CAPPUCCINO PANNA COTTA WITH CHOCOLATE SAUCE

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for the panna cotta:

4 sheets of gelatin

3 cups heavy cream

3/4 cup sugar

2 tablespoons instant espresso powder

½ vanilla bean

½ cup chocolate-covered coffee beans, for garnish (I opted for chocolate-covered cranberries)

for the chocolate sauce:

4 ounces semisweet chocolate chips

1/4 cup heavy cream

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 tablespoons light corn syrup

Make the panna cotta: In a small bowl of cool water, submerge the gelatin sheets to soften. They will go from stiff to soft.

In a small saucepan, combine the cream, sugar, and espresso powder. Split the vanilla bean lengthwise down one side, open it up, and scrape out the seeds with a paring knife. Add the seeds and the hull to the pan. Whisk to combine everything.

Bring the cream mixture to a boil and then immediately turn off the heat. Remove the softened gelatin sheets from the water and squeeze out the excess water. Add the gelatin sheets to the pan and whisk to combine. Immediately ladle the cream mixture into four 6-ounce ramekins and refrigerate for 2 to 3 hours or overnight.

Make the chocolate sauce: Fill a small saucepan with 1 inch of water and bring it to a boil. In a medium heatproof bowl, combine the chocolate chips, heavy cream, butter and corn syrup. place the bowl on top of the pan of water. Reduce the heat to a simmer. Stir until the chocolate has melted and all the ingredients are combined. Remove and use immediately or store in a warm place until ready to use.

Unmold the panna cotta: Fill a small saucepan with 1 inch of water and bring to a boil, then turn off the heat. Run a paring knife around the outside edge of the panna cotta to loosen it. Set each ramekin in the saucepan for 10 seconds. Place a small serving plate on top of each ramekin and flip it over to unmold the panna cotta. If it doesn't release, put the ramekin in the water for a few seconds more and try again.

To serve, ladle a couple tablespoons of the chocolate sauce around the panna cotta and sprinkle with a few chocolate-covered espresso beans.