

Pumpkin French Toast Sticks

With its soothing color and delicate flavor, this French toast is a slight departure from the ordinary, but it's still familiar and comforting, especially for kids. (The novel shape makes the sticks ideal for dipping in syrup.) Be sure to brown each strip well on both sides and to cook it until it feels firm to the touch.

Serves 2 to 3

2 eggs
1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon canned pure pumpkin
1/2 cup low-fat milk
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 tablespoon dark brown sugar
3/4 teaspoon cinnamon
Pinch nutmeg
1 tablespoon butter *and* 1 tablespoon canola oil (divided), or nonstick spray
4 slices firm sandwich bread, white or wheat, stacked and cut into 4 strips (yielding 16 strips total)
Maple syrup, for serving

In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together all ingredients except bread.

Heat a heavy nonstick pan over medium heat. If using butter and oil, add 1 teaspoon of each and swirl to coat. If using spray, coat pan with spray.

When pan is hot, dip bread strips into custard mixture and press to coat. Don't keep submerged for more than a few seconds or bread will become mushy. Cook 6 to 8 strips at a time, about 5 minutes total, turning once or twice for even browning. The French toast is done when it feels firm to the touch.

Repeat with remaining bread strips and custard, adding 1 teaspoon each of butter and oil (if using) or spray before cooking each batch.

Serve with maple syrup.