

CHERRY BRIOCHE BREAD PUDDING WITH ALMONDS



The exquisite combination of almond and cherry is one of my favorite flavors. I make this bread pudding with buttered slices of our Mini Cherry Brioche and custard mix infused with roasted almonds. After baking for an hour covered with foil and then without for an additional 15 minutes to crisp, you'll have a decadent dessert that'll impress even your most discerning guests.

- Leslie Mackie

INGREDIENTS:

Makes two 9" x 5" pans • Serves 6

- 1 Macrina Mini Cherry Brioche
- 1-1/4 cups whole milk
- 3/4 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 teaspoon brandy (or substitute pure vanilla)
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 egg
- 2 egg yolks
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat your oven to 325°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment and set aside.

Remove the Mini Cherry Brioche from its paper mold and cut 1/2" thick slices. You should have 12. Lay the sliced brioche on the prepared baking sheet and toast in the oven for 10 minutes. Flip the slices and toast for another 5 minutes. Let cool.

In a medium bowl, combine the milk, cream, almond extract, brandy or vanilla, honey and eggs. Whisk well and set aside.

Melt the butter in a small saucepan. Brush two 9" x 5" loaf pans with melted butter. To make the bread pudding easy to remove from the pan, line your pans with strips of parchment paper cut to fit. (I cut a 10" x 9" piece and then add smaller pieces to cover the ends.) The melted butter will hold the parchment in place.

Brush 6 slices of brioche with butter on both sides. Stack slices and cut in half vertically. Layer the slices in one pan, overlapping them like shingles. Repeat the process with the remaining 6 slices and the other pan. Then divide the custard between the two pans. Push the brioche down slightly to encourage absorption of the custard. Let rest at room temperature for 20 minutes to allow the brioche to finish absorbing the custard.

Scatter the sliced almonds over the top of each pan. Cover them with foil but leave 2 small vents in opposite corners to allow steam to escape. Place the loaf pans in a 2" deep roasting pan and pour in 1" of hot water to create a water bath for more gentle baking. Bake for 1 hour. Remove the foil and bake another 15 minutes to crisp the top and toast the almonds. The custard should be totally set when done. If not, bake for another 5 minutes and check again.

Cool for 30 minutes. Remove from the pan by lifting the edges of the parchment liner. Peel the parchment from the pudding and cut it into 3 servings per pan. Serve with lightly sweetened whipped cream. If you make the bread pudding ahead of time, keep it in the refrigerator and warm it for 15 minutes at 325°F before serving. Enjoy!