
Festive French Toast

Makes 6 stuffed toasts

12 thin slices French bread
6 slices off the bone ham
8 oz. tub Mascarpone cheese
cranberry sauce
2 tablespoons butter
confectioners sugar
pomegranate seeds
maple syrup

Simple Cranberry Sauce

1/2 cup water
1/2 cup sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 zest of one orange
6 oz. fresh cranberries

French Toast Batter

1/2 cup half and half
1 egg
1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon vanilla
pinch of salt

In a small saucepan combine water, sugar, salt, and orange zest. Bring to a boil and stir in cranberries. Reduce heat and simmer until cranberries have popped open and sauce starts to thicken. The longer you simmer it the thicker it will be. It will thicken more after it cools. Place in the refrigerator until completely chilled. (Tip: It's better to make this the day before. This will be more than you need for this recipe but it's so good to use in many things. I usually double this recipe and keep it in the fridge over the Holidays.)

In a shallow bowl whisk together batter ingredients. Set aside.

To assemble stuffed french toast lay out 12 slices of french bread- two slices wide and six slices down. (Lay the top and the bottom of the sandwich side by side.) On one bread slice spread 1-2 teaspoon(s) of mascarpone cheese and the other side with 1-2 teaspoon(s) of cranberry sauce. Top one side with a slice of ham and top with remaining bread slice to form a sandwich. Repeat this step five more times with remaining bread slices.

In a skillet melt 2 tablespoons of butter. Whisk batter one last time before dipping the bread. Working quickly, dip each side of the sandwich in the batter mixture and add sandwich to skillet; flip when first side is golden brown. Remove from pan when both sides are crisp and golden brown. Repeat this step for remaining sandwiches. If frying in batches add more butter to the skillet. If making this recipe for a larger group you could fry the french toast in batches and keep your finished stuffed toasts in a baking dish in the oven at 200°F until all are ready to serve them.

Place on a serving platter and dust toast tops with powdered sugar. Garnish with pomegranate seeds. Drizzle with maple syrup right before eating.

