

Crème Brulee

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The classic. We happen to like this rendition. Recipe serves six.

6 - egg yolks

½ cup - sugar

4 cups - Whipping cream

2 - split vanilla beans

Additional sugar to form the crust. Raw sugar works the best. Don't use brown sugar though, it burns too easily.

Heat the cream and the vanilla beans until it just reaches the boil. Don't let it boil over though, or you'll have one hell of a mess (been there, done that).

While the cream is heating, beat the egg yolks and sugar together in a bowl big enough to hold all ingredients until you can form ribbons. When the cream is just starting to boil, take it off the heat. Temper the eggs by whisking in a cup of the hot cream (careful, or you'll have sweet scrambled eggs). Slowly mix in the rest of the cream. Put the bowl in an ice bath and continue to stir until the cream has cooled down to where it is warm but not hot. The mixture at this point should coat the back of a spoon.

Strain the mixture into the six serving bowls. The serving bowls you use are dependent on what you want your cream/crust ration to be. More cream, use individual souffle' bowls. More crust, use wider, shallower bowls. Place the bowls in a Bane Marie with hot water and put into a preheated, 325 degree oven. Bake for ~ 25 minutes. The custard should be set but still a little jiggly in the middle. Place the custards on a tray, cover and cool in the refrigerator for at least eight hours.

Just before service, sprinkle a tablespoon or two of sugar on each custard (depends on the size of the bowl). Tilt the bowls so that the sugar covers evenly. Pour off the excess. Brown the top of the custard with a propane torch, or under the broiler. Be careful not to burn the sugar (the torch is by far the best way to do this). Garnish with a mint leaf, a berry or two, or nothing at all.

The classic match is Sauterne. If the wine isn't sweet enough, go with coffee.

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