



## Crema Catalana

Crema Catalana and Crème Brûlée is near related even if they are cooked a little different. The latter will stand in a water bath in the oven and the first is boiled and cooled before eaten. Both are actually easy to do. On El Castillo we season our Crème Brûlée with little Cointreau. But today we will keep to the Spanish variant.

Crema Catalana is sometimes called Crema Josep and will be served the 19 of March. The tradition says that it is grandmothers or unmarried aunts - do not ask me why - that live with their parents that will cook this course. A variant is to fill apples with the delicate cream.

- 1 cup Sugar
- 4 Egg Yolks
- 1 tbsp Cornstarch
- 1 stick Cinnamon
- grated rind of 1 Lemon
- 2 cups Milk

### Preparation:

This is a great dessert to make ahead of time, since it is **very easy** and requires 2-3 hours of refrigeration before serving. Make it the day before and leave it in the refrigerator until you are ready to serve. Then, heat the broiler, caramelize the sugar and serve!

In a pot, beat together the egg yolks and 3/4 cup sugar until thoroughly blended and the mixture turns frothy. Add the cinnamon stick and grated lemon rind. Pour in the milk and cornstarch. Slowly heat the mixture, stirring **constantly**, just until thickened. Remove pot from heat immediately.

**Tip:** As soon as the mixture thickens and you feel resistance while stirring, remove the pot from the heat or the mixture may curdle or separate! The texture of the finished *crema* will be grainy instead of smooth and creamy as it should be.

Remove the cinnamon stick and ladle the milk mixture into 4-6 ramekins (depending on size). Allow to cool, then refrigerate for at least 2-3 hours.

Before serving, preheat the grill. Remove ramekins with the *crema catalana* from refrigerator and sprinkle the rest of the sugar over each ramekin.

You have two ways of caramelize the sugar. You could use a handheld burner that will make the job in a few minutes, or use the grill in the oven. When grill is hot, place the ramekins under the grill on the top shelf and allow the sugar to caramelize, turning gold and brown. This may take 10 minutes or so, depending on your broiler. Remove and serve immediately.