

# The Sweetest French Toast for Mom on Her Day

*Caramel Gives Traditional Breakfast-in-Bed Fare Special Twist*



RACHEL HARKHAM

If baking equals love, and chocolate is a kiss, then caramel must be a warm sweet hug. Mother's Day on May 8 gives you a great opportunity to give mom a delicious embrace. It is a guarantee that any sweet-loving Mother will wrap her heart and taste buds around the luscious flavor contained in this caramel French Toast. Or instead, just give a jar of homemade caramel sauce used in the French toast recipe for a spoonful of golden indulgence.

With simple ingredients like white sugar, water, a few drops of lemon juice, and just five minutes, watch kitchen alchemy occur as sugar cooks and changes color from pale yellow to a beautiful deep amber. Quickly remove from the heat before it gets to burnt brown, keep the pan away from you and pour in the cream. It will bubble and froth. When it begins to settle, return to stovetop and stir. Let it simmer and observe the warm caramel color it has changed into. Inhale the homemade candy smell. Happy Mother's Day or sure.

To assemble the French toast, spread the caramel evenly over the casserole pan so that it coats the bottom of the thick slices of eggy challah. As it bakes, the

challah gets crispy and brown on the outside and soft and gooey on the inside. Before serving, flip the French toast slices up, to show off the glossy and golden caramel layer.

If you are not able to serve Mom a decadent breakfast in bed, a jar of caramel sauce will convey your feelings just as well. A dollop of caramel mixed into Greek

yogurt makes breakfast into dessert. Dripped over scoop of vanilla ice cream, it makes dessert into a su dae party. An apple a day is much easier to eat when is sliced up and dipped into caramel sauce. Dissolve spoon or two into hot milk and then pour into a mug coffee, and those expensive Coffee Bar concoctions a obsolete.

On Mother's Day warm, rich, delectable caram equals Mom. Gather round and celebrate the sweetness with a fork, or spoon, full of caramel.

### Caramel Sauce

- ¾ cup sugar
- 3 tbsp. water
- ¼ tsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 ¼ cups heavy cream
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 tbsp. butter
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

In medium saucepan put the sugar, water, and lemon juice together. Do not stir. Bring to a boil over medium high heat and cook, untouched until the melted sugar begins to color around the edges. Gently swirl pan to distribute color and keep on cooking until the sugar mixture turns a medium amber color (about five minutes). Quickly remove pan from heat, holding the pan away from you, stir in the cream and bring back to a boil (about 30 seconds). Turn the heat down to low and mix in ½ tsp. salt, let simmer and thicken for five minutes. Remove from heat and stir in butter and vanilla. Makes 1 ¼ c.

Note: Allow to cool and thicken before jarring.

### Caramel French Toast

- Butter, for pan
- Caramel sauce, from above recipe (1 ¼ cup)
- 6 to 7, 1-inch slices of challah
- 4 large eggs
- ¾ cup half and half
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

Butter 9 x 13 casserole pan. Spread and cover bottom of pan with caramel sauce. Cover caramel with challah slices, cutting slices if necessary to fit empty spaces. In medium bowl whisk eggs into half and half, add vanilla extract. Pour egg mixture over challah. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Heat oven to 350F. Bake French Toast for 30 to 40 minutes or when the challah becomes puffed up and golden. Remove from oven, flip and enjoy. Serving Suggestion: Sliced bananas, chopped pecans, a scoop of ice cream—all delicious additions to this dish.

*Rachel Harkham is a Rockland County based mother of three who has a cooking blog and runs a small chocolate business.*

