

# RISE AND SHINE

THE TOWNSEND CHEF MAKES MORNINGS SPECIAL WITH TASTY FRENCH TOAST

By Megan Swoyer | Photo by Joe Vaughn



**W**hen The Townsend Hotel Executive Chef Jim Bologna recently hosted a brunch at his home to honor a family member in the U.S. Navy who would soon be shipping out, he served a no-fail entrée that always gets rave reviews. A far cry from military rations, his Challah French Toast (above, recipe at right) comes smothered with fresh berries and whipped cream. (“I always add a touch of powdered sugar and vanilla to the whipping cream,” he says.)

“For the going-away gathering, I wanted to do something that was easy and I could create ahead of time,” says Bologna, who has been with The Townsend for the past two years. Planning time to mix and serve drinks is the

## CHALLAH FRENCH TOAST

### INGREDIENTS

- 6 eggs
- 1 ½ cups half and half
- 1 teaspoon grated orange zest
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon agave nectar or honey
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 loaf of challah (unsliced)
- 1 tablespoon butter and light splash of oil

### FOR THE TABLE

- Pure maple syrup, raspberry preserves, fresh berries, and whipped cream

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, half and half, orange zest, vanilla extract, agave nectar or honey, and salt. Slice the challah into ¾-inch pieces. Soak each piece in egg mixture until bread absorbs the batter, turning once to coat both sides. Heat a griddle to medium temperature. Melt 1 tablespoon of butter and a bit of oil in pan. Place bread slices in pan, and cook for 2-3 minutes per side, until they are a golden-brown. Place on a sheet pan and keep warm in the oven.

Serve hot with whipped cream, berries, and preserves. Can also serve with maple syrup.

second order of the day for Bologna. “I do that while the entrée warms in the oven for up to 15 minutes. That way I can greet guests, make mimosas, and enjoy the company.”

Because the dish, which also graces The

Townsend’s menu, features eggs and cream, it has crème brûlée undertones, Bologna says. “I often refer to it as crème brûlée French toast.” Whatever you call it, the sweet, easy-to-make dish undoubtedly deserves a 21-gun salute.