

WHITE CHOCOLATE and APRICOT BREAD PUDDING WITH SAUCE

8 ounces French bread, croissants, or **sweet bread** cut into 1-inch pieces

About 12 dried apricots cut into pieces

1 cup chopped **hazelnuts** or pecans

3 1/2 cups light whipping cream

1 cup milk (do not use or nonfat)

1/2 cup sugar (or **Splenda**)

18 ounces white chocolate or **Eagle Brand candy coating** – grated or coarsely chopped

7 large egg yolks +2 large eggs (**I used 2 boxes of Egg Beaters and 2 eggs**)

1 Cup apricot preserves

Preheat oven to 275°F. Arrange bread cubes on baking sheet. Bake until light golden and dry, about 10 minutes. Transfer baking sheet to rack; cool completely. Increase oven temperature to 350°F. Mix dried apricots and nuts with bread cubes and set aside.

Combine whipping cream, 1 cup milk and 1/2 cup sugar in heavy large saucepan. Bring to simmer over medium heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat. Add white chocolate and stir until melted and smooth. Whisk yolks and eggs in large bowl to blend. Gradually whisk in warm chocolate mixture. Set aside 1 cup of mixture for the sauce.

Place bread cubes in 2-quart glass baking dish. Add half of chocolate mixture. Press bread cubes into chocolate mixture. Let stand

15 minutes. Gently mix in remaining chocolate mixture. Cover dish with foil. Set dish inside lasagna pan that has 1/2" water in the bottom.

Bake pudding 45 minutes. Uncover and take out of water and bake until top is golden brown, about 15 minutes. Transfer pudding to rack and cool slightly. (Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover with foil and refrigerate. Rewarm covered pudding in 350°F oven for 30 minutes before serving.)

Bring remaining 1 cup cream mixture to simmer in heavy medium saucepan. Remove saucepan from heat. Add the apricot preserves and blend it together. Serve pudding warm with warm white chocolate sauce.

Serves 6