

Homemade Southern Banana Pudding

From the Kitchen of [Deep South Dish](#)

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3 large eggs, separated
3/4 cup granulated sugar, divided to 1/2 and 1/4 cups
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
Pinch kosher salt
3 cups whole milk (not reduced or low fat)
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 box vanilla wafer cookies (Nilla brand recommended)
4 to 6 ripe bananas, sliced
Pinch cream of tartar

Separate the egg whites and yolks into separate bowls; set aside the whites at room temperature to make meringue. In the top of a double-boiler (I use a stainless one), whisk together 1/2 cup of the sugar with the flour, salt, and milk. Whisk in the yolks until blended. Cook, using a wooden spoon to stir regularly (do not whisk), until custard thickens (at about 170 degrees F). Remove top bowl, whisk in the vanilla until mixture is smooth and set aside. Mixture will continue to thicken as it sits.

In a 1-1/2 quart sized bowl or baking dish, begin layering two or three layers of wafers, bananas and custard. Smear a small amount of the custard on the bottom of your dish; add a layer of the wafers on top of the custard and also around the outside of bowl with the rounded tops facing out, if desired. Top the layer of wafers with banana slices, top that with custard and repeat layers, ending with custard on top. Set aside.

Make the meringue by beating the egg whites on low speed until they begin to look frothy. Add in the cream of tartar, increase speed to medium and beat until soft peaks begin to form, gradually adding in the remaining 1/4 cup of sugar. Beat until **stiff peaks begin to form**. Spread the meringue all over the top of the last layer of custard, spreading it completely out to the edges. Using a spatula, create some swirls on top and place pudding under the broiler, with the door ajar, for a few seconds, only long enough to brown the peaks and edges of the meringue. Alternatively, you can bake it at 350 degrees for about 15 to 20 minutes or until browned. Let pudding rest for 1 hour, or refrigerate for up to 4 hours before serving. Garnish with a sprinkling of crushed wafers, if desired. Makes about 12, 2/3 cup servings - double custard recipe for a larger bowl. (continued page 2)

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Cook's Notes: When taking this to a holiday or other event, I double the custard portion of the recipe. Depending on your size bowl (mine is 10" across and 3" deep), you might want to do the same!

Please note that I use large eggs and 3 cups whole milk, not reduced or low fat. If you have never made a homemade egg custard before, understand that it must be cooked slowly and it simply takes time to thicken, but stick with it and eventually it will get thick. I always recommend preparing it with a double-boiler method which is slow, but faster than stovetop and you are less likely to curdle or burn the custard, which happens easily with a direct stovetop method. As long as you follow the recipe and continue to cook it, it will thicken, but you must practice patience. I use a stainless double boiler, and once the water begins to boil, the custard takes from 6 to 8 minutes to thicken. Once the top bowl is removed from the double boiler, the custard will continue to thicken.

Cookie Pudding: Prepare as above, however, omit the bananas.

Pineapple Pudding: Prepare as with banana pudding above, except substitute one large (28 ounce) can of crushed pineapple, drained, for the bananas and combine the pineapple with the custard before layering. Also excellent with the alternate cream cheese and condensed milk or shortcut custard below.

Shortcut Cheater "Custard"

3 cups of milk
1 teaspoon of vanilla extract
2 (3.4 ounce) packages of vanilla instant pudding mix
1 (8 ounce) container of sour cream

To a mixer bowl combine the milk and vanilla extract. Add the vanilla instant pudding mix and beat at medium speed for about 2 minutes, or until thickened. Let stand for 5 minutes and then stir in the sour cream. Use this mixture in place of the homemade custard, eliminating the 1/2 cup sugar, flour, salt, milk and egg yolks. Layer the shortcut custard with the wafers and bananas, and prepare the meringue as directed above to top it off. Can also substitute whipped cream or Cool Whip for the meringue, if desired.

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