Crème Caramel

Serves 1 | Active Time: 30 minutes | Total Time: 5 hours

Chef's Notes

Crème Caramel is a classic French dessert that is quick to make and even more fun to eat. Any leftovers will keep for a few days in the refrigerator.

There are many recipes for Crème Caramel. Some are made with cream and egg yolks and/or with flavorings added. This recipe is lighter than some versions and it's not so heavy to have at the end of a meal.

For a more delicate texture, make this recipe with four eggs.

Step 1: Preparing the Caramel | Sugar Syrup

- 4 oz sugar
- water (enough just to cover)

First preheat the oven to 350 °F (175° C) and have your ramekins (molds) ready. Depending on the size of the ramekins you may need 6 to 8 of them.

To start the caramel, place the sugar into the pot and add enough water just to cover. The more water that is added, the longer the sugar will take to caramelize. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Do not stir. Brush the sides of the pot with a clean pastry brush dipped in water to prevent any sugar crystals from crystallizing, if needed.

As soon as the sugar starts to color, gently swirl the pan to ensure the sugar is caramelizing evenly. This should take about 10 minutes or so. Once the desired caramel color has been achieved, quickly pour a bit of the caramel into the bottom of each ramekin.

Note: Until you get used to making caramel, you can remove the pot from the burner just before you think it is ready and then just gently swirl the pot around. The residual heat from the pot will continue to darken the sugar. This just sort of slows down the process a tiny bit so you don't happen to overcook the sugar.

The caramel will be VERY hot, so DO NOT touch it. As it sits, it will harden. This is what is supposed to happen.

Note: To clean the caramel from the pot (and the ramekins later), fill the pot with water and bring to a simmer. The caramel will just melt away into the hot water.

Step 2: Preparing the Vanilla Custard

- 2 cups whole milk (500 ml)
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 6 large eggs
- 100 g sugar (just under 1/2 cup)

To prepare the custard, scald the milk, which means to bring it almost to the boiling point.

Meanwhile, whisk together the eggs, sugar, and vanilla until just combined.

Step 3: Finishing and Straining the Custard

To finish the custard, slowly temper the warm milk into the egg mixture while constantly whisking.

Once done, strain the custard into a large measuring cup or jug that has a spout. This will make it easier to pour the custard into the ramekins.

Step 4: Filling and Baking the Crème Caramel

Place the ramekins into a large, oven-proof baking dish. Evenly distribute the custard between the ramekins, filling them about three-quarters full.

Next, fill the baking dish with very hot water until the water rises about half way up the ramekins. This will create a bain marie, which will cook the custards more evenly. For more information on this, watch the end of Step 1 of the Crème Brulee Recipe. Carefully transfer to the oven, making sure you don't get any water inside the ramekins.

Let the custards bake for approximately 35 to 40 minutes or until they are just set but still jiggle in the center (like in Step 2 of this Creme Brulee). If some are done before the others, remove them from the bain marie and transfer them to a cooling rack.

Step 5: Chilling & Serving the Crème Caramel

Once done, place the custards into the refrigerator for at least 4 hours or even overnight.

To serve, slide a thin paring knife between the custard and the inside rim of the ramekin. Try to stay as close as possible to the edge and try to be a smooth as possible (one motion) so that the edge of custard comes out as smooth and clean as possible.

Once the custard is loose, place a small plate over the top and then carefully flip the whole thing over, making sure to keep the plate secure with your fingers.

If the custard seems to be sticking a bit just give it a little nudge it should come out quite easily. It may just need a bit of air to get inside to loosen the custard. Serve.