

## CHOCOLATE BREAD PUDDING

*Prepared in 25 minutes or less plus 30 minutes to bake.*

- ➔ 2¼ cups sugar plus a dash to coat pan
- ➔ 10 oz dried fruit, such as dried pineapples, apricots or cherries
- ➔ Stem ginger in syrup, found jarred in many markets and specialty baking stores
- ➔ 9 oz stale brioche or challah bread
- ➔ 3 cups milk
- ➔ 1 plump vanilla bean, split down middle with pulpy seeds scraped down
- ➔ 5 large eggs, room temperature
- ➔ 8 egg yolks, room temperature
- ➔ 9 oz bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped

Preheat oven to 325°F. Center oven rack in the middle.

Butter a 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan. Dust its interior with granulated sugar.

Cut into 2-inch pieces the bread and chop the dried fruit into bits. Pat dry the ginger and finely chop. Toss these ingredients together with your hands in the pan.

Bring to a boil in a large saucepan over medium heat the milk, sugar and vanilla bean, stirring occasionally.

Remove the vanilla bean once the milk is boiling and the sugar has dissolved.

In a separate large bowl, whisk the eggs. Slowly pour in the hot milk into the bowl as you continue to whisk the eggs.

With a spatula, stir in the chocolate pieces into the bowl until melted. Gently pour this mixture over the bread and fruit.

Bake the pudding for 30 – 35 minutes or until an inserted knife comes out clean from the pudding's center.

Transfer pudding to a cooling rack and allow to rest until it is slightly warm. Serves 8.

*Option: Replace stem ginger with candied orange peel.*

