



From the Food Bank Kitchen

Ideas for Using Stale Bread

How often do we throw out bread that has become hard and dry? Or toss the ends or cut off crusts from sandwich bread? Maybe there was a buy 1, get 1 free sale that you didn't use fast enough, or you got a loaf of bread from the food pantry that is starting to stale. As time passes, some pre-sliced breads may begin to mold while other breads and bakery items may become hard and dry. If bread is moldy, throw it away, however; if it is hard and dry, there are many uses for bread past its prime. It can be made into bread crumbs or croutons or stuffing, moistened into thick soups, or incorporated into sweet or savory bread puddings.

How to Tell if the Bread is Unsafe to Eat

Check your bread for mold to make sure it is safe to eat. The mold that grows on bread can be grey or green, and range in size from large spots or multiple tiny spots. The bottom line is; if it's moldy, throw it away! Then clean the area where you had stored the bread and check that all other food items are safe to eat.

How to Store Bread

If you will be eating your bread right away, store it at room temperature. If you plan to use an unsliced loaf at a later date, slice and store in the freezer in an air-tight freezer bag or container. If you choose not to slice it, it may be more difficult to use as needed, unless you plan to use the entire loaf at once. Use it as needed, and leave the rest frozen. Although many people believe that the fridge is the best place to store bread, this is a myth and it will actually cause bread to stale faster.

Bringing Bread Back to Life: Sometimes just toasting bread in the oven gives it a pleasing texture and flavor. Or try these ideas:

- **In the Microwave:** You can make bread soft again by wrapping it in a moist paper towel (wrap both the top and bottom) and microwaving it for 10 seconds or so.
- **In the Oven:** Take your stale bread (unsliced loaf/baguette type), turn oven to warm and stick the bread inside. Heat for 6-7 minutes. Some people like to lightly spray the outside of the loaf with water, so the steam will soften the inside and make the outside crisp. The toaster-oven is great for single servings; try topping it first with a couple slices of cheese.
- **On the Stovetop:** Place stale bread into heat-safe colander or strainer. Pour a low layer of water into a large pan. Bring water to a boil, and then remove from the heat source. Place the colander gently into the pan. The layer of hot water should not touch the base of the colander or steamer. Place the cover over the pan and the steam will soften the bread.

French Toast

In the Microwave

1 serving

Source: foodnetwork.com

1 large egg
¼ c 1% milk
1 tsp cinnamon
Salt

1 tsp butter, room temperature
1 slice bread
Optional: 1 Tbsp raisins
or blueberries

Directions: Whisk together the egg, milk, cinnamon, and a pinch of salt in a large microwave-safe mug until combined. Evenly spread the butter on one side of the bread. Cut bread into bite-sized pieces and add them to mug, pressing down slightly so all the bread is submerged. Stir in raisins if using. Microwave bread mixture on high power for 2 minutes, pausing every 30 seconds. Let French Toast cool in the mug about 1 minute before serving.

Nutrition Facts: Calories 160, Fat 6 gm, Sat Fat 3 gm, Sodium 220 mg, Carbs 19 gm, Fiber 5 gm, Sugars 6 gm, Protein 10 gm

On the Stovetop

3 servings

Source: Allrecipes.com

6 slices of bread
2 large eggs
⅔ c 1% milk
¼ tsp cinnamon (optional)
¼ tsp nutmeg (optional)
Salt to taste

Directions: Beat together egg, milk, salt, desired spices and vanilla. Heat a lightly oiled griddle or skillet over medium-high flame. Dunk each slice of bread in egg mixture, soaking both sides. Place in pan, and cook on both sides until golden. Serve hot.

Nutrition Facts: Calories 240, Fat 6 gm, Sat Fat 2 gm, Sodium 478 mg, Carbs 33 gm, Fiber 2, Sugars 6 gm, Protein 11 gm

Applesauce Bread Pudding

9 servings

Adapted from Cape Cod Cooperative Extension Nutrition Education Program

- 6 slices stale bread, cut into cubes (about 3-4 cups)
- ½ c raisins or dried cranberries (Craisins®)
- 1 c milk
- 3 large eggs
- 3 Tbsp sugar
- 1 c unsweetened applesauce
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ½ tsp salt

Nutrition Facts: Calories 150, Fat 3 gm, Saturated Fat 1 gm, Sodium 240 mg, Carbohydrate 26 gm, Fiber 3 gm, Sugars 15 gm, Protein 7 gm

Directions: Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut bread into cubes. Place bread cubes in an 8"x8" pan that has been sprayed with nonstick cooking spray. Mix remaining ingredients in a medium bowl and pour over bread cubes. Bake for 40 minutes or until a table knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

Sausage and Mushroom Strata

8 servings

Make this dish the night before, then bake up for a meal the next day!

MAKE THIS RECIPE A DAY AHEAD

- 8 oz French or Italian style white or whole wheat bread, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 8 oz turkey breakfast sausage (or other meat)
- 2 c low-fat milk
- 4 oz (1½ c) shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese
- 9 large eggs (or use 3 eggs plus 12 oz egg substitute)
- ½ c chopped scallions or chopped onion
- 1 c sliced mushrooms (fresh or canned)
- ½ tsp paprika
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 2 Tbsp grated Parmesan cheese

Nutrition Facts: Calories 320, Fat 11 gm, Saturated Fat 4 gm, Sodium 640 mg, Carbohydrate 29 gm, Fiber 1 gm, Protein 25 gm

Directions: Preheat oven to 400°F while cutting up bread. Arrange bread cubes on a baking sheet and bake in preheated oven for about 8 minutes or until toasted. Heat a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage to pan; cook 7 minutes or until browned, stirring to crumble. Combine milk, cheese, eggs, Parmesan cheese, paprika, salt, and pepper in a large bowl, stirring with a whisk. Add bread, sausage, scallions, and mushrooms, tossing well to coat bread. Spoon mixture into a 13 by 9 inch baking dish. Cover and refrigerate 8 hours or overnight. **THE NEXT DAY:** Uncover casserole. Bake in preheated 350°F oven for 50 minutes or until set and lightly browned. Cut into 8 pieces; serve immediately.

Other Uses for Stale Bread

- **Garlic Bread:** Rub stale bread with garlic and oil and toast in the oven until golden brown.
- **Croutons:** Cut up 3 cups of 1-inch cube of stale bread. Toss them with 3 Tbsp olive oil on a baking sheet, season with kosher salt and ground black pepper or other favorite seasonings. Bake at 375°F, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 10 to 15 minutes. Serve them with soup or on a salad. You can also use the croutons to make stuffing. See thekitchn.com.
- **Breadcrumbs:** Preheat oven to 250°F. Slice a loaf of bread into large crouton-sized chunks, or thin slices. Place on a large cookie sheet and bake for about 10 minutes or until the bread is completely dried out. If you are in an especially humid climate or if the bread is fresh and moist, turn off the oven and leave it there all night. Grate with a box grater, or put it in a plastic bag and either crumble by hand or crunch it with a heavy can on a counter or table. A blender or food processor could be used for a finer texture. Add seasonings if desired. Store in airtight container in the fridge. Homemade bread-crumbs are often tastier than store-bought, and can be used in casseroles, to top mac and cheese, in meatballs, or to bread fish or chicken.
- **Grilled Cheese Sandwiches:** Start with stale bread rather than fresh, and your grilled cheese will be crispier.
- **Bruschetta :** (Open Faced Sandwich) French or Italian breads work best. Brush with olive oil, toast slices on a tray in the oven till lightly browned and crisp, then top with tomatoes, basil, mozzarella, sautéed garlic, or leftovers.
- **Strata:** is a mixture of eggs, cheese, milk, stale bread and various vegetables and/or meats. Usually assembled the night before, it makes a filling and nutritious lunch or dinner entrée the next day. For more recipe ideas, see thekitchn.com.