



# Favourite dessert is loved for centuries

Happy Valentine's Day! I realize we're a few days early on offering up the

Valentine's greetings, but next Friday will be too late! We have a totally delicious and easy to make dessert for you today—crème brûlée.

It's been around for ages, but is still a big-seller on the dessert list of many restaurants.

Crème brûlée has a creamy, cool custard on the inside and a crunchy sugar layer on top. It is one of Gerry and my favourites. There are many twists on the original recipe these days, but I must say the original version is my particular favourite. However, you can make any number of variations:

Saffron crème brûlée is one of the more exotic versions. Add the saffron while the cream is heating, then strain out the stems before proceeding with the recipe.

Similarly, ginger crème brûlée can be made by adding thin slices of fresh ginger root to the cream, then removing before continuing with the recipe.

Coffee crème brûlée is easy—just add a tablespoon of instant coffee to the cream before moving on to the next step.

Add a tropical twist to your brûlée by sautéing some banana slices in butter and brown sugar, place in the bottom of the ramekins, then proceed with the recipe as normal—gives you a neat treat at the bottom!

Lori Gysel & Gerry Kentner



No one can be quite certain where crème brûlée came from as the English, French and Spanish all lay claim to the discovery! The Spanish called it *crema catalana* and claim that they originated it in the 18th century. The English claim it, dating back to the 17th century, where it was apparently known as *burnt cream*, a hands-down favourite of English school boys at Cambridge. But it was the French who brought it back into vogue in the 19th century.

Today's recipe calls for turbinado sugar, also known as sugar in the raw, can be easily substituted for brown sugar. Turbinado sugar is made by steaming raw sugar cane extract.

Today's recipe is a great dish to make together as a couple. Olivier and I do it all the time. I get to haul out the pretty dishes and make the custard. He, of course, gets to operate the blow torch. There is nothing quite like power tools or welding torches at a dinner party to really make a man feel comfortable!

Have fun and keep cooking!

(Lori and Gerry can be reached at [whatscookin@independentfreepress.com](mailto:whatscookin@independentfreepress.com))

## Crème Brûlée

Serves 8

### Ingredients

- 3 cups 35% cream
- 8 egg yolks
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup turbinado sugar (sugar in the raw). \*\* If you do not have, or cannot find, turbinado sugar, you can substitute brown sugar (preferably brown sugar, not yellow)

### Method

1. In a saucepan, heat cream until steaming (not boiling) hot.

2. In a separate bowl whisk egg yolks with granulated sugar until well combined.

3. Very gradually whisk the cream into the egg yolk mixture (very gradually or you will end up with sweet, creamy scrambled eggs).

4. Whisk in the vanilla.

5. Skim off any foam.

6. Divide mixture into 8 ramekins.

7. Place ramekins in one or two large shallow pans. Gently pour boiling water into the pans until the water comes halfway up the sides of the ramekins.

8. Place the water and ramekin-filled pans into a 350 degree oven and

bake for 30-35 minutes or until edges are set and the centre still wobbles slightly.

9. Remove from the oven and the water. Let cool on racks. Cover and refrigerate at least two hours or for up to two days.

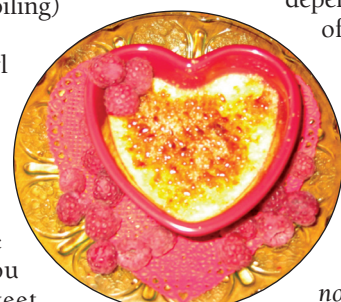
10. Shortly before ready to serve, remove the ramekins from fridge. Remove wrap. Use a paper towel to wick up any moisture on surface of custards.

11. Sprinkle 1 tsp (or slightly more depending on size of ramekin) of turbinado sugar on the surface of the custard.

12. Torch the sugar until it is bubbly and brown.

13. Chill for approximately 10 minutes before serving.

*Cook's note: If you do not have a butane torch or blow torch or welder's torch in the house, then follow the following method to caramelize the tops of the brûlée: Place the dry custards, sprinkled with sugar in the large shallow pans. Fill the pans with enough ice so that the ramekins are snugly nestled in. Broil in the oven, six inches from the heat for 2-6 minutes until sugar is dark brown and bubbly. Remove from the oven and the pans. Chill slightly before serving.*



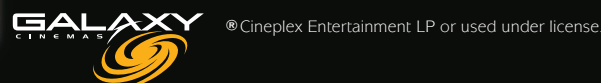
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