

3 tips for a better, easier breakfast in bed on Mother's Day

April 18 2016, by By Melissa D



This April 4, 2016 photo shows easy overnight individual egg strata in Concord, N.H. These savory egg, meat and vegetable treats are ideal for a Mother's Day breakfast in bed because they are easy to eat and can be prepped the night before. (AP Photo/J.M. Hirsch)

Breakfast in bed is a love language in our home. Anytime there is a special occasion to celebrate—a birthday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, whatever—the rest of the family follows an unspoken agreement to meet

early in the kitchen to craft a breakfast-in-bed tray. I'm always first to the kitchen, and as I get the project rolling my daughters show up one at a time, bleary-eyed and clutching handmade crafts or cards and some flowers picked from the garden.

As the team leader for many of the breakfasts our family has orchestrated over the years, I've developed a few best practices. And my No. 1 tip: Do the bulk of the work the night before. Overnight breakfast recipes are key. The (critical) decorating of the tray with small kiddos sucks up a surprising amount of time, leaving precious little space for complex recipe execution in the morning.

Tip No. 2: Serve something a little special. Stepping outside the routine breakfast menu has incredible power to make the whole morning feel like a party.

Tip No. 3: Keep in mind the logistics of eating off a tray while mostly reclined in bed. Cereal, aside from breaking rule No. 2, is just about impossible to eat in bed without spilling. And while you don't need to be limited to finger food, think twice before getting too cozy with messy and liquid-based meal ideas. (It takes weeks for the smell of maple syrup to leave a comforter after a serious spill. Listen to the voice of experience on this one.)

So what dish covers all these bases? And is healthy? Egg strata, which layers bread, eggs, meat and veggies all in one dish. I make mine in a muffin tin, which results in perfect portioning, pretty presentation and the flexibility to pick up breakfast with your hands or use a fork and knife. I use white whole-grain bread and a combination of eggs and egg whites to keep the nutrient profile reasonable. So even your morning breakfast party can boost your day with protein and fiber.



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EASY OVERNIGHT INDIVIDUAL EGG STRATA

Start to finish: 45 minutes, plus overnight chilling

Servings: 8

8 slices of white whole-grain bread

2 small breakfast sausage links or 1 large link chicken sausage, mild or

spicy (uncooked), casings removed

1 clove garlic, minced

1/2 cup finely chopped button or mixed mushrooms

4 ounces frozen chopped spinach, thawed and excess liquid squeezed out

1/4 cup (2 ounces) light cream cheese

1/4 cup salsa

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

2 whole eggs

2 egg whites

3/4 cup low-fat milk

Kosher salt and ground black pepper

2 medium tomatoes, cut into 8 thin slices

1/4 cup shredded Gruyere, Swiss or cheddar cheese

Cut the crusts off the bread, then cut the crusts into 1/2-inch cubes and set aside.

Use the palm of your hand to lightly press the slices of bread flat, making them thin and a little doughy. Coat the cups of a muffin pan with cooking spray, then gently press 1 slice into each cup, creating 8 little crusts. Set aside.

In a medium saute pan over medium-high, cook the sausage, crumbling with a spoon, until no longer pink, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and mushrooms and cook until fragrant, about another minute. Add the spinach, cream cheese and salsa, then cook for another 2 minutes (the mushrooms will not be fully cooked). Remove from the heat and stir in the mustard. Allow to cool for several minutes.

In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, egg whites and milk until frothy. Add the slightly cooled mushroom and sausage mixture and stir to combine. Season with generous pinches each of salt and pepper. Place a few cubes of bread crust in each muffin cup, then spoon the egg mixture on top. You may not need all of the bread crusts. Lay 1 slice of tomato on top of each tart, then 1/2 tablespoon of cheese over that.

Cover the muffin tray with foil and refrigerate for up to 24 hours. When you are ready to serve, heat the oven to 350 F. Bake for 15 minutes covered, then remove the foil and continue baking until the eggs are firm, another 10 to 15 minutes.

Nutrition information per serving: 170 calories; 50 calories from fat (29 percent of total calories); 6 g fat (2.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 75 mg cholesterol; 430 mg sodium; 19 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 5 g sugar; 10 g protein.

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