



Cooking with Susanna's: Apple Bread Pudding & Spiced Wine

Winter entertaining is the most festive, in my book. No matter what your celebrations of the season include, the cooling temperatures bring us indoors, into warm intimate spaces to "converse," as my dear friend Calvin would say.

Impromptu get-togethers occur more frequently during this joyous season and, with a little advanced purchasing, throwing an impromptu gathering in 30 minutes can actually be easy.

Winter fruits are all about the colors red and orange: cranberry, pomegranate, red grapes, rhubarb, pears, oranges, tangerines, mandarin, persimmon and kumquats, to name a few. Garnishing or flavoring with these fruits adds a festive start to any dish.

Bread pudding is a traditional holiday dessert that can have as many variations, depending on your taste preferences. You can add other fruits like cranberries, pears or mandarin oranges to the mixture or drench the finished product in a sauce with rum and fruits. It keeps well in a sealed container and can also be frozen in advance. I like to serve mine warm and topped with vanilla ice cream and pomegranate seeds.

APPLE BREAD PUDDING

4 cups white bread, cubed

2 cups thinly sliced/peeled green apples

¼ cups raisins

1 cup firmly packed brown sugar

2 cups milk

¼ cup butter

1 tsp cinnamon

½ tsp vanilla

2 eggs, beaten

Combine bread, apple and raisins in bowl, set aside. Combine the brown sugar, milk & butter, cook over stove until the butter melts. Pour over the bread mixture let stand 10 to 15 minutes. Stir in the cinnamon, vanilla and beaten eggs. Bake 40 to 50 minutes at 350 degrees.

There is nothing that takes the chill away like a Hot Spiced Wine which is delicious and perfect for winter entertaining.

HOT SPICED WINE

8 oz red table wine

2 oz orange liquor (Cointreau, Controy or Gran Marnier)

1 cinnamon stick

1 tsp honey

Heat mixture for 1-2 minutes, until boiling. Pour into mug and garnish with cinnamon stick and/or mandarin orange