

LAZY OVEN FRENCH TOAST



Ingredients

Butter or nonstick cooking spray,
for greasing the baking dish

4 cups milk

6 large eggs

2 tablespoons granulated sugar

2 tablespoons maple syrup, plus
more maple syrup for serving
(optional)

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon kosher or coarse salt

1 large loaf challah bread, preferably slightly stale, sliced

3/4 to 1 inch thick (see the Cooking Tip)

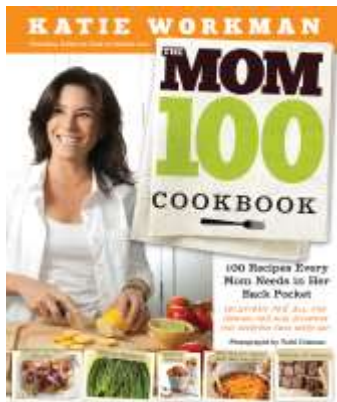
3/4 cup whole raisins, chopped dried fruit, or chopped nuts
(optional)

Fresh fruit such as berries, sliced peaches or pears, and/or
confectioners' sugar, for serving



Directions

1. Grease a 13 by 9-inch baking dish with butter or spray it with cooking spray.
2. Place the milk, eggs, sugar, maple syrup, vanilla, cinnamon, and salt in a medium-size bowl and whisk to mix well. Set the milk mixture aside.
3. Arrange half of the slices of bread in the prepared baking dish, cutting the bread so that it fits in a solid layer. Pour half of the milk mixture over the bread, then evenly distribute about half of any dried fruit or nuts, if using, on top.



4. Repeat, creating a second layer of bread and then pouring the rest of the milk mixture on top and distributing the rest of the fruit or nuts over the bread. Lightly press the bread down into the liquid.
5. Cover the baking dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate it overnight. The bread will have absorbed almost all of the milk mixture. Uncover the baking dish and if there are dryer looking pieces on top, take them off and carefully tuck them underneath the bread on the bottom so that the more milk-soaked pieces are now on

top (this is messy but it all works out in the baking). Note that any dried fruit sitting on the top of the French toast will get pretty chewy when baked and nuts on top will get toasty; the fruit and nuts that are tucked into the French toast will be softer, so disperse the fruit and nuts as you see fit.

6. Preheat the oven to 425°F.
7. Bake the French toast, uncovered, until it is puffed and golden, 30 to 35 minutes.
8. Let the French toast sit for 5 minutes to firm up a bit, then cut it into squares and serve it hot with your choice of maple syrup, fresh fruit, and/or confectioners' sugar.