

### NUTMEG-SCENTED CRUMB CAKE

Adapted from Elisabeth Luard's *The Old World Kitchen: European Peasant Cookery*, this cross between a cake and a custard pudding comes together easily, and is a crowd-pleaser.

**To make crumbs** from dried or stale bread ( we use whole grain Red Fife bread, but use whatever you have), cut into slices and then crosswise into large chunks, then place in a food processor. Watch out, it makes a loud noise as you pulse and process, but you will eventually have a mix of large crumbs, about ¼ to ½ inch across, and small flour-like crumbs.

4 to 4 ½ ounces = 2 packed cups bread crumbs

2 ounces = ¼ cup butter

2 cups whole milk heated very hot

2 tablespoons rum or other liquor (optional)

¼ clove nutmeg, grated, or to taste

½ cup sugar

5 egg yolks

3 egg whites

Place the crumbs and butter in a bowl and pour the milk over. Add the rum or other liquor if you wish. Stir to mix well, then set aside loosely covered to soak for half an hour or so. The crumbs should be very softened.

Meantime preheat the oven to 350.

Stir again and mash a little. Add the nutmeg and sugar and stir. Mix together the egg yolks and stir in. Whisk the egg whites, then fold in.

Pour into a bread pan and bake until set, about 45 to 50 minutes.

NOTES: Of course you could instead flavor this with vanilla and rum, or use cardamom and rosewater, or whatever combo you like...

## GRAIN GATHERING: WASTE NOT! RECIPES: NAOMI DUGUID & DAWN WOODWARD

### CRUMB CAKE WITH GINGERBREAD SPICING

Another take on crumb cake, this recipe is adapted from an English first war recipe that called for molasses rather than sugar. We prefer the hit of blackstrap, and then we add sugar for sweetness.

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2 cups packed bread crumbs (see headnote)

$\frac{1}{4}$  pound/2 ounces butter

2 cups hot whole milk

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup blackstrap molasses

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cinnamon

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ginger

3 eggs

Place the crumbs and butter in a bowl, pour the hot milk over and stir to mix, then set aside loosely covered to soak for half an hour or so.

Preheat the oven to 370 degrees F

Stir and mix again to mash the crumbs a little. Add the salt, molasses, sugar, cinnamon and ginger.

Whisk or beat the eggs until they foam, then stir in.

Pour the mixture into a bread tin and bake until set, about 35 minutes.

Let stand for an hour or more to set and firm up. It will drop a little in the pan; don't worry!

Serve on its own or with cream or ice cream or thick yogurt.

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### DEDAS KHARCHO - OLD BREAD FRITATTA

This traditional recipe from Georgia transforms old bread into succulent eating. Quantities are casual. Cubes of dried bread are tossed in hot oil with onions, then simmered in added water. Once they are tender, whisked egg is stirred in, to make a kind of fritatta.

The recipe was given to me in Tbilisi by a woman of eighty-five, the mother of a friend of a friend. [Tamar's mother-in-law Dali.] She had worked for years as a chemist, in the Soviet era, then, like so many skilled people of her generation, found herself out of work, and with no pension, after the breakup of the USSR. Her garden is a marvel, and so is her pantry, filled with shelves of gleaming preserves.

To feed 5 or 6 for breakfast or a casual meal:

About 3 tablespoons sunflower or other vegetable oil

1 large onion, about 1 ½ cups chopped

4 to 5 cups dried bread, cut into approximate 1-inch cubes

Water

1 small tomato, coarsely chopped (optional)

6 large eggs

About 1 teaspoon salt or to taste

About ¼ cup chopped tarragon or coriander leaves or other chopped tender herbs such as sorrel (optional)

Black pepper (optional)

Heat oil in a wide deep skillet or wide heavy pot. Toss in the onion, set heat to medium, and cook until translucent, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the bread cubes and turn and stir to expose them all to the hot oil, a minute or two, then add about 1 cup water and bring to a boil. Cook for a minute or so, as the bread starts to soften, then add water to cover, bring to a boil, lower heat to medium low, and cook uncovered until the bread is well softened (3 to 5 minutes, depending on the hardness of the bread). If using tomatoes, add them a couple of minutes after the water comes to the boil.

Break the eggs into a bowl, add salt and whisk well, then add chopped herbs and black pepper if using, and stir. Add to the softened bread mixture and stir a little to mix the eggs in. Continue to cook on medium low for about a minute or until the eggs set.

Turn out onto a platter or into a wide shallow bowl and serve.

Serve with a salad, or sliced tomatoes and cucumbers, or pickled red peppers, for brunch or for a casual meal any time.

Texture creamy with tender lumps of bread, rich flavor, almost as if there was cheese in it.

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### AUSTRIAN KNUDEL

Every bakery in Austria sells bread crumbs. Customers buy bags of them to take home for making these simple dumplings.

4 very dry Kaiser-style rolls, cut into crouton size pieces  
2 extra-large eggs  
½ cup milk  
2 tablespoons water  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Marjoram- fresh or dried  
Fresh minced parsley  
Whole fennel or cumin seed  
¼ cup or less of soft white flour  
1 small onion, finely diced

Cut the rolls into crouton-sized pieces. Mix together the egg, milk, and water in a bowl, add the dried bread and let stand for half an hour, stirring several times, to make sure the pieces are well coated.

Cook the onion in a little butter until softened, then add the onion (but as little butter as possible) to the mixture and stir until well mixed; the bread should still be holding its shape.

Add enough flour to bind and shape into large-golfball size rounds. Let rest for 10 minutes.

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a steady boil. Add the dumplings 2 to 3 at a time, so the water keeps boiling, and cook for 15 minutes. Ideally, the dumplings should remain fluffy and soft.

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DAWN'S M'HAMMARA (Armenian and Turkish-style Pomegranate-Pepper paste)  
These recipes comes from a wonderful Armenian family I stayed with in the Anjar, Lebanon and a good friend in Istanbul, Turkey.

½ cup pepper paste (can buy pre-made from Turkish store) or blanch and peel Shepard's/Bulgarian red peppers and cook in plenty of good olive oil until extremely soft. Cook over low heat, so peppers do not brown.  
Add chopped 2 to 3 tablespoons Cerignola olives and generous 1 cup of bread crumbs, softened with ¼ cup of water to make a thick paste. Thin out with a squeeze of lemon juice and good extra-virgin olive oil. Drizzle generously with pomegranate molasses and serve.

Variation: This one from Istanbul:

Prepare peppers the same way, add equal parts ground walnuts and bread crumbs. Mix in crumbled feta cheese and drizzle with pomegranate molasses and good EVO.

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### DAWN'S BREAD CRUMB STREUSEL FRUIT BARS:

Yield: one 9x13 inch baking tray

$\frac{3}{4}$  pound butter

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Generous 3 cups/500 grams Whole grain bread crumbs

3 cups/330 grams rolled oats

2 teaspoons baking soda

1  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup/ 250 grams brown sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt

Fruit jam, preferably tart fruit, such as damsons or sour cherries or gooseberry

Preheat oven to 350 F.

Melt the butter in a small pot and add the vanilla.

Combine all the dry ingredients in large bowl and mix well. Stir in the melted butter and mix evenly.

Line a baking tray with parchment (cover sides, too). Add two-thirds of the streusel and pat down. Spread with a generous layer of fruit butter/jam. (I prefer tart fruits, like sour plums). Sprinkle over remaining streusel.

Bake in a 350F oven for 50 minutes. The streusel should be well-browned. Cool and cut into squares or rectangles.

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### NOTES FROM LUARD, FOR THE OTHER POSSIBILITIES:

gaspacho red and white both

“garbure”

migas

bread salad

knudeln

plus there is streusel...etc

and fried crumbs as seasoning both savory and sweet...

### GASPACHO:

#### RED:

Soak 3-4 slices day old bread in 2 or 3 tablespoons cold water, plus 2 tablespoons wine vinegar 2 crushed garlic cloves.

Later process or pound it to a paste

vegetables:

small cucumber

2 pounds tomatoes

2 green peppers (I would omit these or use red ones)

1 mild /Spanish onion, chopped

Chop coarsely and set a quarter of them aside for topping. Add the rest to the blended bread mixture.

Taste and if the tomatoes have not got enough flavour, cheat and add tomato juice.

Add about 2 cups water or less, and 2 tablespoons olive oil and blend again, then serve chilled with vegetable toppings, served each in a separate bowl.

#### WHITE:

3-4 slices dry bread in a blender with 3 tablespoons blanched almonds, 4 or 5 young garlic cloves peeled, plus 2 cups water and 2 tablespoons olive oil.

Blend thoroughly (or use a pestle without the wafer and oil, then whisk together)

Add extra water if you wish to get the thickness/consistency you want.

Season with salt and white wine vinegar

Serve cold.

Float grapes on top.

And put on fried small croutons if you wish...

### Spanish MIGAS:

1 pound sourdough breadcrumbs

Soak in salted water for 2 hours

Heat 6 tablespoons oil or lard, fry 4 chopped garlics, 1 red pepper in strips and 2 tablespoons chopped serano or bacon etc

Squeeze the bread dry and then add. Stir fry gently as it crisps and crumbles into flavored crumbs

### BREAD SALADS: Italian, Cretan, etc:

In Panzanella, the bread is sliced and toasted and chopped.

Then tomatoes are cooked down in olive oil, with a couple kept uncooked. Then fold together with a little vinegar, a little sugar, capers, black olives and the bread....

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And the tradition of “GARBURE” – layered casserole of bread and vegetables, from Catalonia to Provence to Gascony (turnips, spuds, cabbage, and onion, layered with bread, “with a bit of bacon or preserved goose buried in it”, to Bearn (similar, with salt meat on top; chestnuts and dried beans are added in the winter..

### BREAD DUMPLINGS: knockerl

4 ounces dry bread in dice

1 tablespoon butter or lard

1 egg

About ¼ cup milk

salt and pepper

(heavier if you also add 3 heaped Tablespoons flour, and more milk)

Fry the bread cubes in fat

Mix with the egg and milk and salt and pepper. Let stand half an hour.

Pot of salted water.

Wet your hand and then roll little balls, say 8 or 10. Drop from a spoon into the boiling water and poach for 10 to 15 minutes – they will swell.

If include flour, then a bigger recipe, 12 balls or so.