



# Sugar Apple

Posts From The Caribbean

## Vegetable Strata

You won't need the mushroom soaking water for the strata but it's full of flavor so don't throw it out. Refrigerate or freeze it and use the mushroom water in your next soup, stew or sauce. To determine if the strata is done, insert a small knife carefully in the middle of the strata and check that it's cooked through. And feel free to play around with the combination of vegetables. Just make sure that any particularly watery vegetables get a good sauté so they won't throw off too much juice in the strata, which could make it runny.

*1/2 ounce dried porcini mushrooms*

*A 10-ounce bag of fresh spinach, chopped*

*1 medium onion, peeled and diced*

*1/2 a red bell pepper, cored, seeded and diced*

*1 fat clove of garlic, peeled and finely minced*

*3 tablespoons unsalted butter*

*1 teaspoon salt*

*freshly ground black pepper*

*a grating of fresh nutmeg, about 1/4 teaspoon*

*10 cups cubed bread (I used sourdough but you could use French or Italian also)*

*6 ounces Gruyère cheese, grated*

*9 large eggs*

*2 3/4 cups whole milk*

*2 tablespoons Dijon mustard*

*a dash of Tabasco sauce*

Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and red pepper and cook until slightly softened, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and mushrooms and cook for 2 or 3 minutes, then add the spinach and the half the salt. Cook until the spinach is wilted and any water given off by the vegetables is evaporated. Grate in some fresh nutmeg and black pepper, then remove from the heat and let the vegetable mixture cool.

Butter a 9×13-inch ceramic baking dish and spread half the bread cubes in the dish. Cover evenly with the spinach mixture and then half of the grated cheese. Cover with the remainder of the bread and then sprinkle the top evenly with the rest of the cheese.

Whisk the eggs in a large mixing bowl. Then add the milk, mustard, the remaining salt and another grating of black pepper and nutmeg. Whisk until the mixture is well combined and pour over the casserole. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

The next day, preheat the oven to 350° and remove the strata from the refrigerator (it needs to stand at room temperature about 30 minutes).

Bake the strata, uncovered, on a rack set in the middle of the oven until puffed, brown and cooked through, about 1 hour. Let the strata stand for 5 minutes before serving.  
*Serves 10.*

<http://www.abigailblake.com/sugarapple>

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