

Lemon-Ginger Crème Brûlée

This should be made at least one day ahead.

Ingredients:

½ cup chopped fresh ginger root
4 tbsp sugar
Zest of two lemons
2 cups heavy cream
2 cups half-and-half
6 egg yolks
2 eggs
1 cup sugar, plus 4 tbsp
1 tsp ground ginger
Juice of 2 lemons
Pinch of salt

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees
Blanch ginger root in boiling water for 1 minute, drain well
Pulverize 4 Tbsp sugar and lemon zest in grinder until zest is finely minced.
Warm cream, half-and-half, blanched ginger, and lemon sugar in a saucepan over medium heat just until steam rises. Remove from heat. Let steep for 15 minutes
Whisk yolks, eggs, ½ cup sugar, ground ginger together in a mixing bowl. Slowly whisk warm cream mixture into eggs to temper. Strain mixture then pour into 12, 4 oz ramekins (baking dishes)
Prepare a water bath by placing baking dishes in 4 sided pan filled half-way up sides of ramekin with water.
Bake custards 35 to 45 minutes, or until just set, do not overcook.
Remove baking dishes from water bath, cool and wrap loosely in plastic, Chill until completely cold, preferably overnight.
Just prior to serving caramelize each custard by burning sugar sprinkled on top, either with a torch or in the broiler.

Note: I noticed after cooking that a pinch of salt seemed to improve the flavor.

And this bit of pure speculation ... the ginger was blanched before using probably to deactivate the enzymes that might destroy the proteins. The ginger was sliced about 3/16" thick, or so, and were blanched for one minute by adding them to boiling water. The custard was cooked longer than I would have expected it needed, but it was still too loose. Blanching longer may have solved that problem. (?)