

Traditional Spanish Dessert Crema Catalana

Authentic Spanish Crema Catalana recipe with citrus and cinnamon. Learn to make this traditional Catalan custard dessert with caramelized sugar topping.

10 min

PREP

40 min

COOK

50 min

TOTAL

6

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 17 oz milk
- 1 orange
- 1 lemon
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 vanillin
- 7 egg yolk
- 3 oz granulated sugar
- 1 tsp corn flour

Instructions

1 Infuse the milk

Combine 17 oz whole milk, orange peel, lemon zest, 1 cinnamon stick, and vanilla in a heavy-bottomed saucepan. Heat over medium-low heat until the milk just begins to simmer with small bubbles around the edges, about 5-7 minutes.

2 Remove the saucepan from heat and let steep for 15 minutes to infuse the citrus and spice flavors into the milk.

3 Prepare the egg mixture

Whisk together 7 egg yolks and 3 oz sugar in a mixing bowl until the mixture is light yellow and creamy, about 2 minutes. Add 1 tsp cornstarch and whisk until completely smooth with no lumps.

4 Strain and reheat milk

Strain the infused milk through a fine-mesh sieve into a clean bowl to remove all solids. Return the strained

milk to the saucepan and heat over medium heat until steaming hot but not boiling, about 3-4 minutes.

5 **Temper the eggs**

Slowly pour about 1/4 cup of the hot milk into the egg mixture while whisking constantly to prevent the eggs from scrambling. Continue adding the remaining milk in a thin steady stream while whisking continuously.

6 **Cook the custard**

Return the mixture to the saucepan and cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for 5-7 minutes until the custard thickens enough to coat the back of the spoon and holds a line when you draw your finger across it.

7 **Strain and portion**

Strain the custard through a fine-mesh sieve to remove any lumps. Divide evenly among 6 ramekins or shallow serving dishes.

8 Press plastic wrap directly onto the surface of each custard to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight until completely chilled and set.

9 **Caramelize and serve**

Just before serving, sprinkle 1 tablespoon sugar evenly over each custard surface. Use a kitchen torch to caramelize the sugar until golden brown and crispy, about 30-60 seconds per ramekin.

Tips

Use a heavy-bottomed saucepan to prevent scorching when heating the milk mixture and ensure even heat distribution throughout the cooking process.

Strain the finished custard through a fine-mesh sieve to remove any lumps and achieve the silkiest possible texture, even if you think the mixture looks smooth.

For the most authentic flavor, use fresh orange and lemon peels rather than dried zest, and remove them with a vegetable peeler to avoid the bitter white pith.

When tempering the egg mixture, add the hot milk very gradually while whisking constantly—rushing this step is the most common cause of curdled custard.

Test for doneness by coating the back of a wooden spoon with the custard; when you can draw a clean line through it with your finger, it's ready.

Press plastic wrap directly onto the surface of each custard to prevent a skin from forming during refrigeration.

For perfect caramelization, sprinkle sugar in a thin, even layer and work quickly with your torch or broiler to achieve uniform golden color.

Allow refrigerated custards to sit at room temperature for 10-15 minutes before adding the sugar topping for easier caramelization.