

## **Bacon Breakfast Strata**

*Makes a 9 x 13 inch casserole*

1 pound crusty bread (pugliese or batards work well), diced

1/2 pound bacon, cut into lardons

1 cup red onion, quartered and cut into 3/8 inch slices

1 cup sliced mushrooms, *I used crimini*

1 cup cheddar cheese, grated

8 eggs

1 quart lowfat milk

1 teaspoon salt

Brown bacon in large frying pan. Remove to paper towel lined plate to drain. Pour off all but 2 Tablespoons of the bacon fat. Reserve the fat in a jar in the refrigerator for future use. Saute onion and mushrooms in bacon pan over medium heat until they are softened and begin to brown. Remove onions and mushrooms from the pan and set aside.

Gently beat eggs with a whisk. Add milk and salt. Whisk to combine.

In a large bowl, combine bread, browned bacon, onions, mushrooms, and grated cheese. Toss to mix.

Butter a 9 x 13 inch casserole pan. Fill pan with the bread mixture. Pour egg mixture over the top of the bread. Gently press any floating bread down into the mix. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate 8 hours to overnight.

*In the morning...*

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Remove plastic wrap and bake strata for 1 hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes until the top is nicely browned and the egg sets in the center. Cool for 5 minutes, then cut and serve.

Alternatively, you can bake the strata in individual ramekins or muffin tins. They will bake in closer to 30-40 minutes.

**Note:** The baking time is dependent on the size of the dish and the temperature of the strata when it enters the oven. I find it is better to put it in the oven a little on the early side. If it is done before you are ready to eat, cover it with foil to keep warm. The strata is also delicious cold, perhaps sliced up for a treat later in the day, or a leftover dinner with a simple salad.