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MOTHER LINDA'S CRÈME BRÛLÉE



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- 3 cups fresh cream
- 1 cup fresh milk
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 whole vanilla bean
- 6 egg yolks
- 1-2 tsp. superfine sugar, per ramekin

In a heavy-bottomed saucepan on low, heat the cream, milk, and sugar. Stir the sugar to dissolve and then add the vanilla bean. Continue to heat until small bubbles appear around the edges, but do not allow it to boil. Remove from heat and cool for 10-15 minutes, while letting the vanilla bean soften.

Remove the vanilla bean from the cream, split open lengthwise with a sharp knife, and scrape the tiny seeds from the pod. Add the seeds to the cream, and discard the pod. Set a kettle on to boil some water.

Whisk the egg yolks into the cooled cream mixture, and then strain through a sieve to remove any unbeaten egg. Pour about ½ cup of the mixture into each of eight No. 5 A pilco ceramic ramekins. Set the ramekins in a deep-sided baking dish. Pour enough boiling water into the baking dish to come halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Bake at 325°F for 50-60 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Remove the baking dish from the oven, and let the ramekins cool. Transfer to the refrigerator and let the crème cool completely overnight, or for at least four hours.

Just before serving, remove the crème from the refrigerator and sprinkle the custard in each ramekin evenly with 1-2 tsp. superfine sugar. Using a handheld torchière, caramelize the sugar until golden brown. Let the ramekin set for a few minutes before serving so the sugar can cool and harden to perfection.

If you want to know how I rate restaurants according to the quality of their crème brûlée, cruise over to my article, "[The World According to Crème Brûlée](#)." Do you have any crème brûlée insights? I would love to hear them.