



RICOTTA BASIL AND ROASTED RED PEPPER STRATA WITH PARMESAN

The strata is the perfect make ahead dish for breakfast, brunch or a simple supper.

The ricotta gives this strata a pudding-like consistency. contributes a creamy texture to this strata that makes it almost pudding-like in consistency. For best flavor use your own roasted and peeled red peppers, although you could use a jarred variety. Just make sure to rinse them well and pat dry before using.

Makes 6 to 8 servings

2 roasted red pepper, peeled, seeds and stems removed
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 small garlic clove, crushed through a press
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 container (15 ounces) ricotta cheese
1 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
Freshly grated nutmeg
5 large eggs
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

1. Select an 8 cup (approximately 9 inches square) shallow baking dish. Lightly coat with butter.
2. Cut the roasted peppers into 1 inch strips and place in a bowl' add the olive oil, garlic, pinch of salt and grinding of black pepper. Stir to blend; set aside.

3. In a medium bowl combine the ricotta, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, one of the eggs and a grating of nutmeg. Whisk to blend.
4. In another bowl whisk the remaining 4 eggs until blended. Whisk in the milk, remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt and a grinding of black pepper.
5. To assemble the strata use half the bread to make a single layer in the buttered baking dish, cutting them to fit tightly, if necessary. Spread the ricotta mixture evenly over the bread. Sprinkle with the basil. Arrange the roasted peppers in an evenly layer on top. Drizzle with any juices left in the bowl. Top with the remaining bread to make a second even layer once again cutting to fit, if necessary.
6. Carefully pour the custard mixture evenly over the top using a spatula to press on the bread so that the milk is evenly absorbed. Cover with plastic. Refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight before baking.
7. To bake preheat oven to 350°F. Uncover and bake until puffed and browned, about 45 minutes.