

# Almond Crème Caramel

Yields: 6 servings

## **Caramel:**

1 cup                      sugar

½ cup                      water

## **Custard:**

1 cup                      sliced almonds

3 cups                      half-and-half

3 Tbsp                      light brown sugar

10                              large egg yolks

2                                large whole eggs

½ cup plus 2 Tbsp      granulated sugar

1 Tbsp                      Orzata almond syrup\*, optional (I used Amaretto instead...yum)

Boiling water

In a small saucepan, combine the sugar and water and bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Cook over medium-high heat, without stirring, until a deep-amber caramel forms, about 10 minutes (keep a close eye on it as it will burn quickly if you're not paying attention). Immediately pour the caramel into six 1-cup ramekins or custard cups and gently swirl to coat the bottoms and slightly up the sides. Set the ramekins in a small roasting pan.

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F. In a medium skillet, toast the almonds over moderate heat, stirring constantly, until golden and fragrant, about 5 minutes. In a medium saucepan, heat the half-and-half until steaming. Remove from the heat and stir in the toasted almonds and brown sugar and let steep (sit in pan with no heat) for 30 minutes.

In a medium bowl, whisk the egg yolks with the eggs and granulated sugar just until combined. Re-warm the half-and-half mixture over low heat. Gradually whisk ½ cup of the hot half-and-half into the eggs. Whisk the egg mixture back into the remaining half-

and-half, then strain the custard into a bowl. Stir the almond syrup or Amaretto into the custard.

Pour the custard into the ramekins. Carefully set the roasting pan on the middle rack of the oven and fill the pan with enough boiling water to reach halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Cover the pan with foil. Bake the custards for 30-40 minutes, or until they are set but still slightly wobbly in the center. Remove the roasting pan from the oven and discard the foil. Let the custards cool in the water bath. Cover the ramekins with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

To unmold the custards, run a thin-bladed knife around each ramekin. Cover with a dessert plate and invert tapping gently to loosen the custard. Scrape any remaining caramel over the custards and serve.

The baked custards can be refrigerated in the ramekins for up to 2 days.

\*Orzata is a sweet, almond-flavored syrup that is found at liquor stores or gourmet food stores.

*Recipe from Food & Wine, Tim Goodell*