

WARM LATIYA BRIOCHE BREAD PUDDING

My best friend got married in the summer of 2015 on Guam, and had her reception at Top of the Mar. They served a hot version of latiya as dessert. I don't know what they called it, but I'm calling it "warm latiya brioche bread pudding" because it's different yet the same from our traditional latiya. This is my attempt at that dessert – and it's reminiscent of dipping pantosta in hot coffee – warm, soaked, and delicious. If you can't find sliced brioche, perhaps King's Hawaiian bread will work. It is similar in taste and texture though brioche seems to have more butter. Use King's sweet bread, not the savory butter flavor. Slice the large, round loaves if you can't find the sweet, sliced sandwich bread. Also, try slicing the small sweet rolls in half and toast on a pan in the oven.

For those not in the know, traditional Chamorro latiya is a dessert made of a cake base – pound cake or sponge cake – and custard and cinnamon topping.

Makes 1 – 9 x 13 pan and 1 – 8 x 8 pan, each with a cover

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

1 ½ loaves brioche bread sliced into ¾-inch thickness

Set 2

2 – 12 oz. cans of evaporated milk

2 – 12 oz. cans of water from evaporated milk cans

1 stick unsalted sweet cream butter

1 cup granulated sugar

Set 3

6 large eggs, room temperature

1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Set 4

¼ cup cornstarch

1/3 cup water

Tools: wire rack, 9 x 13 baking dish with lid, 8 x 8 baking dish with lid, electric hand beater, large pot, whisk, medium bowl, 1-cup measuring pitcher, ½-cup measuring cup, warming tray

DIRECTIONS

Toast the slices of brioche bread. Set aside on a wire rack.

In a large pot, add the evaporated milk, water, sugar, butter, and vanilla extract. Heat on medium heat to just below a simmer. Do not boil.

While the milk mixture is heating, in the medium bowl, lightly beat the eggs. Set aside.

Fill the measuring pitcher with ¼ cup of cool water. Add the cornstarch. Mix well and set aside.

When the milk mixture is just below a simmer, use the ½-cup measuring cup to scoop some of the milk mixture. Slowly drizzle the hot mixture into the lightly beaten eggs as you whisk to combine. Continue to add a little of the hot

milk mixture to the egg mixture, tempering the eggs. Tempering means to slowly bring the temperature of a cool mixture up to the temperature of a hot mixture – in this case, so you don't scramble the eggs. Once you've added two-thirds of the milk mixture to the egg mixture, pour the tempered eggs into the pot of milk mixture, whisking as you combine them.

Bring the custard to just under a simmer. Stir the cornstarch mixture then add it to the custard. Whisk and cook for 2 minutes, allowing the final mixture to come to a very gentle boil – that is, it should have few bubbles coming up, but not a full boil.

Remove pot from the heat.

Spread a very thin coating of the custard in each of the baking dishes to help keep bread from sticking to the bottom of the dish.

Layer about 6 slices of brioche to cover the bottom of the larger pan; 4 slices for the smaller pan.

Pour a thin layer of custard over the brioche in both dishes.

Add another layer of sliced bread to each.

Pour the final layer of custard over each pan. You will not completely submerge all of the bread in the latiya sauce, but each of the top slices should have a coating of the custard.

Sprinkle with cinnamon.

Cover the dishes, leaving a slight crack.

Place on warming tray to keep warm.

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of www.PaulaQ.com.