

- Prep Time: 20 minutes
 - Cook Time: 55-65 minutes
 - Total Time: 1 hour 15 minutes to 1 hour 25 minutes
 - Servings: 8-10
 - Difficulty: Easy
 - Category: Dessert
 - Cuisine: American (Classic Comfort)
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Ingredients

For the Bread Pudding

- 6 cups stale bread, cut into 1-inch cubes (French bread, brioche, challah, or plain white bread all work well)
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup raisins (optional, but Grandma always added them)
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans or walnuts (optional)

For the Vanilla Sauce

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 1 tablespoon cold water (optional, for thicker sauce)

Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Oven and Baking Dish

Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Lightly grease a 9×13-inch baking dish or a 3-quart casserole dish with butter or non-stick spray. Set aside.

Step 2: Toast the Bread (Optional but Recommended)

Spread the bread cubes in a single layer on a baking sheet. Toast in the preheated oven for 5–7 minutes, until slightly dry and lightly golden. This step helps the bread hold its shape and absorb the custard without becoming mushy. If you're using already-stale bread, you can skip this step.

Step 3: Whisk the Custard

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the milk, heavy cream, eggs, granulated sugar, brown sugar, melted butter, vanilla extract, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt until fully combined and smooth. The mixture should be a warm, golden color with a fragrant spice aroma.

Step 4: Combine the Bread and Custard

Place the bread cubes in the prepared baking dish. If using raisins and nuts, scatter them evenly over the bread. Pour the custard mixture over the bread, pressing down gently with a spatula or the back of a spoon to ensure every cube is soaked. Let it sit for 10–15 minutes so the bread absorbs the liquid fully.

Step 5: Bake the Pudding

Bake uncovered at 350°F (175°C) for 45–55 minutes, or until the center is set and a knife inserted into the middle comes out clean. The top should be golden brown and slightly

puffed. If the edges begin to brown too quickly, tent the dish loosely with foil after the first 30 minutes.

Step 6: Make the Vanilla Sauce

While the pudding bakes, prepare the sauce. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the sugar and heavy cream, whisking constantly. Bring to a gentle simmer, then reduce heat to low and cook for 5-7 minutes, stirring frequently, until the sugar dissolves and the sauce thickens slightly. If you prefer a thicker sauce, stir in the cornstarch slurry and cook for 1-2 minutes more. Remove from heat and stir in the vanilla extract and a pinch of salt.

Step 7: Cool and Serve

Let the bread pudding cool for 10-15 minutes before serving. This allows the custard to set fully. Serve warm, drizzled generously with the warm vanilla sauce. A scoop of vanilla ice cream or a dollop of whipped cream on top is entirely optional—but highly recommended.

Time and Intensity Guide

Phase	Time	Intensity
Prep and cubing bread	10 minutes	Low
Toasting bread (optional)	5-7 minutes	Low
Whisking custard	5 minutes	Low
Soaking bread	10-15 minutes	Passive
Baking	45-55 minutes	Passive
Making vanilla sauce	10 minutes	Medium (constant stirring)
Cooling	10-15 minutes	Passive
Total	~1 hour 25 minutes	Easy