

Poires Belle Helene (Poached pears with chocolate sauce and vanilla ice cream)

1-2 hours

preparation time

10 to 30 mins

cooking time

Serves 2

Ingredients

For the ice cream

- 250ml/8¾fl oz double cream
- 200ml/7¼fl oz organic full-fat milk
- 2 vanilla pods, seeds scraped out
- 4 organic free-range eggs yolks
- 100g/3½oz organic caster sugar

For the pears

- 2 organic comice pears
- 750ml/1 pint and 7fl oz stock syrup (made from 375g/13oz sugar and 375ml/13fl oz water - boiled together until the sugar dissolves with vanilla extract, cardamom pods and bay leaves, to taste)

For the chocolate sauce

- 250ml/8¾fl oz double cream
- 300g/10½oz chocolate (70 per cent cocoa solids), chopped into small pieces

Preparation method

1. For the ice cream, heat the cream and milk in a small pan with the vanilla pods and their seeds - take care not to boil the milk and cream.
2. Meanwhile, whisk the egg yolks with the caster sugar until the yolks become pale and creamy.
3. Carefully remove the vanilla pods from the cream. Pour in the infused hot cream and continue whisking.
4. Warm the mixture over a low heat. Continue whisking the custard until it coats the back of a spoon. Transfer to an ice cream maker and churn according to manufacturer's instructions.
5. Peel the pears (leaving the stalk intact) and remove the core from each pear. Slice the bottom of each pear to make a flat base.
6. Place the pears upright into a pan with the stock syrup. Poach for about 20 minutes until the pears are juicy and tender. Carefully remove the pears from the poaching liquid, reserving the liquid.
7. To make the chocolate sauce, heat the double cream in a small pan. Add the chocolate pieces. Heat gently until the chocolate has melted.
8. Finish the chocolate sauce with 25ml of the sugar syrup that the pears were poached in - this will give a glossy consistency.

By Steven Wallis
From MasterChef

- 9. To serve, slice the pear in half and serve with the ice cream. Serve the chocolate sauce in a small, warmed copper pot alongside. Serve at once.**