

Catalan Cinnamon Crème Brûlée

Adapted from [Crème Brûlée](#) by Lou Seibert Pappas (Chronicle Books, 2009)

The author states this yields 6 "standard size" servings, but with my traditional crème brûlée dishes (4-3/4"-diameter, 5 ounces each), I only had enough custard for 5. That said, I wished I had made 100 because we would have eaten them all quite happily.

Makes 5 or 6, depending on the size of your dishes

1-1/2 cups heavy cream
1/2 cup half-and-half
1 cinnamon stick
1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg (it really does make a difference)
2 tablespoons grated lemon zest
6 large egg yolks (save the whites in the fridge -- I'll tell you what to do with them soon)
1/3 cup sugar, plus 5 tablespoons for topping

Preheat the oven to 275 degrees.

In a medium saucepan, heat the cream, half-and-half, cinnamon stick, nutmeg and zest over medium heat until small bubbles break along the edges of the pan. Remove from heat and let cool to room temperature.

Set a kettle full of water to boil, then remove from heat as well.

Meanwhile, whisk the egg yolks for as long as you can without getting tired. (The original recipe says to whisk them until they're pale, but my wrists gave out far earlier with no ill results.) Then whisk in the 1/3 cup sugar until dissolved.

Discard the cinnamon stick, then whisk the cooled cream into the egg mixture.

Place the crème brûlée dishes in a large baking pan (I used two). Divide the custard among the dishes, then place the baking pans, one by one, on the open oven door. Use the kettle to fill the baking pans with water until the water level reaches halfway up the sides of the custard dishes. Do not overfill, or the water might seep into the custard.

Bake 35 to 40 minutes, or until the custards are set. Remove from the water, cool to room temperature, and refrigerate until very cold, at least 2 hours.

Just before serving, sprinkle each custard with 1 tablespoon of sugar. Shake the dish slightly or give it a little bang on the counter to disburse the sugar evenly. Use a handheld blowtorch to caramelize the sugar until it's evenly bronzed. (Go slowly.) Serve immediately.