

Cooking with Chef Don

Chocolate Creme Brulee

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Serves 6

2 1/2 cups Heavy Cream
2 tsp. Vanilla
8 oz. Dark Chocolate, chopped
8 Egg Yolks
2 Tbsp. Sugar
6 Tbsp. Sugar, for topping

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F. Mix the cream and vanilla together in a double boiler. Heat the mixture for 10 to 15 minutes and stir in the chocolate.

Whisk the egg yolks and sugar together in a mixing bowl. Slowly pour the chocolate cream into the egg mix, continuously whisking. Place the bowl over simmering water until the cream mix thickens and coats the back of a spoon, about 6 to 8 minutes. Pour into 6 custard dishes. Place in a large baking pan and add enough water to come up halfway up the sides of the cups. Bake until the custard is set, about 1 hour. Remove from the water and cool. Cover and refrigerate. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon of sugar on top of each one and with a brulee torch, caramelize the top and serve.

Salted Caramel Dipping Sauce

Yield: 1 1/3 cups

1 cup White Sugar
6 Tbsp. Salted Butter
1/2 cup + 2 Tbsp. Heavy Cream, room temperature
1/2 tsp. Vanilla Extract
1 tsp. Kosher Salt

In a large heavy-bottomed pot melt the sugar over medium heat, stirring the sugar constantly with a wooden spoon to keep it from burning or melting unevenly. The sugar is done when it has liquefied and is a dark rich copper color. When the sugar is done, add the butter all at once, and stir rapidly until it has melted, then turn off the heat. Carefully pour in the heavy cream—the mixture will foam and splatter and bit. Stir everything together until the sauce is smooth. Stir in the vanilla extract and kosher salt. Serve.

Spun Sugar

2 cups granulated sugar
1/2 cup light corn syrup
1/2 cup water

1. Prepare your work station: cover your kitchen counter and floor with newspaper, to catch sugar spills. Take 3 or 4 chopsticks or skewers, and arrange them close together on the paper-covered counter, extending over the edge of the counter. Place a sheet pan with some weight over the sticks.
2. Fill a large bowl with ice and water, and set it aside to be used later.
3. Combine the sugar, water, and corn syrup in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, and stir until the sugar dissolves. Cover the saucepan with a lid and boil for 2-3 minutes, then remove the lid and continue to boil the sugar syrup, stirring occasionally, until it reaches 310 degrees. The sugar will cook very quickly **towards the end, so watch closely to ensure it doesn't burn.**
4. As soon as the sugar reaches the proper temperature, remove the saucepan from the heat and dunk the bottom in the prepared ice water to stop the sugar from cooking further. Allow the mixture to stand for a minute or two, to thicken slightly.
5. Hold the pan in one hand and a fork in the other. Dip the fork in the sugar syrup and stir. Remove the fork from the heat and hold it 5-6 inches above the prepared saucepan handles. Rapidly flick the fork back and forth over the handles. The sugar syrup should create very fine strands of sugar that drape over the handles. **If the syrup doesn't create any strands, or the strands have a lot of "beads," allow the syrup to cool for another minute.** If the strands are very lumpy and difficult to form, re-heat the syrup very briefly.
6. Continue to dip and quickly flick the fork over the handles, creating many fine strands of spun sugar. At any point, you can remove the sugar that has accumulated and shape it into balls, nests, or thin tubes as desired. Continue to create spun sugar until your syrup is gone, or until you have enough spun sugar for your needs.
7. Spun sugar is best used immediately after it is made, as the sugar starts to liquefy if it comes into contact with anything moist or humid. If you are using it on top of a dessert, wait to position it until the last possible moment. If you want to attempt to store it, place it in a dry, airtight Tupperware container, preferably with several packages of desiccants, like those found in vitamin bottles.