

## Strawberry Crème Brule

The origins of crème brûlée (pronounced krehm broo-LAY) are very much in contention, with the English, Spanish, and French all staking claim. The Spanish have taken credit for this sensuous custard as "crema catalana" since the eighteenth century, while the English claim it originated in seventeenth-century Britain, where it was known as "burnt cream" and the English school boys at Cambridge demanded it. It apparently wasn't until the end of the nineteenth century that common usage of the French translation came into vogue, putting it on the map from Paris to Le Cirque in New York City. Its wide recognition today seems to have given the French credit for inventing crème brûlée. For this we can thank the French, because I just don't think there's a market for an Elegantly Easy Burnt Cream dish!

3 tablespoons strawberry jam  
2 pint baskets fresh strawberries, diced  
6 large egg yolks  
6 tablespoons sugar  
1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise  
1½ cups whipping cream  
12 teaspoons (packed) golden brown sugar

Preheat oven to 325°F. Spread ½ tablespoon jam over bottom of each of six ¾ cup soufflé dishes or custard cups. Press 1 chopped strawberry, placed on their sides, into jam in each dish. Reserve the remaining strawberries for garnish.

Whisk yolks and 6 tablespoons sugar in medium bowl to blend. Scrape in seeds from vanilla bean. Gradually whisk in cream. Divide mixture among dishes. Arrange dishes in 13x9x2-inch baking pan. Pour enough hot water into pan to come halfway up sides of dishes.

Bake custards until set in center, about 40 minutes. Place pan on work surface. Cool custards in water 30 minutes. Remove from water; chill overnight.



Preheat broiler. Sieve 2 teaspoons brown sugar atop each custard. Place dishes on small baking sheet. Broil until sugar just starts to caramelize, rotating sheet for even browning, about 2 minutes. Chill until topping hardens, about 2 hours. Garnish with reserved strawberry.