

SONOMA VALLEY PORTWORKS

DECO Port Poached Pears with DECO Port Chocolate Sauce

2 - 3 ripe, unblemished Bosc, Anjou, or red Anjou pears	1 cup water
1 cup granulated sugar	2 strips lemon peel (about 3 inches long and 1 inch wide)
6 whole cloves	6 whole black peppercorns
3/4 cup DECO Port	DECO Port Chocolate Sauce (see Quick and Easy Recipes)

Wash fruit and dry thoroughly; set aside. In 10-inch diameter heavy-bottomed, non-reactive frying pan, combine water, sugar, and lemon peel strips. Over high heat, stir often until sugar is completely dissolved. Add cloves and peppercorns; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cover frying pan; simmer this poaching syrup for 5 minutes. Remove frying pan from heat; set aside.

Peel pears. Cut in half vertically. Remove core, stem, and any soft spots or blemishes. Place pear halves, cut side down, in frying pan, with narrow end facing outward. Pear halves should touch as little as possible. Return frying pan to medium-high heat. When syrup begins to simmer, reduce heat and cover frying pan. Simmer pears, adjusting heat as necessary to keep syrup at a simmer, just until tender (this will depend upon pear variety, ripeness and size). Begin testing pears after 5 to 8 minutes of simmering by piercing in thickest part with a toothpick. When pears are done, toothpick will go all the way through with little resistance. Try not to test more than necessary, and do not overcook, or pears will be mushy. When pears test done, remove from frying pan carefully with slotted turner; place in heatproof, non-reactive casserole or container just large enough to hold them in a single layer.

Return frying pan with syrup to high heat and bring to a boil. Rapidly boil syrup 3-4 minutes, until slightly reduced and thickened. Remove from heat and stir in port to taste; pour over pears. Cool slightly, basting tops of pears with syrup occasionally. Chill until needed again, basting pears with syrup occasionally.

To Serve:

Gently warm the DECO Port Chocolate Sauce if it is cold, make a small pool on a medium dessert plate with a rim.

Place a pear half (or two) on the sauce (cut side up), then fill the pear center(s) with a bit of the poaching syrup (minus any cloves or peppercorns). Add a scoop of slightly softened vanilla ice cream on the side and drizzle with a bit more of the warmed DECO Port Chocolate Sauce.

Variation:

To create sundaes or parfaits, slice the pears and alternate with the poaching syrup, chocolate and vanilla ice cream. Top with whipped cream, nuts and a cherry or sliced strawberry.