

Steamed Crabmeat Egg Custard

<http://userealbutter.com/2011/03/02/steamed-crabmeat-egg-custard-recipe/>

from Chinese Cuisine by Susanna Foo

2 cups shrimp or chicken stock, all fat removed
3 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 1/2 tsps coarse or kosher salt
1/2 tsp white pepper, freshly ground
8 oz. jumbo lump crabmeat (I used 4 oz.)
1 tbsp olive oil
2 fresh medium shiitake mushroom caps, wiped clean and finely chopped (I used little ones and left them whole)
1 tbsp vodka (I skipped this)
1 tbsp fresh chives, chopped
1 oz. Beluga or other caviar, optional (I used tobiko)

Pour the broth into a small bowl and gradually stir in the eggs until well-blended. Mix in 1 teaspoon of salt and the white pepper. Strain the mixture into a measuring cup with a spout (or something similar that makes it easy to pour). Divvy the crabmeat evenly among 6 to 8 ramekins, tea cups, Chinese tea cups with lids, whatever you like. Pour the stock into the cups making sure to leave at least a half inch from the top (because the egg custard puffs up during cooking and well – it looks better if it doesn't puff up against the plastic wrap or foil). Cover each cup with plastic wrap, foil, or if using Chinese tea cups – the lids. They need to be well-sealed to avoid letting moisture drip into the custards. Now Susanna says to fill the bottom of a steamer with water until just under (but not touching) the rack and bring to a boil. Then she instructs you to place the cups on the rack, cover them and steam on high heat for 5 minutes, then reduce heat to medium-low and steam for another 20 minutes. The surface of the custards should be moist and slick when they are finished. This didn't happen for me – they were overcooked or something, but they had a honeycomb egg texture instead of the nice silky texture that Chinese egg custards should have. So I tried the OTHER method she describes (which Hungry Bear says she's had great success with) and baked them in a water bath in the oven. This worked for me: Place the covered cups in a large, shallow baking dish and fill the dish with hot water to about halfway up the custard vessels. Cover the entire dish with foil and seal the edges tightly. Bake for about 30 minutes at 325°F. This yielded silky, smooth, beautiful custards.

While the custards are cooking, heat the olive oil in a small saucepan and add the mushrooms and vodka (I didn't do the vodka). Cook over high flame for about 5 minutes until the mushrooms are tender and starting to just brown. Add the remaining half teaspoon of salt and then remove from heat until ready to use.

Remove the wrappings or lids from the custards and place mushrooms on each one (either sprinkle the chopped caps or set whole caps on top). Garnish with chives and a

little mound of caviar (tobiko mounds very nicely). Serve right away. Makes 6 to 8 servings 1/2-cup servings. Also very good without crabmeat.