

VALENTINE'S DAY DESSERT

CREME BRÛLÉE

BY MOLLY MANGAN, SIMPLY DESSERTS

What could be more romantic on Valentine's Day than a rich, creamy, sugary creme brûlée with a crispy caramelized top? Do you think it's complicated or hard or solely in the domain of restaurant kitchens and pastry chefs to create? Not at all. Try this recipe from Simply Desserts in Gainesville and have a romantic night!

SERVINGS: 2

2 cups heavy cream
1 vanilla bean or 1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/3 cup sugar
6 egg yolks
8 tsp. sugar (topping)

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place 2 ramekin dishes in an oven-safe flat pan with high sides.
2. Combine cream and half of the sugar in a pot and bring mixture to a boil over medium-high heat. Set off to the side.
3. In a large bowl whisk together egg yolks and remaining half of sugar. Gently start to slowly temper your egg yolks with the hot cream mixture (pouring in the cream mixture very slowly in a steady stream). Pouring the mixture in too quickly could result in cooking the eggs which is not desirable. Stir gently.

4. Gently fill each ramekin with the custard mixture, it is recommended you fill these as close to the oven as possible to avoid spillage when transferring into the oven.

4. Bring a pot of water to a boil. Gently pour the boiling water into the larger pan with the ramekins, ensuring not to get any water into the custards; you will want to fill the pan so it covers 2/3 of the way up the sides of the ramekins.

5. Gently place into the oven and bake for 30-40 minutes or until the sides are set and the edges are golden. The middle will still be slightly jiggly.

6. Remove ramekins from pans and let to cool at room temperature for 2 hours, then cover and chill for at least 4 hours before caramelizing.

7. When ready to serve, sprinkle sugar on top evenly to make a thin layer.

Caramelize the sugar using a kitchen torch (available at most grocery stores) by holding the flame of about 3-4 inches away and moving evenly to cook the sugar until it is golden brown and bubbling. OR, caramelize the sugar using your broiler: move the top rack in your oven up as high as it will go. Place the ramekins on the rack, and turn on the broiler. Broil for 5 to 10 minutes, rotating them frequently so that they broil evenly. Take them out when they are golden brown and bubbling.

8. Serve immediately or refrigerate for up to 8 hours before serving.

About the **AUTHOR** ¶ Molly Mangan is one of the Cake Artists at Simply Desserts in Gainesville. A Culinary Institute of America graduate, she has been working there for 2 years. Before that she was a pastry chef in Fredericksburg. This job has been a dream of hers for a long time and it brings great joy to her to make beautiful cakes for special events.

