

French Toast Casserole with Cream Cheese Surprise

Serves 12

A wonderful addition to a brunch or holiday breakfast gathering. Prep the casserole the night before and bake in the morning.

1 Loaf French Bread or Challah Bread
8 Ounces Cream Cheese, block style & full fat, softened to room temperature
2 Tablespoons Confectioners' Sugar
1 ½ Tablespoons More Than Olives Blood Orange Olive Oil
3 Teaspoons Pure Vanilla Extract, divided
8 Large Eggs
2 ¼ Cups Whole Milk
1 Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
⅔ Cup Packed Light Brown Sugar

Crumb Topping:

⅓ Cup Packed Light Brown Sugar
⅓ Cup All-Purpose Flour
½ Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
6 Tablespoons Unsalted butter, cold and cubed
Optional: Maple Syrup or Confectioners' Sugar for dusting

Brush a 9×13" oven-safe pan with More Than Olives Blood Orange Olive Oil.

Slice the bread and then cut the bread into cubes, about 1 inch in size. It's okay if your bread is a bit stale and firm. Spread half of the cubes into the prepared baking pan.

Using a mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, beat the room temperature cream cheese on medium-high speed until completely smooth. Add the confectioners' sugar, More Than Olives Blood Orange Olive Oil and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract. Beat again until combined.

Drop spoonfuls of cream cheese mixture randomly on top of the bread layer. Spread out the remaining bread cubes on top of cream cheese. Set the pan aside.

Whisk the eggs, milk, cinnamon, brown sugar, and 2 teaspoons vanilla together until no sugar lumps remain. Pour the mixture evenly over the bread. Cover the pan tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 3-4 hours and up to 24 hours. Overnight is best.

Remove the pan from the refrigerator. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

To create the crumb topping, whisk the brown sugar, flour, and cinnamon together in a medium bowl. Cut in the cold cubed butter with a pastry blender or two forks. Sprinkle the topping evenly over the soaked bread in the pan.

Bake uncovered for 45-55 minutes or until golden brown on top.

When ready to serve, place the optional maple syrup or a bowl of confectioners' sugar next to the French toast. Serve warm.

Any leftovers can be stored in a container in the refrigerator for 2-3 days.