

Crème Brûlée

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Making a special custard dessert is not hard. This make ahead recipe will put the work on the day before, and wow your guests when you burn the sugar topping.

Ingredients

1 vanilla bean
2 cups heavy cream
4 egg yolks
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
Caramelizing sugar (or brown sugar)

Instructions

Put heavy cream in a cooking pot.

Split the vanilla bean lengthwise and scrape the seeds into the cream. Heat cream/seed mixture over medium heat until very warm but not boiling.

Whisk together egg yolks, granulated sugar and salt.

When the cream is hot, add it to the egg yolk mixture in a thin stream, a little at a time, whisking well after each addition. Be sure to scrape out the pot as most of the seeds will still be in the pot. Pour into 4-6 small ramekins. Place filled ramekins in a large baking pan and fill the baking pan with hot water so that it comes 1/2 of the way up the sides of the ramekins. Be careful not to get any water in the custard.

Bake at 325 degrees F for 30-45 minutes. This will depend on how deep the custard is. The top will appear set but underneath it will still jiggle.

Cool to room temperature for about an hour, and then refrigerate uncovered for at least 2 hours until well chilled. May leave overnight.

At serving time, sprinkle each custard with caramelizing sugar and melt using a kitchen torch. Move the torch continuously to melt the sugar evenly across the top. If you don't have a torch, you can use your broiler just until caramelized – just watch very carefully.

Serve immediately.

Serves 4-6, depending on the size of the ramekins.

