and cook until the bottoms take on color and are crisp, 4 to 5 minutes. Turn the slices and cook the second sides until crisp and the interiors have set, 4 to 5 minutes; occasionally stand the slices on their edges and feel free to turn the slices multiple times. Serve the French toast hot with butter, strawberry syrup, and fresh strawberries.