

## Cheddar-Bacon Wake-Up Casserole

Simple Every Day | December 2007/January 2008



*If bulging stockings don't get everyone out of bed Christmas morning, this yummy make-ahead breakfast casserole will certainly do the trick.*

- 4 OZ. DRY FRENCH BREAD, CUT INTO  $\frac{3}{4}$ -INCH CUBES (4 CUPS)
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  CUPS SHREDDED CHEDDAR CHEESE
- 4 SLICES BACON, CRISP-COOKED, DRAINED, AND CRUMBLED, OR 1 CUP DICED COOKED HAM
- 2 CUPS MILK
- 4 EGGS, LIGHTLY BEATEN
- 2 TBSP. SNIPPED FRESH ITALIAN (FLAT-LEAF) PARSLEY
- $\frac{1}{2}$  TSP. MUSTARD
- $\frac{1}{4}$  TSP. GROUND BLACK PEPPER
- $\frac{1}{8}$  TSP. ONION POWDER

In a large bowl toss together the bread cubes, cheddar cheese, and cooked bacon or ham. Divide among six 10-ounce individual casseroles or place all of the mixture in one 2-quart rectangular baking dish. In a medium bowl whisk together milk, eggs, parsley, mustard, pepper, and onion powder. Pour over the bread mixture in the casseroles or dish. Cover and refrigerate at least 8 hours or up to 24 hours. Bake, uncovered, in a 350° oven for 25 to 30 minutes for individual baking casseroles (about 40 minutes for 2-quart dish) or until a knife inserted near center comes out clean. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving. Makes 6 servings.

Per serving: 374 cal., 26 g fat (12 g sat. fat), 194 mg chol., 595 mg sodium, 15 g carbo., 1 g fiber, 20 g pro.

**GREEK VARIATION:** Omit bacon or ham and substitute 6 ounces feta cheese and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup shredded Parmesan cheese for the cheddar cheese. Stir 1 cup drained and chopped canned or marinated artichoke hearts,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped green onions, and 2 tablespoons chopped kalamata olives (optional) into the bread mixture before putting into casseroles or baking dish. Continue as above.

**MUSHROOM-SWEET PEPPER VARIATION:** Cook 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped onion in 1 tablespoon hot olive oil over medium heat for 5 minutes or until onion is tender, stirring occasionally. Stir mushroom mixture and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped roasted red sweet pepper into bread mixture before putting into casseroles or baking dish. Continue as above.

**SAUSAGE AND PROVOLONE VARIATION:** Substitute  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups shredded Provolone or Italian cheese blend for the cheddar and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups chopped fully cooked turkey Italian sausage links for the bacon. Substitute basil for the parsley.

### JUST ADD FRUIT

Serve this rich breakfast dish with a refreshing fruit salad. An eye-catching and tasty combination might include honeydew melon, oranges, and fresh raspberries drizzled with honey.