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Garden Breakfast Strata with Sausage

yield: 8-10 servings

1 pound bulk sweet Italian sausage
¾ of a bunch of asparagus
16 oz. sliced mushrooms
1 red bell pepper
1 yellow or white onion
2 Ciabatta rolls or ½ a baguette (8 cups when diced into ½-inch cubes)
3½ cups shredded Jarlsberg cheese
10 eggs
3 cups skim milk
¼ cup Dijon mustard
½ tsp. cayenne pepper
½ tsp. garlic powder
a dash each of salt and freshly ground pepper
olive oil



1. Cook the sausage in a sauté pan over medium heat until cooked through, about 10 minutes. Once fully cooked, transfer to a metal strainer to allow the grease to drain off. Set aside.
2. Cut the tough ends off of the asparagus spears and discard. Dice into 1-inch segments. Blanch the asparagus by dropping the pieces into boiling water for one minute. Immediately transfer the asparagus to an ice bath to stop them from cooking further. After a few minutes, drain the water and remove the ice cubes. Set aside.
3. Sauté the mushrooms in a tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat until dark brown (about 8-10 minutes), stirring occasionally. Set aside.
4. Dice the bell pepper and onion into bite-sized pieces. Sauté over medium heat in a tablespoon of olive oil until slightly tender, about 5 minutes.
5. Chop the bread into ½-inch cubes. Set aside.
6. Spray a 9x13-inch (3 quart) baking dish with canola oil. Place half of the bread cubes in the dish. Sprinkle half of the sausage over the bread, followed by half of the asparagus, half of the peppers/onions, and all of the mushrooms. Top with roughly 1½ cups of the shredded cheese. Layer on the remaining bread, followed by the rest of the asparagus, peppers/onions, and cheese. Gently press down to lightly pack all of the ingredients into the baking dish.
7. In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs. Whisk in the milk, mustard, cayenne pepper, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Pour this mixture over the ingredients in the baking dish. Cover and place in the refrigerator for at least one hour, preferably overnight.
8. Bake at 325°F for one hour until the top is golden brown and bubbly.