

Pretty Peaches in Vanilla Syrup

A sophisticated dessert great on its own, mixed with Ricotta cheese or ice cream or frozen yogurt.

1 cup semisweet white wine (such as French Colombar)
½ cup water
1/3 cup sugar
2 tablespoons honey
1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
1 cinnamon stick
1¼ pounds firm ripe peaches (unpeeled), cut into ½ inch thick slices
1 cup Ricotta cheese

Bring first 6 ingredients to simmer in heavy medium saucepan, stirring to dissolve sugar. Remove from heat. Scrape seeds from vanilla bean into syrup. Return bean to syrup. Cover and continue simmering 5 minutes. Add peaches and poach until just tender when pierced with tip of sharp knife, about 4 minutes. Transfer mixture to bowl and refrigerate, at least 3 hours. (Can be prepared 3 days ahead.)

Remove vanilla bean and any loose pieces of peach skin before serving. Serve over Ricotta cheese.

Jon's Fun Facts

Archaeologists have found bowls of peaches, revered as a potent symbol of immortality, entombed with Chinese dignitaries several centuries before Christ.

The peach is likely native to that part of China near the Pakistani border where it still grows wild. The Latin name for peach means "Persian Plum" because the Romans imported it from Persia (now Iran) some 2,000 years ago.

In the New World, peaches date back to the 1500's, brought first to Latin America by early Spanish colonists. Peach trees flourished in temperate parts of Canada almost from the time of the first European settlement.