

SUBMITTED BY JILL CURTIS

Italian Strata

If I have to host a big group on Christmas, I always make this! It is easily prepared the night before and I can pop it into the oven while we open gifts in the morning. It pairs well with mimosas and fruit.

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350F (180C). Coat a 9×13-in. (3-L) baking dish with oil.
- Cut bread slices into quarters. In a large bowl, whisk eggs with Dijon. Then whisk in milk and seasonings. Prepare ham and onions. Slice peppers into thick strips.
- Place half of bread in a single layer in baking dish. Press down firmly with your hand. Pour half the egg mixture evenly overtop.
- Sprinkle with 1 cup (250 mL) cheese, then half the ham, peppers and onions. Top with 1 cup (250 mL) cheese. Cover with remaining bread. Press bread down. Sprinkle with remaining ham, peppers and onions. Pour egg mixture overtop. Press bread down so liquid will soak in. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake right away or cover and refrigerate up to a day.
- Bake, uncovered, until golden and centre seems set when dish is jiggled, 40 to 50 min. Let stand about 10 min before serving.

Ingredients:

- 12 slices crusty Italian bread
- 8 eggs
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 cups 3.25% milk
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 cup chopped Blackforest ham
- 1/2 cup sliced green onions
- 3 roasted red peppers
- 3 cups grated fontina or Asiago

