

RECIPES

Capirotada

Easter week in Mexico is arguably the most important celebration of the year and, like virtually all such traditions, food is a significant part of it. And there is no more important Easter dish than the easy-to-prepare, outrageously delicious bread pudding called capirotada.

Ingredients

12 slices good quality white bread
1 ½ cups light brown sugar
3 whole cloves
1/8 teaspoon anise seed
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 ½ cups water
1/3 cup apple juice
1 stick cinnamon
3 tablespoons butter
2/3 cup sour cream
4 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, grated
1 cup toasted, unsalted pecan bits
¾ cup raisins
Whipped cream (optional)



Directions

1. Preheat your oven to 300 degrees.

2. Dry the bread. Spread the bread slices on a baking sheet, put it into the oven, and bake the bread, turning every five minutes until it is well dried but not browned, about 15 minutes. Remove and reserve it until you finish the syrup. Turn the oven to 350 degrees.

3. Make the syrup. While the bread is drying, put the sugar, cloves, anise seed, and salt in a medium-size saucepan. Add the water and apple juice and stir until the sugar has dissolved then add the cinnamon stick. Bring the liquid to a medium simmer and cook until the syrup begins to thicken, about 20 – 25 minutes. At that point you should have nearly 1 1/3 cups syrup. Add the butter, remove the pan from the heat, and stir until the butter has melted.

4. Make the capirotada. Using kitchen tongs, dip each slice of dried bread quickly into the syrup and lay three of them into the bottom of a baking dish that is 6 – 7 inches square. (You will probably have to cut one of the slices in half to cover the bottom of the dish). Spread about 2 tablespoons sour cream over the bread, top with ¼ of the cheese, pecans, and raisins. Repeat the process until you have made all 4 layers, topping the pudding with the last of the sour cream, cheese, pecans, and raisins then pour in the remaining syrup. Cover the dish and bake in the 350 degree oven for 20 minutes. Remove the pudding, allow it to cool for about 5 minutes then serve topped with whipped cream, if you wish). Serves 6 – 8.