

by Paul Grimes

Though poaching pears in wine often results in a subtle, sophisticated dessert, it rarely looks as lovely as it tastes. Here, Grimes took inspiration from the saturated-red glassware that's ubiquitous in Parisian flea markets and from a dessert at Le Chateaubriand, which uses beet to give the pears a lush garnet hue. As far as its flavor goes, the beet doesn't lend anything more than a nice balance to the overall dish, but you'll probably want to poach pears this way from now on.

Yield: Makes 6 servings

Active Time: 20 min

Total Time: 1 1/2 hr

ingredients

2 cups Orange Muscat such as Essencia (from a 750-ml bottle)

1 medium red beet (1/4 pound), peeled and sliced

1 tablespoon sugar

2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice

1 (2-inch) cinnamon stick

2 Turkish bay leaves or 1 California

3 small firm-ripe pears (3/4 to 1 pound total), such as Forelle, peeled, halved lengthwise, and cored

preparation

Bring wine, beet, sugar, lemon juice, cinnamon, and bay leaves to a boil in a 1 1/2- to 2-quarts saucepan, stirring until sugar has dissolved.

Add pears and cover with a round of parchment paper. Simmer, turning occasionally, until pears are tender and liquid is syrupy, 35 to 40 minutes. Transfer pears to a bowl. Discard cinnamon stick and bay leaves and pour syrup over pears. Cool completely in syrup, about 30 minutes.

Cooks' note:

Poached pears can be made 1 day ahead and chilled. Bring to room temperature before serving.

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