

FOOD & DINING

A unique take on French toast



Few breakfasts are as beloved as French toast, a dish so hearty and fulfilling that many people enjoy it for dinner. Though traditional French toast is very popular, the traditional recipe can be altered to make the dish even more delightful. Such is the case with the following recipe for "Panettone French Toast With Caramelized Apples" from Norman Kolpas' "Buongiorno!" (Contemporary Books).

PANETTONE FRENCH TOAST WITH CARAMELIZED APPLES

Serves 4

1/4 cup slivered almonds

Caramelized Apples

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 Golden Delicious or Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and cut into 1/2-inch thick wedges
- 1/4 cup apple juice
- 3 tablespoons honey
- Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

Panettone French Toast

- 2 extra-large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup low-fat milk
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 8 3/4-inch thick slices panettone or egg bread
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter

Preheat the oven to 325 F. Put the almonds in a baking dish and toast in the oven until golden, about 5 to 7 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 200 F.

For the caramelized apples, melt the butter in a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the apples and saute until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the apple juice, honey and nutmeg and continue cooking, stirring frequently, until the apples are tender and a thick, caramel-like sauce has formed. Cover and keep warm.

To make the French toast, stir together the eggs, milk, sugar, and almond extract in a wide, shallow bowl or baking dish. Add the bread slices to the mixture, turning to coat them evenly on both sides and then leaving them to soak.

Meanwhile, melt half of the butter in another nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add half of the bread slices and cook them until golden brown, about 4 to 5 minutes per side. Transfer them to a baking dish, cover with aluminum foil, and put in the oven to keep warm. Melt the remaining butter in the skillet and cook the remaining French toast. Serve topped with the caramelized apples and garnished with the toasted almonds.

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