

Stuffed Pears

This is another take on a classic French recipe, Pear & Walnut Salad with Roquefort cheese. The Roquefort needs to be fresh and crumbly. If you can't get Roquefort then Stilton or a good New Zealand blue cheese will also work. If you don't like blue cheese go for a strong cheese like parmesan, I also like using a hard goat or ewe milk cheese.

I like to use the old French pears we grow on the farm: either the squat and juicy, melting Doyenne du Comice, or the long necked, aristocrat Beurré Bosc pear.

At the moment this dish straddles the realm of being both a sweet and a savoury dish. If you want to make it into more of a meal, then serve with a handful of baby rocket leaves and add some thin slices of dry-cured ham, smoked duck breast or sautéed chicken livers. At the farm we are about to experiment with chestnut-fed pigs, so will probably convert this recipe to suit the carnivores in the family.

Ingredients

3 med	Ripe pears	2 tbsp	Chopped fresh parsley
¼ cup	Fresh lemon juice	2 tbsp	Chopped fresh chives
¼ cup	Cream cheese	¼ cup	Toasted walnuts
¼ cup	Cottage cheese	6 large	Plump, dried apricots
¼ cup	Roquefort cheese		Salt and pepper to taste

Method

Halve each pear and remove the core carefully. Scoop out a central cavity for stuffing (a soup spoon is good for this). Brush the pears with lemon juice to prevent them browning, then place them face down on a plate with the remaining lemon juice until needed.

Finely chop the scooped out pear flesh and place in a bowl with a little lemon juice, combine with the cream, cottage and blue cheeses. Finely chop and add in the parsley, chives, and toasted walnuts (see page 6).

Gently combine the stuffing mix so they combine well without becoming too mushy. Taste and season with salt and pepper as desired.

Stuff the pears with the cheese mix and gently press a dried apricot into each pear.

