

Chocolate Pudding Cups

By Lisa Donovan

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Total Time 5 ½ hours

Prep Time 5 minutes

Cook Time 25 minutes, plus at least 5 hours' chilling

Rating ★★☆☆☆ (73)



Linda Xiao for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Monica Pierini. Prop Stylist: Sophia Eleni Pappas.

This grown-up chocolate pudding, which uses dark chocolate and a luxurious custard base rooted in European techniques, is served in small individual portions and nods to childhood indulgence. Perfect for a dinner party, you can prepare this the morning or day before your guests are to arrive, chill it and you'll have a perfectly set dessert just waiting to be garnished and served. (Crème fraîche is a perfect accompaniment.)

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 to 5 servings

4 large egg yolks
¾ cup/128 grams chopped bittersweet chocolate (preferably 67 to 70 percent cacao) or bittersweet chips
2 cups/480 milliliters heavy whipping cream
½ cup/100 grams sugar
¼ heaping teaspoon coarse kosher salt (such as Morton)
1 vanilla bean or 1 teaspoon vanilla paste or extract
Crème fraîche, for serving
Crushed nut brittle, cocoa nibs or cocoa powder (optional), for sprinkling

PREPARATION

Step 1

Place the egg yolks in a medium bowl and gently whisk until smooth. Place the chocolate in a second larger bowl and place a fine-mesh sieve over the bowl of chocolate.

Step 2

In a medium to large saucepan, combine the cream, sugar and salt. Cut the vanilla bean in half lengthwise and scrape the seeds into the saucepan, then add the scraped pod as well. Heat on medium, stirring, until the sugar has dissolved and the cream is steaming, about 5 minutes. Turn off the heat.

Step 3

Start tempering the cream and egg yolks together: While whisking the yolks gently but actively, gradually ladle in 4 to 5 spoonfuls of the hot cream mixture. Pour the yolk mixture into the saucepan with the remaining cream, scraping the bowl thoroughly with a flexible spatula to get every last drop. Whisk the cream mixture together well and turn the heat to medium-low.

Step 4

Using the spatula (the whisk will incorporate too much air), stir nearly constantly until the temperature reaches 175 to 180 on an instant-read thermometer, about 2 minutes. (If you do not have a thermometer, you can look for visual cues: The custard should be glossy and thick. If you dip a spoon in the custard, it should coat the back of the spoon and leave a clean path when you drag a finger across it.)

Step 5

Pour the thickened custard through the sieve directly on top of the chocolate in the bowl. With the spatula, scrape any custard clinging underneath the bottom of the sieve and add it to the bowl. Whisk together until combined.

Step 6

Pour pudding into individual serving cups or bowls and refrigerate, loosely covered, for at least 5 hours, but preferably overnight. Serve with a small dollop of crème fraîche and a sprinkle of nut brittle, cocoa nibs or cocoa powder, if you like.

Private Notes

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