

Roasted Pear Salad with Pancetta, Stilton & Port Thyme Vinaigrette

Serves 4:

Ingredients

2 ripe firm Bartlett or D'Anjou pears
fresh thyme sprigs
melted unsalted butter
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Port Thyme Vinaigrette:

1 cup Port wine
1 small sliced shallot
1 teaspoon crumbled thyme leaves
2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

1/3 pound pancetta, in 1 thick chunk
mesclun leaves
6 ounces English Stilton Cheese

Preparation

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Halve 2 ripe but firm Bartlett or D'Anjou pears and remove cores, using a paring knife.

Place pear halves cut side down.

Starting 1/2 inch from stem end (keeping stem intact), cut lengthwise into 1/2 inch slices.

On a rimmed baking sheet, make a bed of fresh thyme sprigs.

Place each pear half on top of thyme, gently pressing down to fan out slices.

Lightly brush with a bit of melted butter and season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Roast in oven for 15 minutes, until tender.

Remove and let rest on baking sheet at least 30 minutes.

In small saucepan, combine Port wine and sliced shallot and bring to a boil.

Reduce to a simmer and cook until reduced to 1/4 cup, about 10 minutes.

Strain Port into a bowl and let cool.

Heat a skillet over medium heat.

Dice the pancetta--it's easier to do if you stick it in freezer for a few minutes first--and add to pan.

Lower heat slightly and saute, stirring frequently, until golden and fat has been rendered.

Remove with a slotted spoon to a plate lined with paper towels to drain.

In a bowl, mix reduced Port with crumbled thyme, red wine vinegar, kosher salt, and black pepper.

Slowly whisk in extra virgin olive oil.

Toss baby mesclun leaves with crispy pancetta and vinaigrette.

Crumble English Stilton cheese.

Serve the salad on a pretty plate, topped with some of the Stilton and a roasted pear half on the side.

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