

# Stale Bread? Bring it on!

4 unique uses with variations



## Don't throw that bread out!

Instead, get ready to wow your friends & family with a delicious and resourceful meal.

**Note:** We're not talking about moldy bread here, just the kind that's gotten so hard it hurts the roof of your mouth and crumbles when used as a sandwich.

### 1. Ranch Flavored Croutons:

10-15 slices stale bread

1/4 olive oil

1 package of Ranch dressing mix (or any of the mixes from Evelyn's Elegant Edibles)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Remove crusts from stale bread slices. Brush bread on both sides with olive oil. Cut bread slices up into small cubes. Sprinkle with package of Ranch dressing mix. Arrange cubes on an ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake at 350 degrees F for 15 minutes or until browned. Let cool. Store croutons in a covered container or plastic bag and use on salads all week. Who needs to pay for a fancy salad bar!

### Shop This Recipe at the Market:

Bread: Rise Above Bakery

Dressing Mix: Evelyn's Elegant Edibles

### 2. Bread Crumbs:

1 lb. stale bread

2 tablespoons dried oregano or thyme

2 tablespoons dried basil or parsley

1 teaspoon garlic powder

2 teaspoons salt, or to taste

1/2 teaspoon pepper, or to taste

### (Bread Crumbs continued)

Preheat your oven to 300° F.

Cut the bread into a general cube shape, and process the small pieces in a food processor to make coarse crumbs.

Spread the crumbs on a baking sheet and dry the coarse crumbs in the oven for about 10 to 15 minutes, stirring halfway through the baking time. Allow the crumbs to cool completely.

Return the dried crumbs to the food processor, add the seasonings, and pulse until the crumbs are finely processed and well-mixed with the seasoning. (For plain bread crumbs skip this step)

Be certain the seasoned bread crumbs are dry and cool before storing in an airtight container. 1 lb. of bread will make about 3 cups of bread crumbs and keep in an airtight container for about 6 months.

**Fancy version of bread crumbs:** Try going Greek with one of spice packets from Evelyn's Elegant Edibles. Or get crazy and go with a hint of Indian flavors like turmeric, cumin and cayenne with some garlic or ginger powder.

### Shop This Recipe at the Market:

Bread: Rise Above Bakery

Dressing Mix: Evelyn's Elegant Edibles

## 3. Panzanella: (stale bread salad)

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 small loaf of stale French bread cut into 1-inch cubes (about 6 cups)

1 teaspoon kosher salt

2 large, ripe tomatoes, cut into 1-inch cubes

1 cucumber, unpeeled, seeded, and sliced 1/2-inch thick

1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1-inch cubes

1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1-inch cubes

1/2 red onion, cut in 1/2 and thinly sliced

20 large basil leaves, coarsely chopped (about one bunch)

Vinaigrette:

1 teaspoon finely minced garlic

1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard

3 tablespoons of your favorite vinegar

1/2 cup olive oil

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

### (Panzanella continued)

For the vinaigrette, whisk all the ingredients together.

In a large bowl, mix the chopped tomatoes, cucumber, red pepper, yellow pepper, red onion, basil, and capers. Add the bread cubes and toss with the vinaigrette. Season liberally with salt and pepper right before serving. Serve, or allow the salad to sit for about half an hour for the flavors to blend.

*Just one person looking at a big recipe?* Do some prep now and some right before you eat it: chop your veggies and mix together. Keep the chopped bread and mixed vinaigrette separate from everything. Toss together just what you need each meal. It's a great way to make lunch for the week or avoid dirty dishes on a busy weekend.

*Note:* If your bread is too hard you can put some water on your fingers and flick it at the bread until it becomes a little softer. This may also help it absorb some of the vinaigrette.

### Variations on Panzanella

At the very beginning of September you can add some peaches or watermelon from the market.

Try swapping the basil for mint.

Use less bread and add lettuce.

Add some cheese (feta, chevre or a mild blue cheese would be great in this recipe)

Defrost some pre-cooked frozen shrimp and toss.

Take out the dijon & vinegar and use lemon juice instead.

Make it southern by using some old cornbread and pecans.

Use some old pita to make Fattoush (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fattoush>)

### Shop This Recipe at the Market:

Bread: Rise Above Bakery

Cheese: Clarion River Organics

Vegetables & Herbs: Harvest Valley Farms, Clarion River Organics

## 4. Chocolate Banana Pudding:

4 eggs

2 cups milk

1 cup white sugar

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

4 cups cubed stale bread

2 bananas, sliced

1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9x5 inch loaf pan.

In a large mixing bowl, mix eggs, milk, sugar, and vanilla until smooth. Stir in bread, bananas, and chocolate chips, and let rest 5 minutes for bread to soak. Pour into prepared pan.

### (Bread Pudding continued)

Line a roasting pan with a damp kitchen towel. Place loaf pan on towel inside roasting pan, and place roasting pan on oven rack. Fill roasting pan with water to reach halfway up the sides of the loaf pan. Bake in preheated oven for 1 hour, or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

**Savory version of bread pudding:** Take out the sugar, vanilla, bananas and chocolate. Toss in some leftovers (like last night's broccoli and chicken) or sauté something new. Add shredded/crumbled cheese and any spices or herbs you think sound tasty. Prepare exactly the same way as a sweet bread pudding, just use the savory ingredients. Note: if using a watery vegetable like spinach, summer squash or tomato, sautéing before baking is important – it gets the water out, speeds cooking time & improves texture.

**Variation on savory bread pudding:** Strata. Prepare it exactly the same way, cook it at the same temperature, only change the ratio of egg to bread. This will be more like quiche or frittata but instead of using a pastry shell or noodles, you get to use up your stale bread.

### Shop This Recipe at the Market:

Bread: Rise Above Bakery

Eggs & Cheese: Clarion River Organics

Meats: Billy's Smokehouse, Clarion River Organics

Vegetables & Herbs: Harvest Valley Farms, Clarion River Organics

### Want to shop local but need to stretch your food dollars?

Use the same basic ingredients all week. Just change them enough that no one notices. Neither you nor your family gets bored.

- Try making half the Panzanella recipe then using the rest of the ingredients to make a Savory Bread Pudding, or Strata. Veggies and fruit can be expensive but they are essential for a healthy diet. Bread and eggs are healthy and cost effective, even when you buy local.
- Change the spices and herbs and you won't recognize the dish. Try adding any of these to the Savory Bread Pudding or Strata: Dijon mustard, Nutmeg (especially with spinach), Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce. To make it taste more of summer use basil or mint. To taste more like fall use sage, thyme or rosemary.
- When serving your Savory Bread Pudding or Strata as leftovers, pour jarred pasta sauce and lay some cheese across the top. Heat it in the oven until the cheese is browned on top. It's like a new meal.

