

Bread Sauce.

(Serves 8)

A recipe that has a nostalgic smell to me as my Mum would always make it for Christmas Day. She'd prep it first, and then leave it to one side to absorb the flavours until dinner was ready.

It's an unusual extra to add to the Christmas table, but a perfect addition also for the leftovers! (I love dolloping it upon crackers, cold pigs in blankets and cheeses for days after!)

I have now introduced my husband to "Bread Sauce," and so he likes to fancy it up by adding croutons for texture and extra ingredients to deepen its flavour.



Basic Ingredients

800ml milk (*Whole milk preferably*)

1 large onion (*White*)

8 Cloves

8 Peppercorns

2 Bay leaves (*Cracked in half*)

10 Slices white loaf

Salt to season.

Optional items for extra flavour:

100g salted butter,

1 Chicken Stock cube or Vegetable cube for vegetarian,

1 Garlic Clove,

1 Sprig of Thyme or pinch of dried,

2 tablespoons of Extra Virgin Olive Oil,

25g Parmesan.

METHOD

1. Place milk in a saucepan on medium heat until gently simmering.
2. While waiting for the milk to come to temperature, prepare your onion with the cloves. (My husband likes to chop the onion up finely, whereas my Mum would keep the onion whole and push the cloves into it).
3. Once the milk is simmering, add to it the:
 - Onion with cloves,
 - Peppercorns,
 - Cracked Bay leaves,
 - Salt
5. Bring the mixture back to a simmer, stirring continually to prevent the milk from burning on the pan's bottom. Once simmering, remove from the heat and place a lid over it. Leave to cool. The longer you leave it, the more the milk will be infused and develop a deeper indulgent flavour.

During this time, focus on the bread and croutons.

1. Turn on the oven to preheat your oven to 220c.
2. Remove the crust from 7 1/2 of your slices of bread and rip them apart as best you can without squeezing them too much.
3. With the last of your bread slices, slice them into 2cm cubes.
4. Once the oven is preheated, place the pile of cubed bread on a baking tray and roast them until you make dried bread croutons, about 10 minutes, in a fan oven. Continually check them and shake them.
5. Once the croutons are light brown, remove them from the oven and place them to the side with a cloth or tea towel over them.

By now, your sauce should have cooled enough.

1. With a sieve over another saucepan, pour the milk mixture through, and with a ladle, squeeze down on the remaining onion and bits in the sieve to get the most flavour from them.
2. Place the sieved milk mixture back on low heat. When steam begins to rise from its surface, start placing your ripped bread pieces into the mixture. (Depending on the quality of the bread you are using will depend on how much you use due to the gluten content).
3. Gently break down the bread in the milk using a wooden spoon until you have reached the desired thickness. Make sure you touch the bottom of the pan to save any bread from catching and burning at the bottom of the pan- otherwise, the burn will spoil your sauce.

Serving

When you are ready to serve, add in your croutons for a bit of final texture- and enjoy!