Chocolate Pot de Crème

From the blog For Love of the Table

3/4 c. whole milk

3/4 c. heavy cream

1/4 c. sugar

4 oz. bittersweet chocolate (something around 60%), finely chopped

4 large egg yolks

1/2 t. vanilla extract

Line a baking pan with a couple layers of paper towels or a kitchen towel. Place the ramekins or custard cups in the pan. The pan should be just large enough to hold them comfortably without touching.

Place the milk, cream and sugar in a small saucepan and bring just to a simmer. Remove from the heat and add the chocolate. Let sit for a moment or two to allow the heat to fully penetrate the chocolate; whisk until smooth.

In a small bowl, whisk the egg yolks. Then, in a slow, steady stream, add in the chocolate-cream mixture, stirring until smooth. Stir in the vanilla. If time permits, allow the custard to sit for a few moments so that any bubbles that have formed during the whisking will rise to the surface and can be skimmed off. If you take the time to do this, the surface of the finished custards will be perfectly smooth.

Divide the cream among the ramekins. Pour enough hot water (just off the boil) into the pan to reach about halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Cover the pan loosely with foil (this will prevent a skin from forming on the cream). Place the pan in the center of a 300° oven and bake until the cream is just set at the edges but still trembling in the center, about 25 to 35 minutes.

Remove the pan from the oven and carefully remove the ramekin from the water. Let the custard cool to room temperature and then refrigerate, loosely covered, for at least 2 hours. Serve chilled with whipped cream, if desired.

Makes 8 small (3-oz. ramekins), 6 medium (4-oz. ramekins), or 4 large (6-oz. ramekins)

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