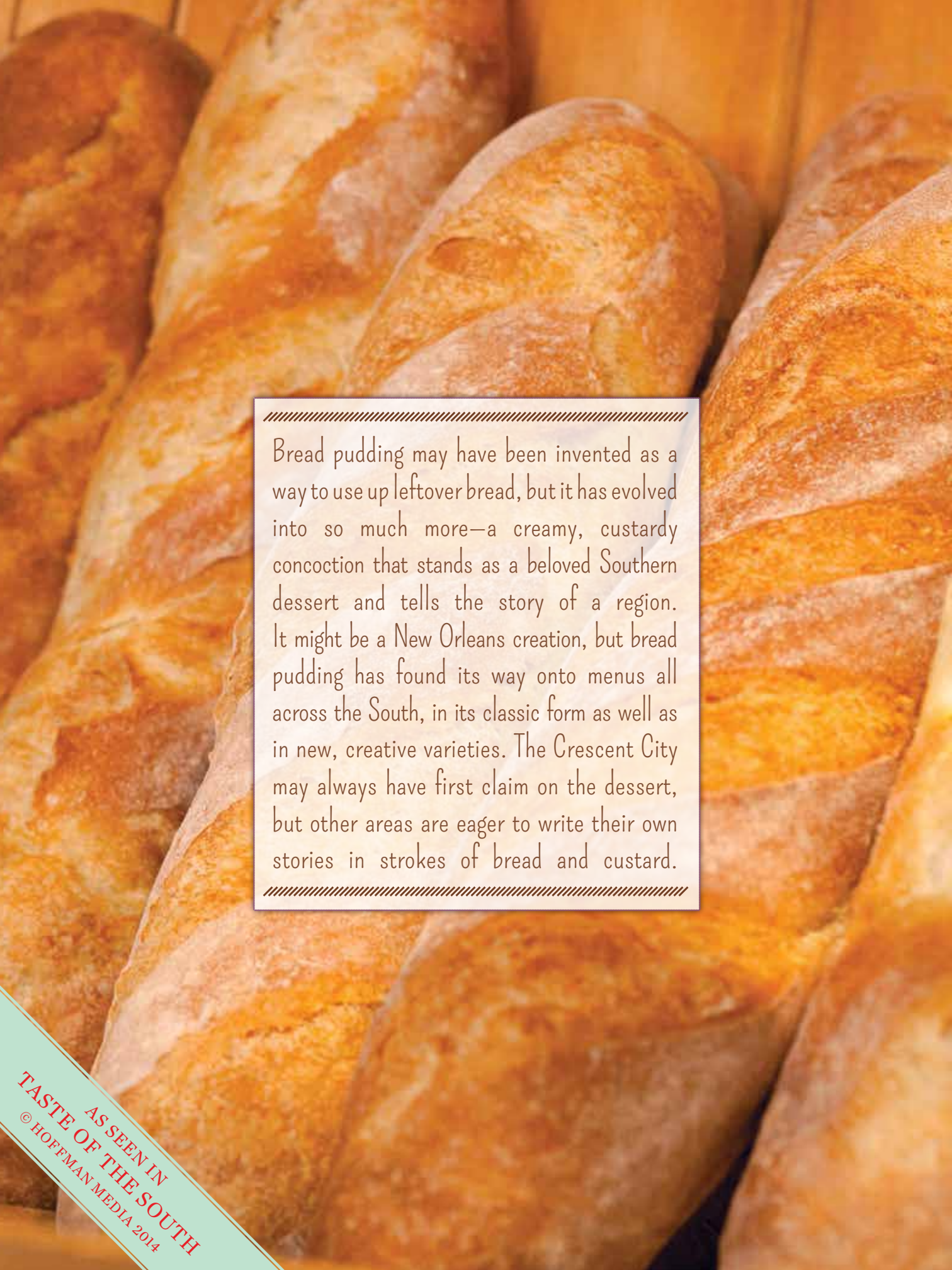


SOUTH'S BEST BREAD PUDDING

Decadent and indulgent, the original cost-saving dessert has grown into a respected Southern classic.

BY GINNY HEARD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAC JAMIESON
AND JOHN O'HAGAN



Bread pudding may have been invented as a way to use up leftover bread, but it has evolved into so much more—a creamy, custardy concoction that stands as a beloved Southern dessert and tells the story of a region. It might be a New Orleans creation, but bread pudding has found its way onto menus all across the South, in its classic form as well as in new, creative varieties. The Crescent City may always have first claim on the dessert, but other areas are eager to write their own stories in strokes of bread and custard.

← CHEZ LULU

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

When it comes to making bread pudding, Chez Lulu takes full advantage of being attached to their bakery, Continental Bakery. As opposed to stale, filler bread, they use flaky croissants and butter rolls to build their desserts. Fresh, quality ingredients go into their bread pudding varieties: chocolate bread pudding with crème anglaise, New Orleans-style bread pudding with bourbon hard sauce, sweet almond bread pudding, and revolving seasonal flavors. Delicate and refined, each flavor in these desserts is intentional. Pair your slice with one of their specialty coffee drinks and take in this eclectic French cafe's bustling atmosphere.

1911 Cahaba Rd.
205.870.7011
 chezlulu.us



Photo courtesy Magnolia's

BLOSSOM

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

This spacious and laid-back restaurant with an open-air kitchen adds an enticing depth to the originally humble dessert. In their Red Velvet Bread Pudding, light and fluffy red velvet cake is surrounded by vanilla cream cheese custard, making this a creamy, moist dessert. The warm pudding is topped with in-house-churned strawberry cheesecake ice cream, creating a decadent indulgence. This dessert combines two Southern favorites, making it the ultimate treat.

171 E. Bay St.
843.722.9200
 magnolias-blossom-cypress.com



Photo courtesy Commander's Palace

COMMANDER'S PALACE

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

We could hardly leave the famous Commander's Palace off of our list! This renowned restaurant has been creating outstanding food since 1880, and has given rise to the careers of illustrious chefs like Paul Prudhomme and Emeril Lagasse. Among its numerous award-winning dishes, Commander's Palace raises the bar on bread pudding. Invented in 1980 to mark the restaurant's 100th anniversary, the Creole Bread Pudding Soufflé is unlike anything you'll find elsewhere—and making the bread pudding itself is just the beginning. The finished bread pudding is crumbled into pieces and whipped into meringue to create the soufflé, giving you the pleasure of two desserts in one bite. In signature New Orleans style, Commander's tops the soufflé with a warm whiskey cream. Classic, rich, and light, this Paul Prudhomme original is one of the quintessential dishes of the restaurant. Since its inception, the Creole Bread Pudding Soufflé has been the restaurant's best-selling dessert, with customers ordering as many as 3,000 a week. The kitchen now requires one employee to be fully dedicated to making the dish. This acclaimed indulgence takes 20 minutes to make, so be sure to order the dish at the beginning of your meal so it will be ready in time for dessert.

1403 Washington Ave.
504.899.8221
 commanderspalace.com

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Photos courtesy Angela Hopper

GOOSE FEATHERS CAFE

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Take a gander at this bread pudding. Served in single or “feed the flock” sizes, this customer favorite is made with French bread and flaky croissants, and topped with an apricot glaze as it comes out of the oven. Golden and bubbly, this dish is their best-selling dessert. Goose Feathers Cafe is an eat-in restaurant located in a 100-year-old building, but they also cater and can ship their bread pudding. But we suggest visiting this European-style café so you can experience historic Savannah while eating your dessert.

39 Barnard St.
866.221.1948
goosefeatherscafe.com

ALCENIA’S

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Named for owner B.J. Chester-Tamayo’s 93-year “young” mother, Alcenia’s is bolstered by its namesake’s tried-and-true recipes. This bright, vibrant restaurant’s bread pudding is more like a piece of cake, studded with pecans and made with love. B.J.’s goal is to bring people together over her food, and she aims to feed your heart as well as your stomach. Call ahead of time to make sure they have bread pudding on the menu. And if you can’t make it to Memphis soon enough, don’t despair—they ship!

317 N. Main St.
901.523.0200
alcenias.com

CHEF POINT

WATAUGA, TEXAS

This fine-dining surprise within a gas station is home to a much sought-after bread pudding, a dessert that has gone through numerous iterations to become the crowd-pleaser that it is today. Made with large pieces of French bread and thick slices of Texas toast, this bread pudding is soaked in a cream mixture overnight, covered and baked for two hours, and then flipped and baked for two more hours. This creates a luscious, dense cake with a double crust. Squares are cut from the pan, topped with a hot cognac sauce, and served to the wide mix of customers who have discovered this culinary wonder.

5901 Watauga Rd.
817.656.0080
chefpointcafe.org

BOUCHERIE

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Made with Krispy Kreme doughnuts, this delectable bread pudding is a dreamy treat, making you nostalgic for late nights when you were lucky enough to come across a brightly lit Hot Now sign. This indulgent dessert was initially one of a few rotating items on Boucherie’s menu, but there was such customer uproar when they changed it out that Boucherie decided to make it a staple. Don’t forget to top your piece with a scoop of one of their homemade ice cream flavors! We suggest the coffee ice cream, for their play on “coffee and doughnuts.”

1506 S. Carrollton
boucherie-nola.com



Photography by Stephen DeVries

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Did we miss your favorite?

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Photography by Stephen DeVries

WAYFARE

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Kevin White, the energetic and creative chef of Wayfare, has a hard time keeping still when it comes to his menu items. With previous variations on his bread pudding including eggnog, tres leche cake, and tiramisu, he has too many good ideas to keep something on the menu for long. Throughout November and December, try his Orange and Chocolate Bread Pudding Beignets, topped with a Grand Marnier crème anglaise. After baking the bread pudding with high-quality chocolate and orange juice and zest, Kevin cuts the dish into squares and deep fries them into “beignets,” creating a dessert that is crispy on the outside and hot and moist on the inside. Let’s be honest—what could be better than bread pudding? That’s right—deep-fried bread pudding. Catch this one while it lasts.

4510 Freret St.
504.309.0069
wayfarenola.com



Photography by Stephen DeVries



Photo courtesy South of Beale

SOUTH OF BEALE

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Ed and Brittany Cabigao, owners of this high-energy and inviting gastropub, got creative by bringing the bar and kitchen together for a unique experience: the “Jack & Coke” Bread Pudding. With a Coca-Cola bread pudding base, housemade Jack Daniel’s ice cream, and a drizzle of Coca-Cola syrup, this unique dessert is a top seller. This twist on traditional bread pudding is not overly sweet, but sings with the richness of bourbon and has a moist, luscious texture.

361 S. Main St.
901.526.0388
southofbeale.com



The Bourbon-Pecan Sauce is best served warm, so prepare it while the bread pudding stands for 30 minutes.

BREAD PUDDING *is the perfect blank canvas dessert—ready to shine with your favorite ingredients. Tasting the South's best left us craving this fall-flavored version, spiked with bourbon and sweetened with molasses and dark brown sugar.*

BOURBON-MOLASSES BREAD PUDDING

Yield: 8 to 12 servings

- 1 (1-pound) loaf French bread, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 6 cups whole milk
- 6 large eggs
- 1¼ cups sugar
- ¼ cup bourbon
- 3 tablespoons molasses
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Bourbon-Pecan Sauce (recipe follows)

- 3. In a large bowl, whisk together milk, eggs, sugar, bourbon, molasses, vanilla, salt, and cinnamon. Add bread, tossing to combine. Pour bread mixture into prepared dish. Using a spatula, gently press bread to cover with milk mixture. Cover, and let stand 30 minutes.
- 4. Uncover, and bake until puffed and golden brown and a knife inserted near center comes out clean, approximately 55 minutes. Let stand 30 minutes before serving. Serve with Bourbon-Pecan Sauce.

BOURBON-PECAN SAUCE

Yield: approximately 2⅓ cups

- 1¼ cups firmly packed dark brown sugar
- ½ cup butter
- ⅓ cup bourbon
- ⅓ cup water
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chopped toasted pecans

- 1. In a large saucepan, bring brown sugar, butter, bourbon, ⅓ cup water, and salt to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Reduce heat to low. Simmer 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Stir in pecans. Serve warm. 📖

Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 13x9-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Set aside. On a parchment-lined baking sheet, place bread. Bake until golden, 15 minutes; let cool.

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