

Dan Ralston's Kitchen

Egg Strata

Serves 6

Most of the assembly for this layered bread-and-egg dish can be done one day ahead. Serve it hot or warm.

9 1-inch-thick slices French bread (each about 3x5 inches)

5 large eggs

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon dried basil

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 1/2 cups half and half

2 cups (packed) grated sharp cheddar cheese (about 8 ounces)

1/2 green bell pepper, cut into 2x1/4-inch strips

15 cherry tomatoes, halved

6 ounces smoked sausage (such as kielbasa), cut into 1/2-inch cubes

2 tablespoons minced onion

Chopped fresh parsley

Butter 13x9x2-inch glass baking dish. Fit 8 bread slices in prepared dish. Cut remaining bread slice into 1-inch cubes; fit cubes into any empty spaces. Whisk eggs, mustard, basil and salt in medium bowl to blend; whisk in half and half. Ladle custard over bread. Cover; chill at least 2 hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Sprinkle mixture in dish with black pepper. Top with half of cheese, then bell pepper, tomatoes, sausage, onion and remaining cheese. Cover loosely with foil. Bake 20 minutes. Remove foil. Bake until strata is set and springy to touch, about 20 minutes longer. Cool 5 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley.

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