Fruit of the pear tree, a tree of the rosaceae, the pear grew in the wild in prehistoric timesand was much enjoyed by the Romans who made a fermented drink from it.

It has been cross-fertilised many times, notably in the 17th and 18thC for improving the fruit. Today, a number of varieties exsist : the most consumed are William pears, Anjou pears and the comice.

## Choice

You will find the pear for four months, from August to November. Choose pears for preference that are smooth, firm but not too hard and without marks or bruises. Summer pears are heavy and scente, with a golden hue, to be chosen fully ripe. Autumn pears which are more green and firm can be left to ripen.

## Consumption

Pears are usually eaten raw, as part of sweet recipes for dessert.

Note that they make an excellent accompaniment to cheese, especially brie, camembert, roquefort and goat cheese. Cooked pears can be poached in wine or a simple syrup then served more lusciously with chocolate sauce, a trickle of caramel and a few grilled or chopped almonds. Tart, gateau, tourt, charlotte or bavarois can all include pears instead of apples for a touch of originality.

## Conservation

Pears should be stored on their own as they absorb the smell of other fruits and vegetables. They should not be enclosed hermetically because they give off ethylene gas which speeds up their ripening. They do not freeze well unless they cooked.

The pear is rich in fibre and contains vitamins **PP** and potassium

**61kcal/100 g**

### PREPARATION

**Preparation should take place just before pears are to be eaten as they turn brown when they come into contact with air. The juice of a lemon or a splash of alcohol form a protective film which prevents oxydation.**

### COOKING

**For poached pears, choose fruit which is not too ripe to ensure they stay whole when cooking.**

### PRESENTATION

**Spices such as cinnamon, vanilla, star anise and ginger can be added to pear compotes, jellies and jams to brighten their flavour. Pears can be served as a puree, a mousse, coulis or sorbet.**

### RECIPE SUGGESTIONS

*Poached pears with caramel sauce, crisp tuile biscuit and mascarpone sabayon*

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