



NUTMEG, MACE, CINNAMON

## PUMPKIN BREAD PUDDING

*Nutmeg, and its webbed coral-red mace wrapper, has almost as strong an olfactory memory recall as the spice vanilla. It's also believed to help with memory, so go on, allow yourself another spoonful of this delicious dessert!*

### SERVES 6

375g (13oz./1½ cups) puréed roasted pumpkin or butternut squash	½ tbsp pure vanilla extract
240ml (1 cup) double (heavy) cream	1 tbsp brandy
1 tsp sea salt	4 large eggs
1 tbsp freshly grated ginger	4 croissants, sliced horizontally and toasted
1 tsp ground cinnamon	250g (9oz.) pitted prunes, cut into small dice
1 tsp freshly ground nutmeg	60g (2¼oz./scant ½ cup) crystallized ginger, chopped
1 tsp ground mace	300g (10½oz./scant 1 cup) Cranberry Compote (see page 106)
85g (3oz./¼ cup) molasses or treacle	butter, for buttering the dish
210g (7½oz./¾ cup) maple syrup	nutmeg-dusted whipped cream or vanilla ice cream, to serve (optional)

In a large bowl, combine the puréed pumpkin, cream, salt, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, mace, molasses, maple syrup, vanilla, brandy and eggs and beat well.

Add the toasted croissant slices and gently turn over in the custard mixture until they are thoroughly coated. (You might want to wear gloves as it's really gooey!) Using your hands or a large spoon, layer the croissants into the prepared dish, sprinkling with the chopped prunes, crystallized ginger and Cranberry Compote (see page 106) between each layer and finishing with a layer of croissant. Tightly cover the dish with cling film (plastic wrap) then foil. Refrigerate and allow to soak for at least 1 hour or preferably overnight.

Preheat the oven to 160°C (325°F/gas mark 3). Butter a deep casserole dish.

Bake in the oven for about 1 hour (a knife inserted in the centre should come out clean). Remove the cling film (plastic wrap) and foil and bake for an additional 15 minutes to lightly brown the top. Remove from the oven and let cool to room temperature.

To serve, cut into slices, gently heat in the oven or microwave and serve with a spoonful of nutmeg-dusted whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.