

Pain Perdu with Poached Pears

By Chef Fadi Kattan

Recently, the avoidance of food waste has become a global culinary issue, but Arab custom has long considered it *haram* to throw away bread and other kinds of food. *Pain perdu* or French toast, as it is also known, is a delicious way to use up leftover, slightly stale bread. This recipe turns your remaining loaf of Palestinian *ka'ak* into a simple dessert with seasonal poached pears with spices and *crème anglaise*, a light custard – a dash of rosewater adding to the local flavor. It is guaranteed to impress your family or guests.

Time: 45 minutes

Servings: four

Ingredients

Poached pears

4 firm, ripe pears
500 ml water
3 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon rosewater
6 black peppercorns
½ teaspoon ground ginger
1 cinnamon stick
3 whole star anise

Crème anglaise

(makes 250 ml)
125 ml whole milk
125 ml whipping cream
1 vanilla bean, split
(or 1 teaspoon vanilla essence)
3 large egg yolks
3 tablespoons sugar

Pain perdu

1 loaf leftover *ka'ak* bread
250 ml whole milk
3 eggs
75 g sugar
40 g butter



Method

1. To poach the sliced pears, heat the water in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Pour in the lemon juice and rosewater. Add the peppercorns, ginger, cinnamon, and star anise. Stir to combine.
2. Gently place the pears in the saucepan, covering them to keep them submerged. Simmer and poach for about 15 minutes, until tender.
3. For the *crème anglaise*, combine the milk and cream in a medium saucepan. Scrape in seeds from vanilla bean and add the bean (or add essence). Heat the milk mixture until it simmers. Remove from the heat.
4. Whisk together the egg yolks and sugar in a medium bowl. Gradually whisk the hot milk mixture into the egg mixture. Return the *crème anglaise* to the saucepan. Stir over low heat until it thickens (about 5 minutes), taking care that it doesn't boil. (If you wish to serve the *crème anglaise* chilled, it can be made a day ahead, covered, and refrigerated.)
5. For the *pain perdu*, whisk the eggs with the sugar and the milk in a medium bowl.
6. Cut the *ka'ak* bread into quarters and then slice these in half.
7. Fully soak each piece of bread in the egg mixture.
8. Heat the butter in a large frying pan and then add the slices of bread, cooking them well on both sides until they are golden brown.
9. Serve the *pain perdu* on a plate over lashings of *crème anglaise*, topping it with slices of poached pears. If you wish, add a scoop of vanilla ice cream.