



FARMERS MARKET

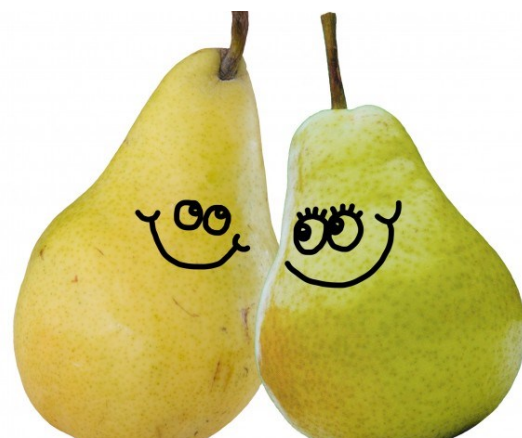
Camarillo Certified Farmers Market

Supporting grief and bereavement services at Camarillo Hospice:
A program of Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association



Source: www.gracelinks.org

Pears are often regarded as the “other” fruit, standing in the shadows of apples, but that may just be a matter of modern-day preference. With a long history of cultivation in both the East and West, and a versatility that lends themselves well to fresh, cooked and fermented preparations, pears are just as practical to grow as apples. Yet their distinctive, mellow sweetness and fresh, floral fragrance make for a more sophisticated and nuanced fruit. Its tapered shape and broad bottom has given way to the term “pear-shaped,” recalling the Botticelli Venus’ figure. Pears make an attractive addition to cheese plates, and they are often paired with foods of a more acquired taste.



Brief History

It’s unclear when exactly pears were first eaten or cultivated, but the fruit’s history can be roughly divided by its two main sub-species: the European pear and the Asian pear. Some sources cite the European pear enjoying popularity since the Bronze Age and that the Asian pear has enchanted eaters since 5000 BC. We know that the Romans ate pears (Homer referred to them as “a gift of the gods”) and spread them throughout Europe. Thanks to its thriving in cool, temperate climates, the pear has been enjoyed throughout the Northern Hemisphere, from Scandinavia to Japan. Celtic languages have a word for “pear” in their ancient dialects. The Renaissance masters were fond of including pears in still-life portraits, and the Belgians and French are credited with developing many species of pear that we still grow today-Anjou (or D'Anjou), Bosc and Comice, for example.

In the US, early colonists imported pears from Europe, a habit that continued even after they began cultivating them in the New World. (Now, does it seem any surprise that receiving pears in fancy boxes has lived on with such mail-order retailers as Harry & David?) However, the US today grows more than 850,000 tons of pears annually, mostly in Washington State and Oregon. The US imports pears primarily from South America and Asia, although it exports more pears than it imports.

Factual Nibbles

- There are more than 250 certified organic farms in the US producing over 20,000 tons of pears.
- Prickly pear, a type of cactus with edible fruits and pads, are unrelated to pears.
- In China, pears are associated with immortality, so it’s bad luck when a pear tree falls.
- The Bartlett pear, the most popular variety in the US, was named after Enoch Bartlett, who acquired an orchard in Massachusetts around the turn of the 19th century. Not knowing that his pear varietal already had a name in Europe — Williams — he began distributing them as Bartlett pears.
- You can put that in your pipe and smoke it: Pear leaves can be smoked and often were in Europe before tobacco was imported.
- Renaissance painters weren’t the only ones infatuated with pears. Pears have been interpreted in popular works of art from the likes of Paul Cezanne, Juan Gris and Pablo Picasso.
- A fancier word for pear-shaped: pyriform.

Simple Pear Tart

From Not Eating Out in New York

(makes 1 9” ; tart)

for the crust:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour

1 egg

2 tablespoons sugar

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small cubes

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

for the filling:

2 large or 3 medium pears, slightly under-ripe

1 tablespoon sugar plus 1 more tablespoon for sprinkling

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 tablespoon cornstarch

Cream the butter, sugar and salt in a bowl. Beat in the egg and gradually incorporate the flour until dough comes together into a ball. Roll the dough onto parchment paper and carefully peel to place into a 9” ; pie or tart pan. (Alternately, you can just smash the dough out by hand and press it into the pan in an even layer with your fingers.) Let the dough come about one inch high around the edges, and straighten them out into a neat rim. Refrigerate crust in the pan for 15-20 minutes, as you prepare the filling.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Peel the pears and cut into quarters. Remove the cores from each wedge, and slice them into roughly $\frac{1}{8}$ ” ; slices lengthwise. Toss with 1 tablespoon of the sugar, the lemon juice and cornstarch. Arrange the pears in a fan-like array into the chilled pan of dough. Sprinkle the top evenly with the remaining tablespoon of sugar. Bake for about 30-40 minutes, or until the edges are just lightly golden-brown. Let chill at least 15 minutes before slicing and serving.