

Banana Bread Pudding with Rum Caramel Sauce

Ingredients for the Pudding:

- 1 cup zante currants
- 3 Tbs. rum
- 5 large eggs
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 4 very ripe bananas mashed
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ⅛ tsp. ground nutmeg
- Pinch of table salt
- 3 cups heavy cream
- ¾ lb. stale white bread with crusts, preferably Italian or French, torn into ¾-inch pieces

Ingredients for caramel sauce:

- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup dark rum



Make the caramel sauce:

Preheat oven to 325°. Sift all dry ingredients and set aside. In a standing In a 2-quart saucepan, cook the brown sugar, butter, and salt over medium heat, stirring until the sugar melts and begins to darken around the edges, about 5 minutes. Slowly whisk in the cream (some sugar will seize) and simmer, whisking occasionally, until smooth and thick enough that the whisk leaves the bottom of the pan visible, 7 to 9 minutes. Whisk in the rum and simmer, whisking occasionally, until the whisk leaves the bottom of the pan visible again, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a heatproof measuring cup. Pour 1/3 cup of the caramel over the bottom of the cooled crust and spread it evenly with a small offset spatula. Refrigerate for at least 15 minutes to set the caramel. (Leave the remaining caramel at room temperature.

Make the bread pudding:

In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, combine the raisins and rum and heat gently until the liquid is evaporated and the raisins are plump, about 7 minutes.

In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs with the sugar, vanilla, spices, and salt. Stir in the cream until well blended. Toss in the torn bread and plumped raisins and stir. Let the mixture stand for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, to allow the bread to soak up the liquid.

Heat the oven to 325°F. Butter eight 6-oz. custard cups or ramekins. Portion the bread mixture into the cups and pour any remaining custard over the top of each. Thinly slice banana slices and place on top of custard. Sprinkle with sugar if desired. Set the cups in a baking pan or shallow roasting pan and add enough water to the pan to come halfway up the sides of the cups. Bake until the puddings are browned on top and a knife inserted in the center comes out barely clean, about 50 minutes. Let the puddings cool on a rack and serve warm with caramel sauce.

Yield: 8 individual ramekin cups