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Dedicated to helping you create loving memories in your kitchen

*Recipes from **Gale Gund's BRUNCH!** by Gale Gund. Published by Clarkson Potter/Publishers, New York NY. Copyright 2009. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.*

Baked Cinnamon-Apple French Toast

Serves 8

When relatives are staying with us and I want to serve French toast but I don't want to have to prepare it first thing in the morning, I use this recipe, which falls somewhere between French toast and bread pudding. I can prepare it the night before, so all I have to do when I wake up is wander down to the kitchen, heat the oven, and pop it in . . . and then steal another hour of sleep. I also love it because it uses up those questionable apples in my fruit drawer. (You have those too, don't you? Please say you do.)

6 medium apples (I use an assortment)
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut up into small cubes, plus more for the baking dish
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
1-1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
8 slices Texas toast (thick pre-sliced white bread)
8 large eggs
1/2 cup granulated sugar
3-1/2 cups whole milk
1 tablespoons pure vanilla extract
Honey Butter

Peel, core, and cut the apples into 1/4-inch –thick slices. Heat the butter in a sauté pan over medium heat until it starts to foam. Add the apples and cook them until tender, about 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and stir in the brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Set aside.

Lightly toast the bread. Cut the toast slices in half to make triangles. Butter a 9x13-inch baking dish, and arrange the bread in two rows, overlapping in the dish.

Beat the eggs in a medium bowl; then whisk in the sugar, milk and vanilla to make a custard. Pour the custard over the bread triangles, and spoon the apples over the top. Cover, and refrigerate overnight.

The next day, heat the oven to 350 degrees.

Uncover the baking dish and bake for 50 to 60 minutes, until the custard is set and doesn't shimmy when you shake the pan. It will puff up and brown slightly. Remove from the oven and let it rest for 10 minutes before serving. Serve in squares or large spoonfuls, with honey butter.

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Baked Cinnamon-Apple French Toast, (*continued*)

Hot or Cold Honey Butter

Makes 1/2 cup

This is great to have in the fridge to dress morning pancakes, waffles, or French toast. Or just spread it on toast! Look for local honey, which has wonderful flavor.

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 pinch salt

1 tablespoon honey