



Pear Napoleon with Apple Cider Cream (Serves four)

Pastry Cream

- 2 cups milk
- 1 vanilla bean, split
- 6 egg yolks
- ¼ cup cornstarch

Red Wine Poached Pears

- 2 cups water
- 2 cups cabernet sauvignon or other dry red wine
- 2 lemons cut into halves
- ¼ cup sugar
- 2 pears, peeled, cut into halves, cored

Pear Napoleon

- 4 (4-inch) squares puff pastry
- 1 cup whipping cream, whipped
- Confectioner's sugar

Apple Cider Cream

- 1 cup apple cider
- ¼ cup sugar
- 4 egg yolks
- ¾ cup sour cream

Procedure & Notes:

For the pastry cream, scald the milk with the vanilla bean in a saucepan. Remove the vanilla bean. Beat the egg yolks and cornstarch in a medium bowl until pale yellow. Whisk half the hot milk into the egg yolks; whisk the egg yolks into the hot in the saucepan. Cook over medium heat until thickened in the center, whisking constantly. Pour into a bowl. Cover and chill until serving time. For the pears, heat the water, wine, lemons and sugar in a large deep saucepan. Add the pears. Place a heavy plate on the top to keep them submerged in the poaching liquid. Poach the pears until slightly softened, piercing frequently with fork to test for doneness. Remove pears and chill until serving time. Reserve poaching liquid for another use.

For the napoleon, bake the puffy pastry squares using the package directions. Remove to a wire rack to cool. Split the squares into halves and spread the bottom with the pastry cream. Slice the chilled poached pears and arrange on top.

Cover with whipped cream and the pastry tops. Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar. For the apple cider cream boil 1 cup of apple cider in a saucepan over medium heat until reduced to ¼ cup. Combine with ¼ cup sugar and 4 egg yolks in a double boiler. Cook over simmering water for 4 to 5 minutes or slightly thickened, whisking constantly. Cool and stir in a ¾ cup sour cream. Spoon Apple Cider Cream onto 4 dessert plates. Place the Napoleon on the cream.