

Savory Bread Pudding

With Spinach, Gruyere, and Shiitakes

Serves 6 to 8

Butter, for greasing the baking pan

2 cups stale bread, cut into ¼-inch cubes (sour dough works well)

1 pound baby spinach (about 13 packed cups)

1 cup (4 ounces) grated Gruyere cheese

2 tablespoons olive oil or butter

8 ounces fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems discarded, caps cut into ¼-inch slices

2 tablespoons minced shallots

3 large eggs

2 cups half-and-half

1 teaspoon salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1. Position a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat the oven to 350°F
2. Butter a 9 by 13-inch baking pan. Spread the bread cubes in the prepared baking pan and set aside
3. Place about one fourth of the spinach in a large, preferably nonstick, skillet over medium-low heat and cook, turning frequently with tongs, until it wilts, 3 to 5 minutes. (if you are not using a nonstick skillet, add 1 tablespoon of water to the spinach.) Continue adding spinach to the skillet until all of it has wilted.
4. Spread the spinach evenly over the bread cubes. Sprinkle ½ cup of the cheese on top of the spinach.
5. Heat the olive oil in the same skillet over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms and shallots and cook, stirring frequently, until tender, 5 to 8 minutes. Scatter the mushroom mixture evenly over the spinach.
6. Place the eggs, half-and-half, and salt in a medium-size bowl, season with pepper to taste, and whisk to blend. Pour the egg mixture over the mushroom mixture and top with the remaining ½ cup of gruyere cheese. Use a spatula or spoon to press down on the bread pudding, making sure all of the ingredients are moistened by the egg mixture.
7. Bake the bread pudding until puffed and golden. 35 to 45 minutes. Let it sit on a wire rack until firm, 10 minutes.
Serve warm.

_ Recipe from Food to Live By- The Earthbound Farm Organic Cookbook – Pages 295-296

(Goodman, Mayra – With Linda Holland and Pamela McKinstry)