

CLEO COYLE'S PANETTONE FRENCH TOAST FROM [HOLIDAY BUZZ](#)

Text & photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi, who writes the [Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) as [Cleo Coyle](#) with her husband, Marc Cerasini

Our readers may recall this beautiful holiday breakfast from our 12th Coffeehouse Mystery [Holiday Buzz](#). Our amateur sleuth, coffeehouse manager Clare, cooks it up on Christmas morning. Because of Clare's Italian heritage, my husband and I knew she would use panettone to make her holiday French toast. (FYI) Panettone is a wonderful, slightly sweet domed-shaped bread that's amazingly fluffy and laced with candied fruit. For hundreds of years, Italians have baked this bread and made a tradition of giving the festively wrapped cakes as gifts. The symbolize luck and prosperity through the New Year. Many American supermarkets, big box stores, even drug stores now sell boxes of panettone around the holidays. You can also buy it online (try [Eataly](#) or [Amazon](#)). While boxed panettone can keep for months, once it's out of its wrappings, the bread goes stale fairly quickly. When that happens, follow our recipe for a festive French toast. It makes a fabulous dessert, too. Try a scoop of gelato or whipped cream over a warm piece, add berries and a splash of amaretto or toasted almonds with chocolate sauce. May you eat with comfort and joy! ~ **Cleo**

Makes 2 servings as breakfast - 4 servings as dessert

Ingredients:

2 large eggs

1/4 cup whole milk, light cream, or half-and-half

(optional) 1 to 2 Tablespoons amaretto

1/2 teaspoon vanilla *(if not using liqueur, double this amount)*

1 Tablespoon sugar

Pinch of salt

1 one-inch thick round of panettone, quartered

For frying: 1 Tablespoon canola or vegetable oil + 1 T. butter

To finish: confectioners' sugar



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Avoid disaster: Note that panettone like any soft bread will be quite fragile and tear easily. To avoid it, note my underlined comments.

Step 1—Prep bread: Unwrap the panettone bread. From the bottom, slice a 1-inch thick round layer (see photo above). The thickness is important to avoid tearing. Allow the bread to sit out and become dry for a few hours or overnight. When ready to cook, preheat your oven to 250 degrees F. Slice the thick round into 4 quarters and set aside.

Step 2—Mix egg custard: In a bowl, combine the eggs, milk, liqueur (if using), and vanilla, sugar, and salt. Place the egg mixture into a pie or cake pan and soak the slices of bread for 3 minutes on one side. Turn the fragile pieces carefully to avoid tearing and soak for 3 minutes on the other side. Most of the liquid should be absorbed.

Step 3—Fry and bake: Into a skillet or sauté pan, heat 1 T. of oil & 1 T. butter. When the butter is melted and the pan good and **hot**, use a clean hand to carefully transfer the fragile slices into the pan. Pour any remaining custard over top of slices. Reduce heat to medium. Fry 2 to 3 minutes on each side, until golden brown (do not overcook). If cooking more batches, wipe pan clean with a paper towel and add fresh oil and butter for each new batch. Use a spatula to carefully transfer the fried quarters to a parchment-lined baking sheet and toast in oven for 5 to 10 minutes. Then serve at once or turn off oven to hold pieces 20 to 30 minutes.

Step 4—Serve: Enjoy warm with a dusting of powdered sugar. Or serve with butter and maple syrup or fruit toppings. To serve as **dessert**, add a scoop of ice cream, gelato, or whipped cream with berries and a drizzle of amaretto or try chopped nuts and chocolate sauce.



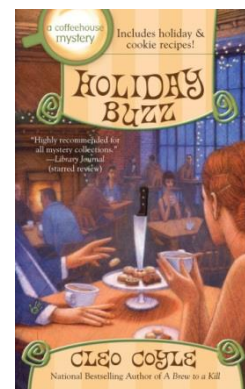
Eat with comfort and joy!

~ Cleo Coyle

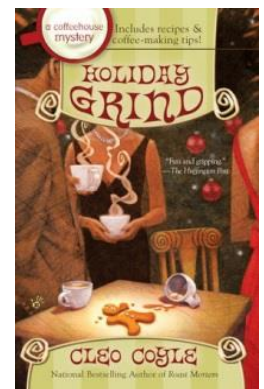
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