

# Cleo Coyle's 3 Secrets to Creamy Egg Custard

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**The Coffeehouse Mysteries**  
as Cleo Coyle with her husband,  
Marc Cerasini



*Warm egg custard brings back equally warm memories for me...of Mom and home; crowded family kitchens and those familiar baking smells of goodies in the oven: eggs, milk, vanilla, and nutmeg. My recipe is an easy but evocative one—a simple dessert that I hope will bring back that feeling of comfort for you, too. (We can all use it these days, I think.)*

*There are three secrets to producing a lovely custard with a smooth top and silky, creamy texture:*

- (1) Use sifted confectioners' sugar, which will dissolve more easily.**
- (2) Use room temperature eggs. Just warm them quickly in a bowl of water from the tap. This will help loosen the albumin (protein) and make it easier to properly blend the custard.**
- (3) Bake it low and slow and *do not* put foil on top of the custard cups or the roasting pan (as some recipes suggest). On page 3 of this recipe, I'll show you what happens if you try to speed up the baking with a higher temperature or foil on top.**

*So here you go: Love in a cup from me to you, with a bit of nutmeg sprinkled on top...*

# Cleo Coyle's Baked Egg Custard

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**Servings:** 4 (in 4-ounce ramekins or custard  
cups)

1-1/4 cups whole milk  
3 large eggs, room temperature (just sit them in bowl  
of warm tap water)  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup confectioners' (powdered) sugar, sifted

**Step 1:** Whisk together all ingredients until *well  
blended* and pour into 4 four-ounce ramekins.

**Step 2:** Place cups in a roasting pan or baking dish  
and create a shallow water bath by filling just enough  
to reach halfway up the sides of the cups. Bake  
*uncovered* in a preheated 325° F. oven for 1 hour and  
5 minutes (the time may be a little longer or shorter,  
depending on your oven).

**Step 3:** When is it done? You are looking for the top  
to set. The custard may still jiggle slightly, but the top  
should no longer be liquid. It should feel firm (spongy  
but set) when lightly touched; and when a toothpick or  
skewer is inserted down into the custard at the edge  
of the cup, it should come out clean.

**Step 4:** Remove from oven, take the cups out of the water bath, and allow them to cool  
for one hour on a rack. Eat the freshly baked custard at once or chill by placing plastic  
wrap over the top of each cup and storing in the refrigerator. (You need the plastic to  
prevent a skin from forming.) Note also that the low temperature and long baking time is  
important. Patience is a virtue in most things, but especially in making really good baked  
custard. See my baking tips on the next page...





## Cleo's Baking Tips



To the *left* is what happens if you follow this recipe and bake the custard (uncovered) in a water bath at 325 degrees F. for 1 hour and 5 minutes.

To the *right* is what happens if you try to rush the process of baking. Do you see those unsightly pockmarks on the top of the

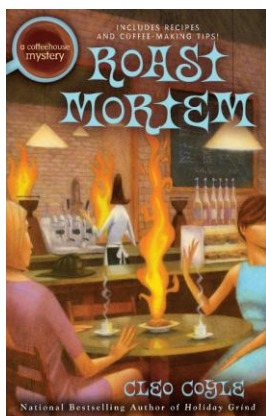
custard? That comes from the custard boiling instead of cooking slowly. In the batch at the *right*, I sealed aluminum foil over the roasting pan. Yes, this sped up the cooking time but it also made the custard boil, creating this less silky result.



**Allow** the custard to cool for an hour after removing from the oven. If you chill or store in the fridge, don't forget to seal plastic wrap over the top of the ramekins or custard cups to prevent a skin from forming.

*Now all you have to do is pour a fresh cup of coffee and...*

*Eat with joy!*  
~ Cleo Coyle



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