



Espresso Creme Brulee Noel

A Little Cup of Coffee Magic

Hello, my dear. Come sit. Let's talk about a special dessert. It is called Espresso Crème Brûlée. It sounds fancy, doesn't it? But it is just a creamy custard with a coffee hug. It has a crispy sugar top you crack with a spoon. That crack is the best part.

I first had it at a tiny cafe years ago. The sound of that crack made me jump! I still laugh at that. I knew I had to learn to make it. This recipe is my favorite version. It feels like a warm, quiet morning in a dessert cup.

Why The Coffee Bean Steep Matters

We do not just stir in coffee. We steep the beans in warm cream. Think of it like making tea. The hot cream pulls out the flavor from the beans.

It gets a deep, gentle coffee taste. Not bitter at all.

This step matters. It gives flavor without graininess. You get the soul of the coffee bean. Doesn't that smell amazing? Letting things sit is often the secret to good flavor. What's your favorite coffee or tea smell? Mine is this, right here.

The Gentle Bake

Now, we bake the custards in a water bath. We put the cups in a pan of hot water. This is very important. The water keeps the oven gentle. It cooks the custard softly so it stays smooth.

Without the water, the heat is too harsh. It would make the eggs curdle. We want silk, not scrambled eggs! Patience here makes a perfect texture. *Fun fact: This water bath method has a fancy name. Chefs call it a "bain-marie."*

The Joy of the Crack

The final magic is the sugar top. We sprinkle sugar on the cold custard. Then we use a little torch to melt it. It bubbles and turns into a hard, glassy sheet. You must tap it with your spoon to get in.

That moment matters. It is a little celebration before you eat. The contrast is wonderful. Cold, smooth cream under warm, crisp sugar. Do you like desserts with a fun texture to break?

Make It Your Own

This is a lovely recipe for a quiet dinner. It feels special but is simple inside. You can make the custards days ahead. Just add the sugar and

torch before serving.

You could try a different flavor. Steep a vanilla bean instead of coffee. Or use a pinch of cinnamon. What would you try steeping in the cream? A piece of orange peel? Tell me your idea. I love to hear them.

Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Heavy cream, chilled	4 cups	Divided, see instructions
Granulated sugar	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup	
Table salt	1 pinch	
Espresso beans	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	Coarsely cracked in a bag
Large egg yolks	12	
Vanilla extract	1 teaspoon	
Turbinado or Demerara sugar	8 – 12 teaspoons	For caramelizing the top



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Instructions

Step 1: Heat your oven to 300 degrees. Put a rack in the middle. Now, grab a saucepan. Pour in two cups of cream, the sugar, and a tiny pinch of salt. Add your crushed espresso beans. Warm it all up until it just starts to bubble. Stir it now and then. Turn off the heat and let it sit for 15 minutes. This lets the coffee flavor sneak into the cream. Doesn't that smell amazing?

See also [Holiday Hazelnut Chewy Delights](#)

Step 2: While that steeps, get your ramekins ready. Place a towel in a big baking dish. Set your ramekins on the towel. This keeps them from sliding. Now, boil some water in a kettle. You'll need it soon. In a big bowl, whisk the egg yolks and vanilla. Just mix them until they're friendly and combined.

Step 3: Time to mix! Stir the remaining two cups of cold cream into your warm coffee cream. This cools it down. Slowly whisk about a cup of this cream into your egg yolks. Do it gently. Then add another cup and whisk. Finally, pour in the rest. (Pouring slowly keeps the eggs from getting scared and curdling). Strain it all into a pitcher to catch the coffee bits.

Step 4: Pour the custard into your ramekins. Put the baking dish in the oven. Carefully pour the hot water into the dish around the ramekins. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes. The center should be just set, not wobbly. What's the best tool to check doneness without cutting into it? Share below!

Step 5: Let the custards cool on a rack for two hours. Then cover them

with plastic wrap. Chill in the fridge for at least 4 hours. I sometimes make them a day ahead. The wait is the hardest part!

Step 6: Right before serving, blot any moisture off the tops. Sprinkle a teaspoon of turbinado sugar on each. Tilt the dish to spread it evenly. Use your kitchen torch to melt the sugar into a shiny, crackly top. Let them chill again for 30 minutes. Then serve with a happy crack!

Creative Twists

This recipe is like a dear friend. You can dress it up for different occasions. I love playing with little changes. It makes the kitchen feel like a magic workshop. My grandson once suggested a chocolate version. It was brilliant!

Orange Zest: Add the zest of one orange to the cream with the coffee beans. It's a sunny, bright flavor.

Chocolate Shavings: Sprinkle very dark chocolate shavings over the sugar before torching. It melts into the caramel.

Maple Sugar: Use maple sugar instead of turbinado for the topping. It gives a cozy, autumn taste.

Which one would you try first? Comment below!

Serving & Pairing Ideas

This dessert feels so fancy. But keep things simple. A few berries on the side are perfect. A little whipped cream never hurt anyone either. For a party, I serve them on a big platter with doilies. It reminds me of my mother's table.

See also Christmas Roast Beef with Horseradish Parsley Sauce

For drinks, I have two favorites. A small glass of amaretto tastes lovely

with the coffee. For the kids, a frothy glass of cream soda is just right. The vanilla and cream sing together. Which would you choose tonight?



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Keeping Your Creme Brulee Cozy

This dessert loves a cold fridge. Cover the ramekins tightly with plastic wrap. They will keep happily for up to four days. I do not recommend freezing them. The custard can become grainy and weep.

You can make the custards days before your party. Just caramelize the sugar tops right before serving. This is a wonderful batch-cooking trick. It makes hosting feel easy and calm.

I once made these for a big family dinner. I did all the steps two days early. On the night, I just needed my little torch. It felt like magic! Storing ahead matters. It gives you time to enjoy your own guests.

Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!

Smooth Sailing for Your Custard

First, watch the steeping time. Steep the espresso beans for exactly fifteen minutes. Steeping too long makes the flavor bitter. Too little time gives weak coffee taste.

Second, strain your mixture well. Use a fine-mesh strainer. This catches all the espresso bean bits and any cooked egg. I remember when I skipped this step once. We had little specks in our smooth custard!

Third, the water bath is key. The water must be very hot. It should come two-thirds up the ramekin sides. This gentle heat cooks the custard evenly. It prevents ugly cracks on top. A smooth custard builds your kitchen confidence. A perfect crackly top makes everyone smile.

Which of these problems have you run into before?

Your Quick Questions, Answered

Q: Is this gluten-free?

A: Yes, it is! All the ingredients are naturally gluten-free.

Q: Can I make it ahead?

A: Absolutely. Follow the make-ahead tips in the first section. It's a lifesaver.

Q: What if I don't have espresso beans?

A: You can use two tablespoons of very strong, cooled brewed espresso. Just add it with the vanilla.

Q: Can I halve the recipe?

A: You can. Just use six egg yolks and halve all the other ingredients. It works perfectly.

Q: Do I need a kitchen torch?

A: A torch is best. But you can use your oven's broiler. Watch it very, very closely! *Fun fact: The hard sugar top is called the "cradle."*

Which tip will you try first?

From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope you love making this special treat. It seems fancy but is quite simple. The smell of caramelizing sugar is pure joy. I would love to hear about your cooking adventure.

Please tell me all about it in the comments below. Did your family cheer when you tapped the top? **Have you tried this recipe?** I read every

note you leave.

See also Savory and Sweet Christmas Cookie Bites

Happy cooking!
—Elowen Thorn.



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Author: Elowen Thorn

Cooking Method: [Baking](#)

Cuisine: [French](#)



Courses: [Dessert](#)

Difficulty: **Beginner**



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Prep time: **30 minutes**

Cook time: **35 minutes**

Chill time: **6 minutes**

Total time: **7 minutes**



Servings: **8 servings**



Calories: **520 kcal**

Best Season: **Summer**

Description

A rich and elegant dessert featuring a smooth espresso-infused custard

topped with a crisp, caramelized sugar crust.

Ingredients

- ☐ 4 cups heavy cream, chilled
- ☐ $\frac{2}{3}$ cup granulated sugar
- ☐ pinch table salt
- ☐ $\frac{1}{4}$ cup espresso beans, placed in zipper-lock bag and crushed lightly with rolling pin or meat pounder until coarsely cracked
- ☐ 12 large egg yolks
- ☐ 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ☐ 8 - 12 teaspoons turbinado sugar or Demerara sugar

Instructions

1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 300 degrees.
2. Combine 2 cups cream, sugar, and salt in medium saucepan; add espresso beans to pan, submerged in cream, and bring mixture to boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally to ensure that sugar dissolves. Take pan off heat and let steep 15 minutes to infuse flavors.
3. Meanwhile, place kitchen towel in bottom of large baking dish or roasting pan and arrange eight 4- to 5-ounce ramekins (or shallow fluted dishes) on towel. Bring kettle or large saucepan of water to boil over high heat.
4. After cream has steeped, stir in remaining 2 cups cream to cool down mixture. Whisk yolks and vanilla extract in large bowl until broken up and combined. Whisk about 1 cup cream mixture into yolks until loosened and combined; repeat with another 1 cup cream. Add remaining cream and whisk until evenly colored and

thoroughly combined. Strain through fine-mesh strainer into 2-quart measuring cup or pitcher (or clean medium bowl); discard solids in strainer. Pour or ladle mixture into ramekins, dividing it evenly among them.

5. Carefully place baking dish with ramekins on oven rack; pour boiling water into dish, taking care not to splash water into ramekins, until water reaches two-thirds height of ramekins. Bake until centers of custards are just barely set and are no longer sloshy and digital instant-read thermometer inserted in centers registers 170 to 175 degrees, 30 to 35 minutes (25 to 30 minutes for shallow fluted dishes). Begin checking temperature about 5 minutes before recommended time.
6. Transfer ramekins to wire rack; cool to room temperature, about 2 hours. Set ramekins on rimmed baking sheet, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until cold, at least 4 hours or up to 4 days.
7. Uncover ramekins; if condensation has collected on custards, place paper towel on surface to soak up moisture. Sprinkle each with about 1 teaspoon turbinado sugar (1 1/2 teaspoons for shallow fluted dishes); tilt and tap ramekin for even coverage. Ignite torch and caramelize sugar. Refrigerate ramekins, uncovered, to re-chill, 30 to 45 minutes (but no longer); serve.

Notes

For the best texture, ensure the custards are thoroughly chilled before caramelizing the sugar. Use a kitchen torch for the most control when creating the crisp sugar crust.

Keywords: Creme Brulee, Espresso, Custard, Dessert