



Cardamom and vanilla bean ice-cream

Green Saffron perfect puds

This recipe makes about 20 scoops of dreamy, creamy delight. An aromatic, indulgence!! Using the highest quality ingredients really does make a vast difference to the end result when making ice-cream so try to get only the best....in for a penny, in for a pound of perfection!

Ingredients:

20 Green Saffron green cardamom pods, shelled and seeds ground in a pestle and mortar
2 Green Saffron vanilla pods
2 pints or 1100ml organic Irish cream, double is best but pouring is fine
½lb/250g of caster sugar
Splash of water
8 yolks of best organic Irish eggs

Method:

There are 2 basic ways to make a good ice-cream, the custard or the 'soft ball' method. We think the 'soft ball' way is easier to get right, hopefully you will too! Essentially, you're going to add a 'base' of sugar syrup and whipped egg yolks to infused, whipped cream, then freeze it...simple!

Firstly, infusing the cream:

1. Pour the cream into a thick bottomed saucepan and add the ground green cardamom seeds
2. Split the vanilla pods lengthways by running a sharp knife firmly along their lengths – watch your fingers!
3. Next, remove the tiny fragrant seeds by carefully running the back of the knife along the inside of each of the 4 halves making sure to immediately scrape the collected small black masses of seeds into the cream.
4. Then, pop the 4 split and scraped pods into the cream, stir around a bit with a metal spoon, place the pan on the hob and heat over a gentle flame.
5. After 10 or so minutes, when you just see the first few bubbles rising, take off the heat, stir again, set aside and **allow the creamy infusion to totally cool down (it is important to allow it to cool completely otherwise you'll have difficulty trying to whip it up later on....!!)**.

NB: Try not to let the cream boil as you may then burn the bottom of the pan and this will change the flavour for the worse!

Now to make your ice-cream base:

6. Crack the 8 eggs and separate the yolks from their whites.

NB: Keep the whites covered in a bowl in your fridge and save them for the time you manage to work up the enthusiasm to make your own meringues!

7. Put the yolks into the bowl of your (Kenwood) mixer, lower the whisk into the dark yellowy yolks, set to high and whip until they're pale, light, fluffy and have about doubled in volume....Leave your machine going...

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Meanwhile, whilst your mixer works happily away, it's time to make the 'soft ball' stage sugar syrup:

8. Pour the sugar into another saucepan, add just enough water to wet it, maybe about 4 tbsp or so, and stir thoroughly.
9. Put the pan on the hob and heat over a medium flame, watching it as you go. (You don't want the colour to change to a brown, caramel colour.)

DON'T STIR from now on!!

10. When it gets bubbling take a metal spoon, dip it into the molten sugar solution to catch some syrup. Raise the spoon to about the same level as the rim of the pan, tilt the spoon and allow the syrup to carefully fall from the spoon back into the pan.

NB: You will need to keep repeating this until you see a "gloopy drop" fall from the spoon. It should no longer fall freely back into the pan but, be more like soft candle wax or lightly whipped cream gently oozing from the spoon, as if in slow motion, leaving a thin thread whispering from the spoon....make sense??!!

11. Excellent! You've done it, you've got your 'soft ball stage' sugar syrup. Remove the pan from the heat.
12. Quickly.....With your mixer still whirling around, firmly grab the handle of the sugar syrup saucepan and slowly pour the hot sugar syrup into the whipping egg yolks.

NB: TAKE GREAT, GREAT CARE! The sugar syrup is extremely hot and will quickly burn you if it splashes onto your skin – worst ways, have some turmeric powder around so you can dab any burns with it to help cool them down, if needed!

Finishing your ice-cream base:

13. Leave your mixer going until the eggy, sugar mixture (your 'ice-cream base') has cooled down.

(This 'base' can be kept covered in a fridge for up to 2 days, if necessary before you complete the ice-cream)

Finishing your ice-cream:

14. Pour the cooled, infused cream through a sieve into a clean mixing bowl and discard the cardamom seeds caught in the sieve's net

NB: Quick suggestion. Why not take the vanilla pods out of the sieve, allow them to dry out and put them into a jar of caster sugar. Ta dah! Now you're making vanilla sugar and ice-cream! Vanilla sugar is great in coffees, can be used for baking or sprinkling over your favourite morning cereal!

15. Lower the whisk attachment (or hand whisk) into the cream, set to high and soft whip the cream. Basically, whip the cream until - when you gently dab it with a spoon - a small peak remains. This is known as the 'soft peak' stage.
16. Remove the mixing bowl from your machine (if using)
17. Pour the egg and sugar mixture into the whipped cream and thoroughly combine the two, mixing well with a wooden spoon or large rubber spatula.

NB: The resulting mixture should have a light, mousse type texture at this stage.

18. Once you're happy both mixtures are thoroughly combined pour into a plastic dish or lightly oiled jelly mould and place on a level shelf in your freezer.
19. It should take at least 8 hours to completely set, then scoop into balls, or turn out of the mould (if using) and serve....enjoy!

Serving suggestion:

For an extra special treat, why not serve with Green Saffron's Garam Masala Cookies. The biscuits can be used as spoons to scoop up delicious dollops of cooling luxurious ice-cream for that double extravagant hit!

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