

Bananas Foster Crème Brûlée with Flambéed Bananas & Pecans

Bananas Foster is my absolute favorite dessert of all time. Ripe bananas flambéed in caramel flavored with rum and banana liqueur served over vanilla ice cream – life just doesn't get any better. At least that's what I thought before I came up with this inventive take on the New Orleans classic. If you attempt only one recipe out of this cookbook (though I have no idea why on earth you'd limit yourself that way), make this the one.

YIELD – 4 servings

Spoon 1 tablespoon of the raw sugar into each of 4 6-ounce ramekins. Shake the ramekins to form an even layer of sugar. Using a specialty kitchen torch, evenly brown the raw sugar and set the ramekins aside.

Preheat oven to 300 degrees.

Bring the cream to a scald in a double boiler over medium heat. In a separate bowl, whisk together the eggs, granulated sugar and salt until all of the ingredients are fully incorporated. Temper the egg yolk mixture with the cream and strain it into the double boiler. Continue to cook until the mixture coats the back of a spoon, about 4 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the banana and vanilla extracts, cinnamon and nutmeg. Ladle equal portions of the mixture into the ramekins and place them in a 10-inch by 10-inch pan filled halfway with water. Transfer the pan to the oven and bake until the brûlées are set, 35 to 45 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and take the ramekins out of the pan. Cover the brûlées with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 2 hours.

Melt the butter in a sauté pan over medium heat. Whisk in 2 tablespoons of the brown sugar to form a syrup. Stir in the bananas and pecans. Remove the pan from the heat and whisk in the rum. Return the pan to the use a long match to flambé the mixture. Cook until the flame has extinguished and the alcohol has evaporated completely, about 1 minute. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the bananas soften, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

To serve, remove the ramekins from the refrigerator. Spoon 1 tablespoon of brown sugar evenly over each of the brûlées and use a specialty kitchen torch to evenly brown the sugar until it crystallizes. Spoon ¼ of the banana and pecan mixture atop the crystallized sugar. garnish with a dollop of whipped cream and a sprig of mint and serve.

¼ cup raw sugar
2 cups heavy cream
4 egg yolks
¾ cup granulated sugar
½ tsp salt
1 tsp banana extract
½ tsp vanilla extract
½ tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp fresh grated nutmeg
¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp light brown sugar
1 banana, cut on the bias into ½-inch thick slices
8 whole pecans
2 tsp dark rum
¼ cup sweetened whipped cream
4 sprigs fresh mint