



A Pair of Pears

MOURN IF YOU WILL the passing of summer produce. Pine for your weekly sojourn to the farmers' market. So do I. But there's an amazing treat in store. Both autumn and winter bring their own splendor of fruits and vegetables. They all have a place at my table.

Take, for example, the pear. What a lovely guest it is. It arrives on our shelves in October or November and stays with us all winter long. They don't ask for much; only that you check them once in a while. Since they ripen off the tree, they should be looked at each day while they're on the counter. Once they have a little give when gently pressed near the stem, they should be refrigerated. There, they'll happily stay, waiting to enchant you with their culinary possibilities. The Bartlett doesn't fall apart while cooking, so it's an excellent choice for poaching. The elegant Comice, yellow with a faint blush of red, is remarkably sweet and

juicy. Savor its taste and heady perfume. The Bosc, crisp and not too sweet, takes well to caramelizing.

Grab some and bring them home. They'll brighten up the short days and even longer nights. 



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Caramelized Pears with Rosemary

INGREDIENTS:

- 6 firm pears, cut lengthwise in half, seeds removed
- 1 cup dark brown sugar
- 2/3 cup orange blossom honey
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla or vanilla paste
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground peppercorns
- 2 large sprigs rosemary, coarsely chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Place the pears skin side down on a foil lined pan. Combine remaining ingredients and pour over pears. Bake, basting every 15 minutes for 1/2 hour. Turn pears skin side up and continue to bake for another 15 minutes until softened and caramelized. Serve as is, or with a dollop of crème fraiche or a scoop of ice cream.

Pears Poached in Red Wine

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 bottles dry red wine
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 4 bay leaves
- 1/4 teaspoon fennel seed
- 6 firm pears, peeled

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring the wine, sugar, bay leaves, and fennel seed to a boil in a large saucepan, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Boil for 5 minutes. Add the pears and reduce the heat to medium-low. Cover and cook until pears are tender when pierced with the tip of a knife, turning, and basting occasionally, about 40 minutes. Remove pears with a slotted spoon to a large bowl. Boil the wine sauce until thick and syrupy and reduced to 1 1/2 cups, about 15 minutes. Pears and sauce may be made a day in advance. Serve warm, at room temperature, or chilled.