

HELADO DE VAINILLA MEXICANA

MEXICAN VANILLA FROZEN CUSTARD

The secret of this vanilla ice cream (quite simply the best we've ever had) is a rather startling quantity of vanilla: a whole bean plus one tablespoon of extract. Another secret: use only 100% real Mexican vanilla. This isn't easy to come by in Mexico. In fact, you can't buy it here. All the tourists who rush around in pursuit of big jugs of vanilla that cost \$2.98 are in for bitter disappointment. The truth is, excellent, pure vanilla requires a laborious process of curing, involving much human toil. The result is a price too hefty for the Mexican market. Instead, the best vanilla in the country is sold exclusively for export. The Mexican vanilla we use is grown, harvested and cured in the state of Veracruz; exported to Santa Cruz, CA; and finally shipped to us! Yes, this vanilla is worth it!

10 SERVINGS

☞ PREPARE THE ICE CREAM BASE ☞

- **2 cups (500ml) crema** (*Substitute: heavy cream*)
- **2 cups (500ml) milk**
- **1 cup (200g) granulated sugar**
- **1/4 tsp. (1.25ml) salt**
- **1 Mexican vanilla bean, split length-wise**

- **6 egg yolks**

- **1 Tbs. (15ml) pure Mexican vanilla extract**

STEP 1 IN A HEAVY SAUCEPAN, combine the cream, milk, sugar, and salt. Scrape seeds from the vanilla bean into the mixture, then add the entire bean. Simmer over medium heat, stirring constantly, about 8 minutes, or until sugar is dissolved and mixture is hot. **DO NOT ALLOW TO BOIL.**

STEP 2 USING A HAND-HELD ELECTRIC MIXER, beat egg yolks in a medium mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Gradually blend in 1 cup of the warm milk mixture. Mix thoroughly. Very slowly, whisk the egg mixture back into the milk. Reduce heat to medium-low. Stir with a spoon about 15-20 minutes or until the mixture thickens enough to coat the spoon. It should read about 180° F (82°C) on a candy thermometer. **DO NOT ALLOW TO BOIL** or the eggs may scramble.

STEP 3 REMOVE FROM HEAT. Allow to cool, then refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight. Remove vanilla bean and stir in vanilla extract.

☞ FREEZE ☞

STEP 4 PROCESS IN AN ELECTRIC ICE CREAM MAKER according to manufacturer's directions. Place finished ice cream in a covered freezer container and freeze for 2-3 hours before serving. The ice cream will stay delicious for at least 3 days.