

Creamy Vanilla Bean Rice Pudding

2 quarts of whole milk (8 cups)
1 1/4 cups Arborio Rice
1 teaspoon table salt without Iodine
Warm water just to cover rice
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 vanilla bean, split and scraped, and placed into the milk
2 cinnamon sticks, or more to taste
Freshly ground nutmeg to taste (start with a 1/4 teaspoon)
1 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons sugar
1 large egg (room temperature)
3 teaspoons pure vanilla extract or to taste
Cinnamon to taste
Cinnamon to sprinkle on top of rice pudding
3/4 cup dark raisins (optional)

Place 2 quarts of milk in a 6-quart pot over low heat. Add the vanilla bean, split with seeds scraped into milk, cinnamon sticks and sugar.

Bring to a simmer and let sit for 30 minutes or longer. It gives the vanilla bean and cinnamon sticks time to infuse into the milk. Bring back to a simmer before adding rice.

Place 1 1/4 cups Arborio Rice in a one quart saucepan. Wash with warm water and drain into a strainer.

Place back in saucepan with one teaspoon salt and stir. Just cover with warm water, about one inch above the level of the rice. Cook over medium flame and watch carefully.

When the water is completely evaporated, put the rice into the pot of infused milk.

Stir and bring to a boil.

Lower flame to a medium heat, and cook for 30 - 35 minutes.
You should maintain a medium bubble.

Stir occasionally until mixture is thick and creamy.

Taste the rice, it should be fully cooked. Shut off the heat.

Place 1 cup of cream, 2 tablespoons sugar in a 2 quart saucepan. Have ready a portable electric mixer or electric stand mixer. Have ready one large egg at room temperature.

Bring cream and sugar to a simmer, add egg, and quickly beat with mixer until very frothy and creamy. It takes about 3 minutes.

Add to rice mixture and stir well. Taste for seasoning.

Add freshly grated nutmeg, cinnamon and vanilla extract to taste.

Note: If adding raisins, add five minutes before rice mixture is finished cooking. If raisins are dry, soak in brandy for 10 minutes, just to cover, drain if desired before adding to rice pudding.

Can be spooned into individual dessert cups, or into a 4 quart bowl.

Place plastic wrap right into pudding and refrigerate overnight. Can be served warm.

Place cinnamon in a strainer, and sprinkle lightly over the top of the pudding just before serving.

Can also be served with softly whipped cream, seasoned with strained confectioners' sugar, and vanilla extract.

I like to sprinkle the whipped cream with a touch of cinnamon after it is placed on the rice pudding.

If you are handy with a pastry bag, make a beautiful rosette.

Note: If you have vanilla sugar, use for the heavy cream, sugar mixture.