

Across the Fence

Recipes - February 2022

Crema Catalana

2 Tbsp. cornstarch
2½ cups whole milk
A big slice of peel from a lemon and/or
an orange
1 cinnamon stick

5 large egg yolks
½ cup superfine sugar or granulated sugar
Additional sugar to caramelize on top
Fresh fruit like figs, raspberries or strawberries to top

Put the milk on the stove in a small saucepan, along with the citrus peels and the cinnamon stick. Slowly bring to a boil. Dissolve the cornstarch in a splash of water and set aside. While the milk is slowly heating, beat the egg yolks with the sugar, until the mixture turns pale yellow. Beat in the dissolved cornstarch and a spoonful of the hot milk. Remove the citrus peels and cinnamon stick from the hot milk, and lower the heat. Slowly add the egg yolk mixture to the milk, making sure to keep stirring so that the eggs don't scramble! Stir constantly over a low heat, until the mixture has thickened. Remove from the heat and pour the mixture into traditional clay dishes or ramekins. Allow the custard to cool, and then cover in plastic wrap and chill the Crema Catalanas for about four hours (preferably overnight). Let cream cool to room temperature before serving, then sprinkle a thin layer of sugar on top of each ramekin. Spread the sugar out by tilting the ramekins in all directions. Caramelize with a small kitchen blowtorch or by placing under the broiler for 2 minutes. Notes: Make sure to use whole milk for a creamy Crema Catalana. Heavy cream can also be substituted. Make sure to refrigerate for at least four hours so that the Crema Catalana fully sets.

Love-ly Cupcakes

1½ tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
1 stick unsalted butter, at room temperature
For the cupcakes:
1½ cups all-purpose flour
¾ cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs, at room temperature
1 tsp. vanilla extract

½ cup strawberry-flavored milk, at room temperature
6 strawberries, hulled
For the frosting:
2 cups confectioners' sugar
½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 stick unsalted butter, at room temperature
½ cup heavy cream
3 strawberries, hulled and halved lengthwise

Make the cupcakes: Preheat the oven to 350° F. Line a 6-cup jumbo muffin pan with paper liners. Whisk the flour, baking powder and salt in a bowl. Beat the butter and granulated sugar in a large bowl with a mixer on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, then beat in the vanilla. Reduce the mixer speed to low; beat in the flour mixture in 3 batches, alternating with the strawberry milk, beginning and ending with flour, until just combined. Divide the batter evenly among the prepared muffin cups. Bake until a toothpick comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes in the pan, then remove to a rack to cool completely. Using a paring knife, cut a cone-shaped piece of cake out of the top of each cupcake (about the same size as the strawberries), stopping about 1/2 inch from the bottom. Stuff with the strawberries, then cover with a small piece of the removed cake. Make the frosting: Sift the confectioners' sugar and cocoa powder into a medium bowl. Transfer half of the sugar-cocoa mixture to a large bowl; add the butter and 1/4 cup cream and beat with a mixer on medium-high speed until smooth. Add the remaining sugar-cocoa mixture and 1/4 cup cream and beat until fluffy. Transfer to a pastry bag fitted with a star tip and pipe onto the cupcakes. Top each with a strawberry half.

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