



From Chef Alekka Sweeney

Crème Brulee:

Yields- 8 crème brulee

1 quart – Heavy Cream
1# 4oz - Egg Yolks
2 - Vanilla Beans (spilt and scraped)
10-½ oz - Granulated Sugar

Procedure:

In a medium size bowl whisk together half the sugar and the egg yolks. Bring the heavy cream, the remaining sugar, the vanilla beans and scrapings to a boil in a “heavy- bottomed sauce pot. When this mixture comes to boil, temper into the egg yolk mixture. Put back on stove and cook for 1 minute. Strain through a chinois, bake immediately or place in an ice bath to cool.

Baking Time and Temperatures:

Crème Brulee is traditionally baked in shallow ramekins or gratin dishes. It is important to bake in a warm water bath to prevent the custard from curdling. Depending on your oven, bake the crème brulee at 325- 350 F. for 20-25 minutes or until custard is set. To determine when the custard is set, insert a knife in the center of the custard; if it comes out clean, the custard is done. Cool, then refrigerate.

Finishing the Crème Brulee

To finish, first dab any moisture from the tops of the custards. Sprinkle with an even layer of brown or turbinado sugar. Caramelize the sugar under the broiler; place the custards very close to the heat so that the sugar caramelizes quickly before the custard warms up too much. Alternatively, use a blowtorch. Serve within an hour or two. If the custards are held too long, the caramel tops will soften.

About the Chef

From a young age Chef Alekka Sweeney enjoyed the communal, creative feel engendered by a warm, busy kitchen. She started her culinary career baking bread at her mother’s side and sipping wine with her father. Chef Alekka graduated from the *Pennsylvania Institute of Culinary Arts* with an externship with Master Pastry Chef Gunther Heiland, and studied pastry arts at Ottawa’s *Le Cordon Bleu*. She went on to work as Assistant Pastry Chef for Atlanta’s *Bold American Food Company* for five years. There she developed and planned dessert menus for the company’s three restaurants, including *The Food Studio*, as well as its catering company. In 2002, Chef Alekka took part in the One Day Stage with Gale Gand at *Tru*. She worked with pastry staffs at the *Hotel Inter-Continental*, *Bon Appetit* at the *Art Institute of Chicago* and *Giselles*. She also designed and assembled cakes, tempered chocolates and helped develop new products at *Vosges Haut Chocolates*. In 2006 she founded *Give Me Some Sugar* with partner Roxann Krull. When Chef Alekka is not showing the citizens of greater Chicago how to create homemade Strawberry-Rhubarb with Nut Streusel, authentic Spanish tapas or smoked trout mousse at home, she also teaches a number of baking, pastry and culinary hands-on classes at *The Wooden Spoon* and *Kendall College*.

