



Lavender Crème Brûlée

Featured on August 17th, 2018 for “Julia Child’s Legacy” demo with Chef Lynne Just

Julia and Paul Child built a small cottage in a village just outside of Cannes in Provence, France. They named their cottage “La Pitchoune,” which means “The Little Thing,” which they often called “La Peech” for short. The cottage was surrounded by olive trees, almond trees, and lavender bushes – all plants indicative of the region. One can imagine that Julia may have used fresh lavender from those bushes to prepare sweet treats like this lavender crème brûlée.

Lavender Crème Brûlée

Original recipe by Julia Child, adapted by Lynne Just

Ingredients

3 cups heavy cream
2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon edible lavender flowers
6 large egg yolks
½ cup granulated sugar

For burning:
½ cup granulated sugar

Special Equipment

Eight 4-ounce ramekins (small soufflé molds)
Strainer
Propane blowtorch (optional)

Directions

In a 6-cup saucepan, bring the cream, extract, and lavender flowers to a simmer. Remove from heat and let steep for 45 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350° F.

In a medium mixing bowl, whisk the egg yolks and sugar together until yolks are thick, pale yellow, and form a fat, slowly dissolving ribbon when dropped from the whisk back into the bowl.

Warm the cream back to a simmer. So as not to scramble the egg yolks, stir by dribbles half a cup of the hot cream into the yolks, stirring (not beating – you do not want to form bubbles). Adding it in a slow stream, stir in the rest of the cream. Set the strainer over a quart measure cup and strain the custard mixture through it to eliminate any coagulated bits of eggs and lavender flowers. Skim off any bubbles from the surface of the custard.

Arrange the ramekins in the baking pan and pour or ladle $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of custard into each, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ inch clearance at the top for the glaze. Set the baking pan in the oven and pour in enough hot water to come up halfway up the ramekins.

Bake the custards for 30 to 35 minutes, until the tops are set but the custard in the center is still quite soft to the touch. Carefully remove the baking pan from the oven, and lift the ramekins from the hot water. Let them cool briefly, then chill thoroughly in the refrigerator, at least 4 hours. Either serve them as pot de crème, or glaze them as follows.

Sprinkle a tablespoon or so of sugar over each custard and smooth it gently with the back of a spoon, forming an even layer of sugar that covers the surface.

To make the crust with a blowtorch: Ignite the torch and direct the flame downward over a ramekin, always keeping the tip of the flame about 8 inches above the sugar. Move the torch around constantly, shifting the focus of the heat as the sugar melts. Heat each custard gradually – for 10 seconds or longer, depending on the power of the torch – until lightly caramelized all over. If one section of the sugar is darkening too fast, move the flame to another area, or start heating another ramekin. When all the custards have been crusted, give them a few moments to harden, then serve.

To make the crust under a broiler: Set the ramekins on a heatproof tray or a baking dish (1 or 2 at a time if you are not sure how quickly your broiler will crust them). Turn on the broiler and place the ramekins underneath, so the surface of the sugar is about 5 inches below the heat. Leave the door open so you can watch as the sugar melts and starts to caramelize. Turn the ramekins around if one side gets too brown, so that the glaze is consistent all around. Remove the custards as soon as the sugar has turned to a smooth sheet of brown glaze. If it has blackened in spots, set the remaining custards lower or reduce the glazing time. If the ramekins have been heated by the broiler, chill them briefly before serving.

Recipe originally published in From Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home, page 378-384. Copyright © 1999 by Julia Child. Published by Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Penguin Random House, LLC.



For more recipes from **Cooking Up History**, visit: www.s.si.edu/CookHistory.

