

# Maple Flan

serves 8

This is a rich and creamy version of the classic Mexican dessert. It complements most any dinner menu, and is a perfect ending to a delicious meal. I sometimes serve it with little bits of shaved chocolate on top, or with small bites of one of my favorite chocolates on the side.

**3/4 cup granulated sugar, pref. organic**  
**2 1/2 c. whole milk**  
**1/2 c. heavy cream**

**3 whole eggs**  
**3 egg yolks**  
**3/4 c. maple syrup**  
**1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract**

Preheat the oven to 350°. The first step in this recipe is to engage in a bit of alchemy. We will turn solid, dry sugar into wet, liquid caramel. Choose a small, heavy pot and pour the sugar in; place on medium heat. Give the pot a jiggle to even out the level of the sugar, but don't stir. In a few minutes, the sugar will begin to melt. It will become all liquid, then it will begin to brown. In the meantime, get eight 4–6 oz. custard dishes/ramekins and place them in a baking pan. You can also prepare the custard while the sugar is melting. The melted sugar wants to turn into medium, amber brown, smooth syrup. At that moment, remove the pot from the heat and quickly pour enough in the bottom of each ramekin to coat the bottom, giving a swirl if necessary. The syrup will thicken, so you must work quickly!

To prepare the custard, heat the milk and cream until it just barely begins to simmer. Stir the milk a couple of times while it is heating to even out the temperature. Meanwhile, blend (in a blender, a food processor, or in a bowl with a whisk) the eggs, yolks, and maple syrup until thoroughly blended and creamy. Add the vanilla. When the milk and cream are ready, turn off the heat and very slowly drizzle the egg-syrup mixture into the hot milk, stirring constantly to prevent curdling. A failsafe method is to drizzle a little bit of the hot milk into the egg mixture while stirring constantly, to raise the temperature a bit. Then pour that mixture into the hot milk/cream, stirring constantly.

Pour the custard mixture into the ramekins. Fill the baking pan that the ramekins have been placed into halfway up with hot water. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, until the custard is set. The custard should be a bit firm to the touch, not jiggly, but should still be a bit "soft" to the touch. Remove the pan from the oven, remove the ramekins from the pan, and allow the custard to cool. When cool, run a sharp knife around the edges of each ramekin and invert onto plates or small bowls. The caramel will form a luscious pool beneath the creamy custard. Mmmm!!!! Serve chilled.