

Breakfast Strata

We should probably get around to rewriting this recipe to the proper one, H...

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Ingredients

- 8 - 10 slices supermarket French bread (1/2-inch thick) or Italian bread (6 - 7 ounces)
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 8 ounces bulk breakfast sausage, crumbled
- 3 medium shallots, minced (about 1/3 cup)
- 8 ounces white button mushrooms, cleaned and quartered
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup medium-dry white wine, such as Sauvignon Blanc
- 6 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, grated (about 1 1/2 cups)
- 6 large eggs
- 1 3/4 cups half-and-half
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves

Recipe

To weigh down the assembled strata, we found that two 1-pound boxes of brown or powdered sugar, laid side by side over the plastic-covered surface, make ideal weights. A gallon-sized zipper-lock bag filled with about 2 pounds of sugar or rice also works. This recipe doubles easily; use a 9 by 13-inch baking dish greased with only 1 1/2 tablespoons butter and increase the baking time as directed in step 4. Feel free to substitute any good melting cheese, such as Havarti, sharp cheddar, or colby.

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 225 degrees. Arrange bread in single layer on large baking sheet and bake until dry and crisp, about 40 minutes, turning slices over halfway through drying time. (Alternatively, leave slices out overnight to dry.) When cooled, butter slices on one side with 2 tablespoons butter; set aside.

2. Fry sausage in medium nonstick skillet over medium heat, breaking sausage apart with wooden spoon, until sausage has lost raw color and begins to brown, about 4 minutes; add shallots and cook, stirring frequently, until softened and translucent, about 1 minute longer. Add mushrooms to skillet, and cook until mushrooms no longer release liquid, about 6 minutes; transfer mixture to medium bowl and season to taste with salt and pepper. Add wine to skillet, increase heat to medium-high, and simmer until reduced to 1/4 cup, 2 to 3 minutes; set aside.

3. Butter 8-inch square baking dish with remaining 1 tablespoon butter; arrange half the buttered bread slices, buttered-side up, in single layer in dish. Sprinkle half of sausage mixture, then 1/2 cup grated cheese evenly over bread slices. Arrange remaining bread slices in single layer over cheese; sprinkle remaining sausage mixture and another 1/2 cup cheese evenly over bread. Whisk eggs and parsley in medium bowl until combined; whisk in reduced wine, half-and-half, 1 teaspoon salt,

and pepper to taste. Pour egg mixture evenly over bread layers; cover surface flush with plastic wrap, weigh down (see note, above), and refrigerate at least 1 hour or up to overnight.

4. Remove dish from refrigerator and let stand at room temperature 20 minutes. Meanwhile, adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Uncover strata and sprinkle remaining 1/2 cup cheese evenly over surface; bake until both edges and center are puffed and edges have pulled away slightly from sides of dish, 50 to 55 minutes (or about 80 minutes for doubled recipe). Cool on wire rack 5 minutes; serve.

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