

Summer Pudding

This refreshing English pudding will serve 4 to 6. You'll need 6 cups of berries altogether, including a few for garnishing, and a 3-cup straight-sided container, like a soufflé dish. Use whatever assortment of berries or other fruit are in season – like our American cobbler, an infinite variety of fruit combinations is possible! Make this the day before you want to serve it.

1 pint red raspberries

½ pint each of red currants, blueberries, and blackberries

½ cup granulated sugar (or more, depending on the sweetness of the fruit)

11 slices of firm-textured white bread

assorted fresh berries, for garnish

sweetened whipped cream

1. In a medium nonreactive saucepan, combine the berries (except a few of each which you will reserve for garnishing) with the sugar. Toss well to completely coat the berries. Set the pan over moderate heat, cover and cook for 5 minutes. Uncover and stir gently. If the berries are still quite firm, continue to cook until they are soft but not broken down, about 1 minutes longer. (The berry juices and sugar will have formed a syrup.) Remove from the heat.
2. Trim the crusts sparingly from the bread. Arrange 4 of the slices close together on a work surface to form a square. Cover with 4 more slices to form a second layer. Using the base of a 3-cup soufflé dish as a template, trim the double-decker bread square into a circle. (Save all the bread trimmings for another use, as bread crumbs or croutons.) Halve the 3 remaining bread slices crosswise and set all the prepared bread aside.
3. Line the soufflé dish with plastic wrap, allowing a generous overhang. Smooth the plastic wrap to remove as many wrinkles as possible. Line the base of the dish with 4 of the bread triangles. Place 5 of the bread rectangles length-wise around the sides of the dish to line it; they will fit snugly.
4. With a slotted spoon, transfer the berries to the bread-lined dish; pack them in so that they are level with the top of the bread. Cover the fruit with the remaining 4 bread triangles. Drizzle most of the berry syrup evenly over the bread, reserving a small amount for later.
5. Set the soufflé dish on a large plate to catch any juices that might overflow. Place a small plate on top of the pudding and weigh it down with a pint jar filled with water. Refrigerate overnight.
6. To unmold the pudding, remove the small plate and weight. Invert the soufflé dish onto a serving platter and lift off the dish. Carefully peel off the plastic wrap. Paint any white bread patches with the reserved juice, and garnish the top of the pudding with fresh berries.
7. To serve, use a sharp knife to cut the pudding in wedges. Pass the sweetened whipped cream separately.