

ANYTIME BRUNCH MENU

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TWO DAYS BEFORE

- Read through all the recipes.
- Do the shopping.
- Chill the champagne or prosecco.
- Transfer the juice out of the plastic bottles into glass carafes, cover, and refrigerate.

THE DAY BEFORE

- Slice the clementines, cover, and refrigerate.
- Bake the brunch cake. Keep in the pan, let cool, cover the pan loosely with foil, and leave at room temperature.
- Prepare the strata, cover, and refrigerate.
- Slice the radishes, cover, and refrigerate.
- Make the panna cotta, cover, and refrigerate.
- Prep the hazelnuts and leave them in the resealable bag at room temperature.



THE DAY OF

- Make the crème fraîche dressing.
- Half an hour before guests arrive, preheat the oven to 300°F (175°C).
- Reheat the brunch cake, covered, in the oven for 15 minutes. Uncover and heat for 5 more minutes to crisp up the top.
- While the cake is reheating, brew the coffee, if making.
- Set out the juice carafes, glasses, and garnishes.
- Once the cake is done, increase the oven temperature to 375°F (190°C).
- Remove the strata from the refrigerator to take the chill off while the oven heats up.
- Once guests arrive, serve the drinks and the brunch cake.
- Bake the strata, covered, for 40 minutes, and then uncovered for 15 to 20 minutes.
- After you uncover the strata, compose the salads. Create the cucumber ribbons and add the radishes and the dressing.
- Garnish the strata with black pepper and chives.
- Serve the strata and the salads.
- Once the plates have been cleared, garnish the panna cotta and serve!





CITRUS SPARKLERS

A brunch cocktail is a great way to get everyone into a festive mood. I love to take the basic idea of a mimosa and spiff it up a bit by adding an equal amount of ruby red grapefruit juice to the orange juice. A splash of crème de framboise takes the acidity down, and a topper of champagne or prosecco adds a festive fizz. I like to garnish these with a sliced clementine, which fits snugly into a champagne flute and floats to the top, and a little sprig of mint. Set out all the components and let guests serve themselves!

SERVES 6

52 ounces (1.5 L) orange juice
52 ounces (1.5 L) ruby red grapefruit juice
One 750 ml bottle crème de framboise
Two 75 cl bottles champagne or prosecco

GARNISH

6 small clementines, sliced into wheels (see Note)
1 bunch fresh mint

NOTES

Buy small clementines with firm skin; they will work better than larger ones with looser skin.

1. Transfer the juice into two separate glass carafes.
2. Fill a champagne flute with 1 tablespoon (15 ml) crème de framboise, then fill it with ½ cup (120 ml) orange juice and ½ cup (120 ml) grapefruit juice or until the glass is three-quarters full. Top with champagne or prosecco.
3. Garnish with a clementine wheel placed on top of the drink so it floats to the top, fitting snugly within the rim of the glass, and a mint sprig. Repeat with the remaining ingredients.

MAKE-AHEAD GAME PLAN

- Two days ahead, transfer the juice into glass carafes, cover, and refrigerate.
- One day ahead, slice the clementines, cover, and refrigerate.

NUTTY SPICED BRUNCH CAKE

I love to serve this cake at the start of any brunch, because it has so many things going for it: the crackly top, the fluffy cake, and those buttery, crunchy nuts baked into cinnamon sugar! It's a great cake to serve with a cup of coffee or a fruity mimosa. It also reheats beautifully, allowing you to make it the day before and not dirty up the kitchen before your guests arrive!

MAKES ONE 9-INCH (23 CM) CAKE

CAKE

Baking spray

1 cup (212 g) granulated sugar, plus 2 teaspoons (6 g) for topping

½ cup (113 g) salted American butter, room temperature

2 eggs, room temperature

1 tablespoon (15 ml) vanilla extract

2⅓ cups (325 g) all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons (8 g) baking powder

½ teaspoon (2 g) baking soda

1 teaspoon (6 g) salt

1⅓ cups (327 g) sour cream, room temperature

FILLING

¾ cup (95 g) finely chopped pecans (see Note)

1 tablespoon (15 ml) ground cinnamon

1 tablespoon (13 g) granulated sugar

NOTE

You can also swap the pecan for walnuts. Soft nuts like these work better over harder nuts like almonds, hazelnuts, and pistachios.

- 1. Make the cake:** Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Place the oven rack in the lower third of your oven. Spray a 9-inch (23 cm) springform cake pan with baking spray, distributing it well with a pastry brush, and set aside.
- 2.** Add the sugar and butter to the bowl of a stand mixer and beat on high until nice and fluffy, 4 to 6 minutes. Scrape down the bowl as needed.
- 3.** Add the eggs, one at a time, beating in between each addition, and scraping down the bowl as needed. Add the vanilla extract, give it a beat, and set aside.
- 4.** Whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl.
- 5.** Add the dry ingredients to the butter mixture in thirds, gently beating in between each addition and alternately adding the sour cream. Continue until both are used up.
- 6. Make the filling:** Stir together the pecans, cinnamon, and sugar in a medium bowl.
- 7.** Using a standard ice cream scoop (4 ounces/120 ml), create eight batter balls in the bottom of the cake pan. Smooth them into an even layer with an offset spatula.
- 8.** Sprinkle the pecan mixture all over this layer. Use a medium ice cream scoop (2 ounces/60 ml) to create six to eight smaller batter balls, then add them on top. Use an offset spatula to smooth them out into an even layer.
- 9.** Sprinkle the top of the cake with granulated sugar.
- 10.** Bake for 50 to 55 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

MAKE-AHEAD GAME PLAN

One day ahead, bake the cake. Allow to cool, then cover loosely with foil and leave at room temperature. Reheat, covered, in a preheated 300°F (150°C) oven for 15 minutes. Continue heating, uncovered, for 5 minutes to crisp up the top. Serve immediately.





HAM, LEEK, AND GRUYÈRE STRATA

This strata might just be the king of all brunch dishes. It's filled with the hopes and dreams all brunches are made of—toasty bread, cheesy eggs, salty ham—and best of all, it can be made the night before. In fact, it's even better that way! All you have to do the next day is bake and serve. Assembling the strata ahead of time allows the bread to soak up all the egg filling, which leads to a soft, custardy texture that is somewhere between a quiche and a soufflé. It looks beautiful when baked in a large gratin pan, allowing everyone to get a little bit of the crispy, cheesy topping, but a casserole dish works well, too. Pop it in the oven right as guests arrive, and it will be done as soon as you offer them a second mimosa.

SERVES 6 TO 8

1 tablespoon (14 g) salted American butter
1 tablespoon (15 ml) olive oil
3 large leeks, white parts only, sliced into half-moons (about 1¾ cups/125 g)
8 large eggs
Kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
1½ cups (360 ml) heavy cream
1½ cups (360 ml) whole milk
⅓ cup (80 ml) dry white wine (chardonnay or sauvignon blanc)
2 tablespoons (30 ml) Dijon mustard
3 tablespoons (45 ml) minced chives, divided
1 pound (454 g) rustic French, Italian, or sourdough bread, cut into 1-inch (2.5 cm) cubes
6 ounces (170 g) Black Forest ham, chopped
1¼ cups (119 g) shredded Gruyère (see Note)

NOTE

The thick pre-shredded Gruyère/Swiss cheese from Trader Joe's works well for this recipe.

1. Grease an 11×14-inch (28×36 cm) gratin dish or 9×14-inch (23×36 cm) oven-safe casserole dish with the butter. Heat the olive oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat.
2. Sauté the leeks in the oil until soft, fragrant, and golden brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Set aside to cool.
3. Whisk together the eggs, salt, and pepper in a large bowl. Add the heavy cream, milk, wine, mustard, and 2 tablespoons (30 ml) chives.
4. Add the bread cubes and toss gently in the egg mixture until well coated and saturated. Stir in the ham, ½ cup (48 g) Gruyère, and the leeks.
5. Transfer the mixture to the prepared dish and top with the remaining cheese. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours (overnight is even better).
6. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Place the oven rack in the lower third of the oven. Remove the strata from the refrigerator while the oven preheats.
7. Bake, covered, for 40 minutes. Uncover and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until the bread cubes are golden brown and the cheese is bubbling. No egg liquid should be visible when you press gently on the strata with your fingertips.
8. Garnish with pepper and the remaining chives.

MAKE-AHEAD GAME PLAN

The night before, prepare the casserole. I highly recommend this to give the bread cubes time to soak. The strata's texture will be softer and creamier.

MÂCHE SALAD

WITH HERBY CRÈME FRAÎCHE DRESSING

Since the Ham, Leek, and Gruyère Strata (page 10) is so rich and decadent, I like to balance it out with something refreshing and light like this salad. You could use mixed greens, but for a special occasion I like to seek out fancier greens like mâche (you could use watercress or arugula, too). For six guests, composed salads allow you to get artistic with the cucumber ribbons and radish, or you could just toss it all in one big salad bowl—that works too!

SERVES 6

DRESSING

¼ cup (60 g) crème fraîche
2 teaspoons (10 ml)
 champagne vinegar
2 teaspoons (10 ml) minced
 fresh dill
2 teaspoons (10 ml) minced
 fresh tarragon
Kosher salt and freshly
 cracked black pepper, to
 taste

SALAD

5.3 ounces (150 g) mâche or
 mixed greens
1 bunch French breakfast
 radishes, halved vertically
1 English cucumber, peeled
 into long, thin ribbons

- 1. Make the dressing:** Whisk the crème fraîche and champagne vinegar in a small bowl. Whisk in the dill and tarragon, and salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.
- 2. Compose the salad:** Place a small handful of mâche in the center of a salad plate, add 2 or 3 cucumber ribbons around the plate, and nestle in the radishes. Add the dressing on top with a fork to create a delicate drizzle.
- 3.** Top with freshly cracked pepper and serve as a starter or with the Ham, Leek, and Gruyère Strata (page 10).





CHOCOLATE-HAZELNUT PANNA COTTA

When it comes to brunch, the inevitable question is always “Should we or shouldn’t we serve dessert?” I usually opt for “Yes, we should!” As long as it’s easy and light, then I’m all in! These chocolate-hazelnut panna cotta tick all the boxes; they are easy, require just three ingredients plus garnishes, and despite Nutella’s rich flavor, they are surprisingly light. I like to serve them in vintage ice cream bowls for a pretty presentation.

SERVES 6 (Makes six $\frac{3}{4}$ cup/175 ml portions)

PANNA COTTA

4½ cups (1 L) heavy cream

½ cup (120 ml) Nutella

4 gelatin sheets or
2 tablespoons powdered
gelatin (see Note 1)

TOPPING

½ cup (50 g) hazelnuts, skins
removed (see Note 2)

2 ounces (57 g) bittersweet
chocolate, shaved

NOTE

1. You’ll get a better texture with the gelatin sheets, and they are worth buying on Amazon if your store doesn’t carry them.
2. If you cannot find skinned hazelnuts, place them on a rimmed baking sheet in a preheated 350°F (175°C) oven for 8 to 10 minutes, until fragrant. Transfer to a clean dish towel and wrap them up in the towel for 15 minutes. This will help to steam off the skins. Brush off as much as the skin as you can with the dish towel.

1. Take out six small glass bowls with at least a 1 cup (240 ml) capacity. Footed ice cream dishes work well. Set aside.
2. **Make the panna cotta:** Heat the cream in a large saucepan over medium-high heat until the cream is hot, 3 to 4 minutes. Whisk in the Nutella, until dissolved; it should look like chocolate milk. Keep on a simmer.
3. Place the four sheets of gelatin, one at a time, in a bowl of cold water to soften, 1 or 2 minutes. Once they feel like plastic wrap, add them, one at a time, to the warm cream mixture, whisking in between each addition.
4. Pour the cream mixture through a fine mesh sieve into a 2-cup (480 ml) glass Pyrex pitcher. But don’t fill it all the way to the top; it will be easier to pour if it isn’t totally full. Keep the rest of the mixture in the pot on a very low simmer.
5. Place the dishes on a small sheet pan or tray small enough to fit in your refrigerator. Fill the dishes with the mixture from the pitcher, leaving about ¼-inch (6 mm) at the top. Repeat the process until all the dishes have been filled. Place the tray in the refrigerator, uncovered, for a minimum of 6 hours. (If you chill them overnight, the texture will be even better!)
6. **Make the topping:** Place the hazelnuts in a resealable plastic bag and whack them gently with a French-style rolling pin, hammer, or meat mallet, to break them roughly in half. Set aside.
7. To serve, place each panna cotta dish on a small dessert plate, then top with chocolate shavings and hazelnuts.

MAKE-AHEAD GAME PLAN

One day ahead, make the panna cottas and refrigerate, uncovered. Crush the hazelnuts and keep them at room temperature in the plastic bag.