

Flan

Flan tops the list of Latin American desserts. Its name and not so much its preparation varies from country to country. This comforting, rich and silky simple baked custard topped with a caramel sauce dripping over the side begging to be slurped features caramelized sugar, eggs, both whole milk and condensed milk, and vanilla. The recipe is quite simple and easy to make. The custard ingredients are mixed in one bowl and then poured into the baking dish, which goes into a water bath (AKA bain-marie) to get the dessert's notoriously silky and creamy texture exactly right and is baked for one hour. Another great thing about the recipe is that it must be made at least 1 day in advance of serving, which gives you one less thing to prepare on the day of your dinner party.

Special Equipment

- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ quart baking pan, pan in which the flan will be baked
- 13x9x2-inch glass baking pan, pan which the flan pan will fit into
- Serving platter with a flat bottom and enough rim to hold the caramel, which will have melted to a sauce.
- Tea kettle, to boil water for water bath
- Stand mixer (a hand mixer will work too)

Ingredients

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- 6 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 (14-ounce) can sweeten condensed milk
- 1 (14-ounce) evaporated milk
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- Caramel, recipe follows
- Fresh strawberries, sliced, for garnish

Caramel

- 1 cup sugar

Directions:

Make Caramel:

1. Put sugar in a heavy medium saucepan. Place saucepan over medium-low heat. Cook, stirring constantly using a wooden spoon until sugar dissolves and syrup turns amber color, about 15 minutes. Be extremely careful not to burn the sugar. Nothing will happen for about 7-10 minutes, then the sugar will harden into little balls until it very quickly caramelizes.
2. Immediately pour caramel into the 2 1/2 quart baking dish, tilting, and rotating dish to coat bottom and 1 inch up sides with caramel. Be careful, as caramel is extremely hot at this point. Set aside to set. This will take only few seconds.

Make Flan:

1. Adjust oven rack to center position and preheat oven to 325°F.
2. Bring a kettle of water to a boil and keep it hot.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat eggs on medium-low until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add condensed milk and beat until completely blended. Add evaporated milk gradually, in a low stream, beating constantly until all the milk has been added. Add the vanilla extract; beat to combine.
4. Pour custard mixture into the caramel-lined dish. Place in the 13x9x2-inch glass baking pan. Pour enough hot water into pan to come 1 1/2 inches up the sides of the custard dish.
5. Bake until a knife inserted into center of custard comes out clean, about 1 hour. Do not insert the knife all the

way to the bottom of the custard or it will spoil the appearance when inverted. When the custard achieves a delicate golden yellow crust, it is done and ready to come out of the oven. Do not allow water to boil in pan. If "goose pimples" appear in the water bath, add a little cold water to end the threat of boiling.

6. Immediately, remove baked custard from hot water and transfer to a wire rack to cool completely, uncovered.
7. Cover with plastic wrap when completely cool, and place in refrigerator to chill at least 8 hours, preferably overnight. Do not cut the chilling time short as the more the flan chills, the more the caramel absorbs moisture from the custard and liquifies into a sauce. Also, the flan will collapse when cut if not refrigerated long enough.
8. Remove from refrigerator and allow to stand at room temperature for 10 minutes before serving.
9. To serve, run a knife around the sides of the custard to loosen. Place serving platter over top of custard, turn over and shake the custard out of the pan. Remove pan and allow the caramel to drip over custard.
10. Slice and serve garnish with the fresh strawberries.
11. Refrigerate any leftover flan, covered, for up to 3 days.