

To make fried Toasts

(Payn Perdu)

The Compleat Housewife by Eliza Smith, 1766

Background

The earliest recipe for the dish now known as “French Toast” is found in the Apicius, a 4th and 5th century collection of Roman recipes. It appears in a 1430 English cookbook under the title “Payn purdeuz,” a French term meaning “lost bread” or “wasted bread,” suggesting it was a dish meant to make use of bread that had gone stale. This name, in various spellings, was common for many years in English cookbooks.

Original Receipt

Chip a manchet [bread loaf] very well, and cut it round-ways into toasts; then take cream and eight eggs, seasoned with sack, sugar and nutmeg; and let these toasts steep in it about an hour; then fry them in sweet butter, serve them up with plain melted butter, or with butter, sack and sugar, as you please.

Ingredients

Loaf of Bread

Egg

Cream

Sack [Sweet Sherry]

Sugar

Grated Nutmeg

Butter

For Sauce

Melted Butter

Sugar

Sack [Sweet Sherry]

Amount

One

Eight

One Cup

¼ cup

1 ½ Tablespoon

½ teaspoon

3-4 Tablespoons

4 Tablespoons

1 ½ Tablespoon

2 Tablespoons

Directions

Slice off outer crust from bread. If stale bread is desired, let sit overnight. Slice remaining crumb about ¾" thick. In a bowl mix egg, cream, sherry, and sugar, and nutmeg. Dip bread slices in batter and let them set for a while to soak. While bread is soaking, begin sauce. Melt butter, then add sherry and sugar. Mix and set aside and keep warm. Melt butter in frying pan and add payn perdu. Fry on both sides until golden brown. Add topping. Other appropriate toppings are honey, molasses, or sprinkled sugar.