VANILLAGOODS BAKING ACADEMY · CUSTARDS & CRÈME BRÛLÉE

Course workbook

Custards & French Desserts

Crème brûlée, pastry cream, mousse



Beginner · 5 video lessons · 47 minutes of video · Notes, quizzes and a practice log

By the end you'll be able to

- Infuse cream with a vanilla bean
- Temper eggs and bake in a water bath
- Caramelize a crisp sugar topping

Inside

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Lesson videos by French Cooking Academy, Preppy Kitchen, Matt Hinkamp Cooks, Everyday Food and Chef Majk, watched on YouTube from the course page.

This workbook belongs to _____

Free course: **vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-course/creme-brulee-and-custards**

November 2026

START HERE

How to use this workbook

This workbook goes with the free video course **Custards & French Desserts** on vanillagoods.com. Watch each lesson there, then use these pages to keep what you learned and to track what you have practised.

1

Watch

Open the lesson page and watch the creator's video. Jot quick notes on the lined space as you go.

2

Read and tick

Read the VanillaGoods notes, then tick each key point once you can explain it in your own words.

3

Check and practise

Answer the three questions, compare with the answer key on page 13, then log your bake.

Your lesson plan

	LESSON	VIDEO	WATCHED	QUIZ	PRACTISED
1	**Mastering French crème brûlée** Video by French Cooking Academy	15 min	☐	☐	☐
2	**Perfecting custard texture** Video by Preppy Kitchen	8 min	☐	☐	☐
3	**Common crème brûlée mistakes** Video by Matt Hinkamp Cooks	7 min	☐	☐	☐
4	**Flavor variations** Video by Everyday Food	5 min	☐	☐	☐
5	**Advanced plating techniques** Video by Chef Majk	12 min	☐	☐	☐

Tools you'll see

Ramekins · Kitchen torch · Fine-mesh strainer · 9×13 baking dish · Instant-read thermometer · Balloon whisk · Saucepan · Offset spatula · Ice cream scoop

Any brand works. The lessons show what each tool is for.

Keep track online too

On each lesson page, "Mark complete" saves your progress in your browser, with no account. Finish every lesson and the course page lets you print a free certificate of completion.

Mastering French crème brûlée

Video by **French Cooking Academy**: *"How to Make Perfect Crème Brûlée At Home (Every Time)"*

vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-lesson/creme-brulee-and-custards-1-mastering-french-creme-brulee

Master classic French crème brûlée: a silky vanilla custard baked low and slow, then finished with a crackling caramelized sugar top.

Key points

- [ ] Infuse the cream with real vanilla for the best flavor
- [ ] Bake low and slow until the centers just wobble
- [ ] Caramelize the sugar only right before serving

The custard

- Heat the milk and cream with a split, scraped vanilla bean until it just steams; or add extract after heating
- Whisk egg yolks with sugar until pale
- Slowly pour the warm cream into the yolks while whisking
- Strain into ramekins and skim off any foam

Baking

The video uses a low-temperature dry oven with no water bath. The classic alternative is a water bath, with hot water halfway up the ramekins, which gives extra insurance against curdling. Either way, bake until the edges are set and the centers still wobble, then chill at least 4 hours.

The brûlée

Just before serving, sprinkle a thin, even layer of sugar over each cold custard and torch until amber and bubbling. Let it sit a minute to harden into glass.

TOOLS IN THIS LESSON: Ramekins · Kitchen torch · Fine-mesh strainer · 9×13 baking dish

NOTES WHILE YOU WATCH

✓ Check yourself

Three quick questions from this lesson. Mark your answers, then compare with the answer key on page 13.

1 What is the sign that crème brûlée is baked enough?

- (A) The whole custard is firm
- (B) The edges are set and the centers still wobble
- (C) The top turns brown

2 When should the sugar top be caramelized?

- (A) Right after baking
- (B) The day before
- (C) Just before serving

3 How does the vanilla bean go into the custard?

- (A) Split and scraped into the cream as it heats
- (B) Whole, left in while baking
- (C) Ground into the sugar

Practice log

Practice is where the lesson sticks. Note what you made and what you would do differently.

WHAT I MADE	DATE AND HOW IT WENT
	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

WHAT WENT WELL

WHAT I'D CHANGE NEXT TIME

Perfecting custard texture

Video by **Preppy Kitchen**: *"Easy and Amazing Creme Brulee Recipe | Preppy Kitchen"*

vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-lesson/creme-brulee-and-custards-2-perfecting-custard-texture

Get a silky, smooth custard every time by tempering eggs properly and controlling the bake.

Key points

- [ ] Temper by adding hot cream to the yolks slowly
- [ ] Avoid whisking in foam and air
- [ ] Pull the custards while the centers still jiggle

Tempering

Pouring hot cream into yolks too fast scrambles them. Add a thin stream while whisking gently, then strain the mixture to remove any cooked bits and the vanilla pod.

Watch for

- Whisk gently; foam bakes into a bubbly, uneven top
- Use hot water in the water bath so the custard bakes evenly
- Bake to about 170–175°F in the center; the middle should wobble like set gelatin
- Overbaked custards turn grainy or weep; underbaked ones are soupy

VanillaGoods tip

Steep the vanilla bean in the warm cream, covered, for 15–30 minutes before mixing. The longer infusion pulls out much more flavor.

TOOLS IN THIS LESSON: Instant-read thermometer | Fine-mesh strainer | Ramekins | Balloon whisk

NOTES WHILE YOU WATCH

✓ Check yourself

Three quick questions from this lesson. Mark your answers, then compare with the answer key on page 13.

1 What does tempering mean here?

- (A) Cooling the custard quickly in ice
- (B) Adding hot cream to the yolks in a thin stream while whisking
- (C) Heating the yolks on their own

2 Why whisk gently instead of vigorously?

- (A) The yolks turn bitter
- (B) The sugar will not dissolve
- (C) Foam bakes into a bubbly, uneven top

3 What internal temperature means the custard is done?

- (A) About 170 to 175°F
- (B) About 140°F
- (C) About 200°F

Practice log

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WHAT I MADE	DATE AND HOW IT WENT
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WHAT WENT WELL

WHAT I'D CHANGE NEXT TIME

Common crème brûlée mistakes

Video by **Matt Hinkamp Cooks**: *"I Made (And Fixed) All The Mistakes For Crème Brûlée"*

vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-lesson/creme-brulee-and-custards-3-common-creme-brulee-mistakes

See the most common crème brûlée mistakes side by side with the fixes, from curdled custard to burnt tops.

Key points

- [ ] Too hot an oven curdles the custard
- [ ] Straining makes the texture smooth
- [ ] Use a thin sugar layer and torch evenly

Mistakes and fixes

- Grainy or curdled custard: oven too hot or no water bath; bake low in a hot water bath
- Lumps or cooked egg bits: cream added too fast; temper slowly and strain
- Soupy center: underbaked or not chilled long enough
- Burnt, bitter top: sugar layer too thick or torch held too close
- Soft, melted top: torched long before serving

Getting the top right

Use about 2 teaspoons of sugar per ramekin, spread in a thin even layer. Keep the flame moving 2–3 inches above the surface and stop at deep amber.

Watch for

Serve within an hour of torching; the sugar crust slowly softens in the fridge.

TOOLS IN THIS LESSON: Kitchen torch · Ramekins · 9×13 baking dish · Fine-mesh strainer

NOTES WHILE YOU WATCH

✓ Check yourself

Three quick questions from this lesson. Mark your answers, then compare with the answer key on page 13.

1 A grainy or curdled custard most likely means...

- (A) The oven was too hot or there was no water bath
- (B) Too much vanilla
- (C) The sugar was torched too long

2 How much sugar goes on top of each ramekin for the crust?

- (A) A thick 1/4-inch layer
- (B) About 2 teaspoons in a thin, even layer
- (C) A pinch

3 Why serve within an hour of torching?

- (A) The custard warms up
- (B) The ramekin cracks
- (C) The sugar crust slowly softens

Practice log

Practice is where the lesson sticks. Note what you made and what you would do differently.

WHAT I MADE	DATE AND HOW IT WENT
	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

WHAT WENT WELL

WHAT I'D CHANGE NEXT TIME

Flavor variations

Video by **Everyday Food**: *"Crème Brûlée Demystified - Kitchen Conundrums with Thomas"*

vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-lesson/creme-brulee-and-custards-4-flavor-variations

Master the classic five-ingredient method, then change the flavor with different vanillas, coffee, tea, citrus and spices.

Key points

- [ ] Flavor the cream, not the custard ratio
- [ ] Different vanilla origins taste noticeably different
- [ ] Strain out any infused ingredients

In this video

The video demystifies the classic method with five ingredients. Once you have that down, every variation below uses the same ratio; you only change what goes into the cream.

Flavor ideas

- Madagascar vanilla: rich, creamy and classic
- Tahitian vanilla: floral and fruity, lovely with berries
- Coffee: steep whole espresso beans in the warm cream, then strain
- Tea: steep Earl Grey or masala chai in the cream for 5–10 minutes
- Citrus or spice: orange zest, cinnamon or cardamom

Watch for

Taste the cream after infusing; it should be a little stronger than you'd like, because cold desserts taste milder.

TOOLS IN THIS LESSON: Kitchen torch · Ramekins · Fine-mesh strainer · Saucepan

NOTES WHILE YOU WATCH

✓ Check yourself

Three quick questions from this lesson. Mark your answers, then compare with the answer key on page 13.

1 How do you change the flavor of crème brûlée without changing the recipe?

- (A) Add more egg yolks
- (B) Use less sugar
- (C) Flavor the cream and keep the same ratio of ingredients

2 Which vanilla is described as floral and fruity?

- (A) Tahitian
- (B) Madagascar
- (C) Both taste the same

3 After infusing, the cream should taste...

- (A) Exactly like the finished dessert
- (B) A little stronger than you want the dessert
- (C) As mild as possible

Practice log

Practice is where the lesson sticks. Note what you made and what you would do differently.

WHAT I MADE	DATE AND HOW IT WENT
	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

WHAT WENT WELL

WHAT I'D CHANGE NEXT TIME

Advanced plating techniques

Video by **Chef Majk**: *"Michelin star CRÈME BRÛLÉE | Fine Dining Raspberry Dessert"*

vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-lesson/creme-brulee-and-custards-5-advanced-plating-techniques

Plate crème brûlée like a restaurant dessert with a passion fruit custard, a raspberry gel and a sorbet for contrast.

Key points

- [ ] Contrast temperature, texture and color
- [ ] Keep each element simple and precise
- [ ] Torch at the very last moment

The approach

Fine-dining plates pair the rich custard with something sharp, something cold and something crisp. This video uses a passion fruit crème brûlée, a raspberry gel and raspberry sorbet.

Plating principles

- Use a shallow dish for more crisp sugar crust per bite
- Add acidity, such as fruit gel or fresh berries, to balance the richness
- Add a cold element like sorbet, shaped into a neat quenelle
- Add crunch with a tuile, crumble or nuts
- Leave empty space on the plate; less looks more refined

Watch for

Caramelize just before serving so the top is still crackling when it reaches the table.

TOOLS IN THIS LESSON: Kitchen torch · Ramekins · Offset spatula · Ice cream scoop

NOTES WHILE YOU WATCH

✓ Check yourself

Three quick questions from this lesson. Mark your answers, then compare with the answer key on page 13.

1 What does a restaurant plate pair with the rich custard?

- (A) More custard
- (B) Only a mint leaf
- (C) Something sharp, something cold and something crisp

2 Why use a shallow dish?

- (A) More crisp sugar crust in every bite
- (B) It bakes faster
- (C) It is easier to wash

3 Leaving empty space on the plate...

- (A) Looks unfinished
- (B) Looks more refined
- (C) Keeps the sorbet colder

Practice log

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WHAT I MADE	DATE AND HOW IT WENT
	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

WHAT WENT WELL

WHAT I'D CHANGE NEXT TIME

ANSWER KEY

Check your answers

One correct answer per question. If you missed one, the note explains why, and the lesson page has the full notes and the video.

1. Mastering French crème brûlée

1 **B** Bake low and slow until the edges are set and the centers still wobble, then chill at least 4 hours.

2 **C** Torch a thin layer of sugar on the cold custard just before serving so it is still crackling at the table.

3 **A** Heat the cream with a split, scraped vanilla bean until it just steams, or add extract after heating.

2. Perfecting custard texture

1 **B** Pouring hot cream into yolks too fast scrambles them; add it slowly while whisking gently, then strain.

2 **C** Air whisked in becomes foam that bakes into a bubbly, uneven surface; skim any foam before baking.

3 **A** Bake to about 170 to 175°F in the center with a gelatin-like wobble; overbaked custards turn grainy or weep.

3. Common crème brûlée mistakes

1 **A** Too much heat curdles the eggs; bake low in a hot water bath for a smooth custard.

2 **B** Use about 2 teaspoons per ramekin in a thin, even layer; a thick layer burns bitter before it melts evenly.

3 **C** The sugar crust slowly softens, especially in the fridge, so torch and serve within the hour.

4. Flavor variations

1 **C** Every variation uses the same ratio; only what you infuse into the cream changes, and infused ingredients are strained out.

2 **A** Tahitian vanilla is floral and fruity, lovely with berries; Madagascar is rich, creamy and classic.

3 **B** Cold desserts taste milder, so the infused cream should be a little stronger than you would like.

5. Advanced plating techniques

1 **C** Fine-dining plates balance the custard with acidity (a fruit gel), a cold element (sorbet) and crunch (a tuile or crumble).

2 **A** A shallow dish gives a bigger surface, so there is more crackling sugar crust per bite.

3 **B** Keep each element simple and precise and leave empty space; less looks more refined.

WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED

Three things to do next

1

Mark each lesson complete

The "Mark complete" button on every lesson page saves your progress in your browser. No account, nothing to sign up for.

2

Print your certificate

Once all 5 lessons are marked complete, the course page prints a free certificate of completion with your name on it. It records what you finished; it is not an accredited qualification.

3

Bake it

Practice with VanillaGoods recipes that use what this course teaches.

vanillagoods.com/pages/recipes?q=creme%20brulee

NEXT ON THE LEARNING PATH

Ice Cream at Home

Beginner · Custard bases, churning, sorbets

vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-course/vanilla-ice-cream-at-home

Free guide for this course: “Custard temperature and substitution guide”, Set points for every custard, plus extract-to-bean substitutions. Get it from the course page.

Baking with real vanilla? VanillaGoods keeps Madagascar, Uganda and Tahiti vanilla in stock, along with coffee and tea, at vanillagoods.com.

✧ Key points from every lesson

1. Mastering French crème brûlée

- Infuse the cream with real vanilla for the best flavor
- Bake low and slow until the centers just wobble
- Caramelize the sugar only right before serving

2. Perfecting custard texture

- Temper by adding hot cream to the yolks slowly
- Avoid whisking in foam and air
- Pull the custards while the centers still jiggle

3. Common crème brûlée mistakes

- Too hot an oven curdles the custard
- Straining makes the texture smooth
- Use a thin sugar layer and torch evenly

4. Flavor variations

- Flavor the cream, not the custard ratio
- Different vanilla origins taste noticeably different
- Strain out any infused ingredients

5. Advanced plating techniques

- Contrast temperature, texture and color
- Keep each element simple and precise
- Torch at the very last moment

The lesson videos are by independent creators (French Cooking Academy, Preppy Kitchen, Matt Hinkamp Cooks, Everyday Food and Chef Majk) and play in YouTube's own player on the lesson pages; this workbook links to them and copies nothing. Notes, key points, questions and this workbook are written by VanillaGoods for home bakers.

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