

Crème Brûlée

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 30 minutes | Total Time: 4 hours

Chef's Notes

Crème Brûlée is delicious and pretty much hassle-free. Especially if you let your guests torch the top themselves.

There is less of a risk of water getting into the ramekins if you fill the casserole dish with hot water once it is in the oven.

If you really like the crème brûlée topping, then use ramekins that are wider and more shallow. Ramekins that measure 4 3/4-inch in diameter work beautifully for this dessert.

Crème brûlée is very easy to make and can be made up to 2 days in advance, making it a great choice for a dinner party.

Step 1: Making the Brûlée

- 2 cups heavy cream (whipping cream)
- 1 whole vanilla bean
- 1 1/2 tsp orange zest (or 2 tsp orange liqueur)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 6 large egg yolks

To start the custard, preheat your oven to 325° Fahrenheit (165°C).

Heat the cream over medium-low heat. Meanwhile, slice the vanilla bean in half lengthwise. Scrape out the seeds, using the back of the knife. Add the seeds and the vanilla bean to the cream, along with the finely grated orange zest. Whisk everything together and let the cream come to a simmer.

Meanwhile, place a bowl onto a wet towel to hold it in place. Whisk the eggs and sugar together. Once the cream comes to a very gentle boil, add a small amount to the eggs to temper them. Continue to whisk as you slowly add the rest of the cream.

Strain the custard mixture into a pitcher or large measuring cup. Next, place the ramekins into a large casserole dish with at least 2" -inch sides. Pour the custard into the ramekins, filling them only about three-quarters full.

We used 3 1/2-inch x 1 1/2-inch ramekins, but you can use any size you like. Just keep in mind that different sizes will affect the cooking time.

Step 2: Baking the Custard

Transfer the ramekins to the oven. Carefully pour boiling or very hot tap water into the casserole dish until it reaches at least half way up the sides of the ramekins.

Bake the custard for approximately 20 to 25 minutes, but again this will depend on the size of the ramekins that you have used.

To check the custard, use a pair of tongs to gently shake the ramekin. When done, the custard should have a nice, uniform jiggle. Remove the custard from the bain marie and place onto a cooling rack. If any of the custards seem slightly underdone, leave them in the bain marie for another minute or so out of the oven. They will continue to cook a bit in the hot water.

Once the brûlées have cooled, place them into the refrigerator for at least 4 hours...or better yet overnight. This will give the custard plenty of time to fully set.

Step 3: Finishing the Brûlée

- 6 tbsp granulated sugar

To serve the custard, sprinkle some sugar onto the surface of the cold brûlée. To caramelize the sugar, you can use either a small kitchen torch, or a regular torch which can be found in any hardware store.

Let cool for a minute to allow the sugar to harden, before serving.