Cleo Coyle's Panettone Pain Perdu from Holiday Buzz

Text & photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi, who writes the Coffeehouse Mysteries as Cleo Coyle with her husband, Marc Cerasini

Our readers may recall this beautiful holiday breakfast from our Coffeehouse Mystery Holiday Buzz. Our amateur sleuth, coffeehouse manager Clare, cooks it up on Christmas morning for her longtime love interest NYPD Detective Mike Quinn. Because of Clare's Italian heritage, my husband and I knew she would use panettone to make her *pain perdu*. If you've never tried panettone, a slightly sweet Italian yeast bread enjoyed during the Christmas season, look for it in boxes like the one in my photos. Boxed panettone can keep for months, but once it's out of its wrappings, this delicious bread goes stale fairly quickly. When that happens, simply follow my directions for this festive French toast. Or serve this recipe as a lovely dessert by scooping ice cream over a warm piece, sprinkling on toasted and chopped almonds, and adding a drizzle of amaretto and a puff of whipped cream. May you eat with comfort and joy! ~ *Cleo*

Makes 2 servings as breakfast - 4 servings as dessert

Ingredients

2 large eggs
¼ cup whole milk, light cream, or half-and-half
(optional) 1-2 tablespoons amaretto
½ teaspoon vanilla *(if not using liqueur, double this amount)*
1 tablespoon sugar
Pinch of salt
1 one-inch thick round of panettone, quartered
For frying: 1 tablespoon canola or vegetable oil +
For frying: 1 tablespoon butter
To finish: confectioners' sugar

Note: This is a versatile recipe so feel free to substitute orange liqueur (such as Grand Marnier) for the amaretto. A bit of nutmeg and cinnamon to taste are also optional additions, along with orange zest—although my husband and I prefer it with just the vanilla and amaretto!

Avoid disaster: Note that panettone like any soft bread will be quite fragile and tear easily. To avoid it, note my underlined comments.

Photo by Cleo Coyle

Free Recipe Guide to
Holiday Buzz
click here.

Step 1—Prep bread: Unwrap the panettone bread. From the bottom, slice a 1-inch thick round layer (see photo above). <u>The thickness is important to avoid tearing.</u> Allow the bread to sit out and become dry for a few hours or overnight. When ready to cook, preheat your oven to 250 degrees F. Slice the thick round into 4 quarters and set aside.

Step 2—Mix egg custard: In a bowl, combine the eggs, milk, liqueur (if using), and vanilla, sugar, and salt. Place the egg mixture into a pie or cake pan and soak the slices of bread for 3 minutes on one side. <u>Turn the fragile pieces *carefully* to avoid tearing</u> and soak for 3 minutes on the other side. Most of the liquid should be absorbed.

Step 3—Fry and bake: Into a skillet or sauté pan, heat one tablespoon of oil and one of butter. When the butter is melted and the pan good and **hot**, <u>use a clean hand to carefully transfer the fragile slices</u> into the pan. Pour any remaining custard over the top of the slices. Reduce heat to medium. Fry 2 to 3 minutes on each side, until golden brown (do not overcook). If cooking more batches, be sure to wipe the pan clean with a paper towel and add fresh oil and butter for each new batch. Use a spatula to <u>carefully transfer</u> the fried quarters to a parchment-lined baking sheet and toast in the oven for 5 to 10 minutes. After that time, either serve or turn off oven to hold pieces for 20 to 30 minutes.

Step 4—Serve: Enjoy the *pain perdu* warm with a traditional dusting of powdered sugar. Or serve with butter and pure maple syrup or fruit toppings (strawberries, blueberries, etc). To serve as **dessert**, add a scoop of ice cream and/or whipped cream with a sprinkling of chopped nuts and drizzle of amaretto or another liqueur.
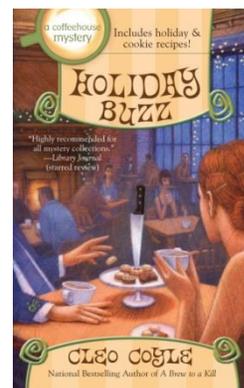
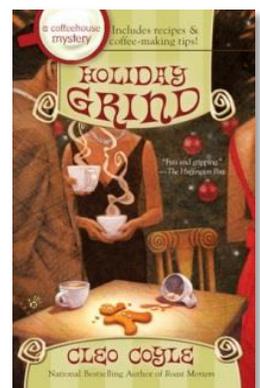*Eat with comfort and joy!*

~ Cleo Coyle

* * *

You can find many more holiday recipe ideas in the recipe sections of our Coffeehouse Mysteries ***Holiday Buzz*** *and* ***Holiday Grind****.*

* * *

Holiday Buzz
NY Times Bestseller
Learn more here

Holiday Grind
PW Bestseller
Learn more here