

Floating Islands with Caramel Sauce



Serves 4 Prep 25 mins Cooking 15 mins + chilling Easy

Ingredients

For the caramel sauce

50g caster sugar

For the floating islands

2 egg whites
drop of vanilla essence
50g caster sugar
sunflower oil , for greasing

For the crème anglaise

500ml full-fat milk
200ml single cream
1 vanilla pod
4 large egg yolks
75g caster sugar, plus 4 tbsp
2 tbsp cornflour

1. To make the caramel sauce, put the sugar in a small, heavy-based pan over a high heat and cook for a few mins until it has melted to an amber colour. Remove from the heat and carefully add 3 tbsp water – watch out as it will spit quite violently. Stir until smooth and set aside to cool completely.
2. Whisk the egg whites and vanilla essence together to soft peaks, add the caster sugar and whisk until you have a stiff, glossy mix. Grease four ramekins or small pudding moulds with sunflower oil, then gently spoon the meringue mixture into a piping bag. Snip the end off the bag and pipe out the mixture to half fill the ramekins. Put them in a large shallow pan or roasting tin and pour boiling water from a kettle into the pan around the ramekins, stopping when the water comes halfway up the ramekins or before it fills the pan. Cover with a lid or tin foil and place over a medium heat so that the water is just simmering. Cook for 4-6 mins, then take the ramekins out of the water and, while still warm, run a palette knife all the way around the edge of the meringue to release it and carefully turn out onto a sheet of baking paper. Set aside at room temperature for up to 4 hrs until serving.
3. To make the crème anglaise, put the milk and cream into a large pan. Cut the vanilla pod in half lengthways and scrape out the seeds. Add the seeds and pod to the pan and bring to the boil, then take off the heat to cool slightly. Whisk together the egg yolks and 75g of sugar until pale and creamy, then whisk in the cornflour and 4 tbsp sugar.
4. Discard the vanilla pod, then add the egg mixture to the warm milk and cream, and heat gently for 4-5 mins, stirring continuously until it starts to thicken and coats the back of a spoon. Strain through a sieve into a large jug and cover with cling film. Leave to cool, then chill in the fridge until serving.
5. To serve, pour a pool of chilled custard into each bowl then carefully top with a meringue. Drizzle over the caramel syrup and serve immediately.