

Savory Bread Pudding with Sausage and Escarole (for 6-8)

SOURCE: SUNSET.COM (Marcia Smart)

The simplest way to make odds and ends of bread into a satisfying last-minute dinner is to toss them with a healthy dose of escarole or other greens + some flavorful Italian sausage, and bake - for added zing, cut up your extra escarole for a side salad with tomatoes, garbanzos and Italian dressing.

PREP AND COOK TIME: About 1 hour

INGREDIENTS:

2 TBS **olive oil**

1 **onion** (10 oz), peeled/cut in half/thinly sliced crosswise

2 cloves **garlic**, peeled/minced or pressed

1 lb fresh mild or hot **Italian sausage** (about 4 links), casings removed

4 oz **escarole**, rinsed/tough white parts removed/thinly sliced

2 C **whole milk** 4 large **eggs**

1 C shredded **Gruyère** OR **Swiss cheese**

10 C 1-2" cubes **French** or **country-style bread** (1 lb, crusts removed)

1 tsp **salt** 1/4 tsp **pepper**

1/8 tsp fresh-grated **nutmeg**

DIRECTIONS:

Pour oil into 10-12" frying pan over medium-high heat - add onion - stir often till limp and slightly golden (about 5 minutes). Stir in garlic + crumbled sausage into pan. Stir often till meat is no longer pink (7-10 minutes), using a wooden spoon to break up meat if needed. Add escarole to sausage mixture - reduce heat to low. Stir till escarole is wilted (1-2 minutes). Remove from heat.

In large bowl, whisk milk + eggs till combined. Stir in Gruyère, bread cubes, salt, pepper + nutmeg. Add sausage mixture - stir to mix well. Scrape mixture into buttered 9x13" baking dish and spread level.

Bake in 375° F oven till top is golden and knife inserted comes out mostly clean (35-45 minutes). (If top is brown after 30 minutes, cover loosely with foil and continue to bake) Serve hot.

NOTES: This can be assembled (through step 4) up to 1 day ahead – cover/chill. Bring to room temperature before baking or increase baking time by 10-15 minutes. If no escarole, choose another leafy green (e.g., spinach or chard).

Per serving: 515 cal., 56% (288 cal) from fat; 22 g protein; 32 g fat (12 g sat); 34 g carbs (2.2 g fiber); 1,130 mg sodium; 174 mg chol