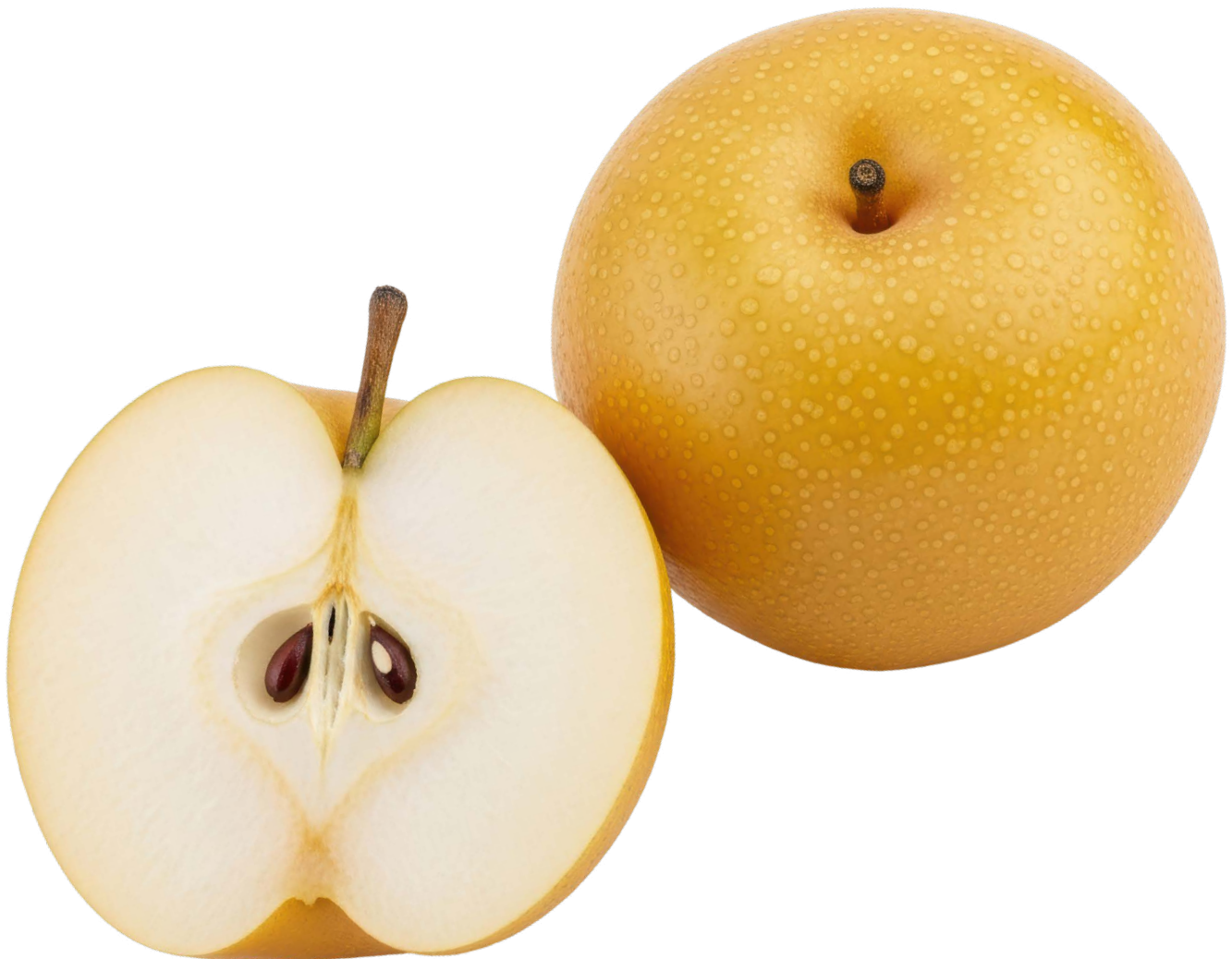




GARDEN STATE ON YOUR PLATE

ASIAN PEARS

RECIPES



GARDEN STATE ON YOUR PLATE SM IS A PROJECT OF THE PRINCETON SCHOOL GARDENS COOPERATIVE, PRINCETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND POMPTONIAN FOOD SERVICE, WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM BENT SPOON, WHOLE EARTH CENTER, LILLIPIES BAKERY, AND CHURCH & DWIGHT EMPLOYEE GIVING FUND.

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History

Asian pears are a branch of the pear family, which themselves are part of the rose family. Smaller versions of the fruit originated in China, Japan and Korea, and likely were cultivated as early as 300 BC. By the time of the Han dynasty, 2,000 years ago, there were large orchards of Asian pears along the Huai and Yellow rivers.

Pyrus Pyrifolia or Ussuriensis, aka...

Pyrus is derived from the Latin *pirus*, meaning pear tree. Asian pears might also be called apple pear, crunch pear, salad pear, or sand pear.

From There to Here

Asian pears were planted by Chinese miners and railroad workers along the foothills of the Sierra Nevada during the California Gold Rush between 1848 to 1852. Later, they were planted by Chinese and Japanese immigrants to the West coast. Horticulturalist William Prince of Flushing, NY, imported and planted the "sand pear" variety in 1820 on the East Coast.

Words for Asian Pears

Latin: *Pirum Asiaticum*

Arabic: *يرثم كلالة يوي سآلا*

Cantonese: 亞洲梨

French: *Poire Asiatique*

Haitian Creole: *Pwa Azyatik*

Hindi: *एशियाई नाशपाती*

Italian: *Pera Asiatica*

German: *Asiatische Birne*

Japanese: *アジアナシ*

Persian: *هه دالوق*

Spanish: *Pera Asiática*

Swahili: *Pea ya Asia*

Ukrainian: *Азійська груша*

Art & Literature

"Zhongli," translated as "The Wonderful Pear Tree," is a short story collected or written by Pu Songling (1640-1715), first published in "Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio," in 1740. Set in ancient China, the story revolves around a miserly pear seller and a priest who seemingly makes a pear tree grow from a seed in minutes, then serves the ripe pears to the assembled crowd. The story teaches respect for elders and the value of sharing.

Botany

Asian pears, *Pyrus pyrifolia*, are true pears. *Pyrus* is a group of deciduous trees and shrubs in the Rosaceae family, which includes apples, cherries, peaches, plums, raspberries, roses – and about 30 species of pear trees. It is thought that Asian pears were cultivated by selecting larger fruits from rose-hip-like ancestors as early as 300 BC. The fruit's fragrance carries notes of its floral ancestry.

Japanese varieties are mostly derived from the "sand pear," which refers to the stone cells in the fruit that give it a gritty texture, and usually resemble the apple. Chinese varieties are more cold hardy and with a shape closer to the European pear.

Season's Best

Asian pears ripen between mid-August and early September. They are ready to pick as soon as they look ripe on the tree. Ripe pears on rough-skinned russet varieties will change from green to light brown or orange; smooth-skinned pears will turn from green to greenish-yellow. Asian pears bruise easily, but carefully stored in the refrigerator will keep for months.



In the Garden

Asian pear trees grow well in USDA zones 5-9. They need well-draining soil and full sunlight. Plant them with at least 15 feet between trees for best airflow and productivity. Trees reach 15–30 feet in height. Expect aromatic flowers from late February through mid-April. Companion plants: borage, chives, marigolds, nasturtiums, and garlic.

Math & Money

In New Jersey, Asian pears are a growing, high-value niche crop, driven by high demand from the state's diverse population. To compare, New Jersey grows about 3,918 acres of peaches and about 2,336 acres of apples – and about 150-200 acres of Asian pears. Peak picking season is from late August through October. Top locations for picking include Lee Orchard Garden in Cranbury and Evergreen Orchard Farm in Hamilton Township.

Ingredient Pairings

For a quick dessert, sauté thinly sliced Asian pears in butter, then sprinkle with salt and a splash of balsamic vinegar – with or without vanilla ice cream or plain Greek yogurt. Grill Asian pear halves and serve with caramelized onions and toasted walnuts. Roast a sheet-pan dinner with gnocchi, leeks, and wedges of Asian pear tossed in vinaigrette and garnished with curls of parmesan.

In the Kitchen

Asian pears are delicious out of hand, diced into a salad with peppery greens (arugula, watercress, purple cabbage) and as a fresh and juicy switch from almost any apple or pear recipe. Juiced or pureed, they work as a meat tenderizer and marinade (add grated onion, soy sauce, sesame oil, black pepper, pressed garlic, and chopped ginger). Refrigerate for 2-3 hours before cooking as desired.

Fuel for Learning & Powerful Play

Asian pears are a solid source of fiber, Vitamin C, K, potassium, copper, folate and magnesium.

Climate & Resource Intensity

Since life-cycle emissions for Asian pears are higher with additional transport, choose locally grown fruits when possible. Other emissions come from high synthetic fertilizer use, mechanized orchard operations, and intensive packaging required to protect the delicate fruit from bruising.

Asian Pear Tasting

Begin with wedges or thinly sliced unseasoned raw/roasted Asian pears. Then season with a pinch of salt. After observing how seasoning changes the flavor, taste with a drizzle of vinaigrette. If available, compare and contrast different methods of cooking beyond roasting: steamed, sauteed, and with relevant flavorings.

Garden State on Your Plate is a K12 program that uses local produce, school cafeterias, campus lands, and student demographics to illustrate and amplify curriculum. The program, designed to elevate the everyday quality of school foods and to increase participation in the National School Lunch Program, was created in 2010 by the Princeton School Gardens Cooperative in partnership with Princeton Public Schools, and with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



Pomptonian Asian Pear Slaw

In this adaptation of a Pomptonian recipe, the sweetness of the Asian pear plays foil to spice of ginger, onion and vinegar or lemon juice. To transform into a main dish, serve over a warm grain pilaf (brown rice, millet, chopped toasted sunflower seeds and or pumpkin seeds) and mukimame (shelled edamame).

Serves 6

Ingredients

2 ¼ cups shredded green or purple cabbage or a mix

1 carrot, shredded

½ medium onion, chopped

¾ cup chopped Asian pear

2 scallions, sliced into thin rings

1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh ginger

Dressing

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar or lemon juice

Salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Preparation

1. Whisk together olive oil, acid, salt, and pepper.
2. In large bowl, gently toss all ingredients. Taste and adjust seasonings.



The New York Times and Pomptonian Asian Pear Muffins

This recipe for homemade muffins from Samantha Seneviratne for The New York Times is warmed with Pomptonian additions of nutmeg and ginger.

Serves 12

Ingredients

For the Batter

- 2 cups/256 grams all-purpose flour
- 1¼ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal)
- ¼ packed cup/110 grams light brown sugar
- ¼ cup/100 grams granulated sugar
- ½ cup butter, salted or unsalted, at room temperature
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- ¼ cup whole milk yogurt, at room temperature
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
- 1½ cups diced Asian pear

Preparation

1. Heat oven to 450 degrees. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt.
3. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer on medium speed, beat the brown sugar, granulated sugar and butter until fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, and beat until combined. Beat in the yogurt and vanilla extract.
4. Using a rubber spatula, fold in the dry ingredients and about 1¼ cups of the diced Asian pear by gently scooping up some of the mixture from the bottom and folding it over them. Rotate the bowl and repeat until just combined. Do not overmix.
5. Divide the batter evenly among the liners, about a heaping ¼ cup each. Top with the remaining diced Asian pear. Adjust the oven temperature to 350 degrees.
6. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out with moist crumbs attached, about 25 minutes. Let cool slightly in the pan, then transfer the muffins to a rack to cool completely.

<https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1026063-apple-cinnamon-muffins>



Pomptonian

Asian Pear Side Salad

In this adaptation of a Pomptonian recipe, grated cheddar cheese is substituted for Goldfish crackers, allowing the Asian pear its turn in the spotlight.

Serves 6

Ingredients

1½ cups diced Asian pear

¼ cup dried cranberries

6 cups chopped romaine lettuce

1½ cups diced cucumbers

½ cup grated sharp cheddar cheese

Vinaigrette

⅓ cup lemon juice or balsamic vinegar

⅔ cup olive oil

1-2 garlic cloves, crushed

½ teaspoon dijon mustard

Salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Preparation

1. Place all salad ingredients in large bowl and mix gently.
2. Make dressing: Place lemon juice or vinegar, olive oil, garlic cloves, mustard, salt and pepper in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Shake to combine.
3. Drizzle salad with a portion of the dressing, tossing to ensure even distribution. Add dressing by the tablespoon as desired. Reserve remaining dressing for other uses; store in refrigerator.
4. Garnish with grated cheddar cheese.



Julia's Green Kitchen

Fried Asian Pears

Julia, of Julia's Green Kitchen, writes: "Asian pears are firm, crisp, juicy, sweet and hold their shape well when cooked." Garnish with plain Greek yogurt and a drizzle of honey, if desired.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 4 asian pears peeled and quartered
- 1 teaspoon ghee or olive oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons toasted pecans, or toasted rolled oats, or granola, chopped

Preparation

1. In a heavy-bottomed saute pan, heat ghee or olive oil on a medium high heat until it begins to sizzle. Add quartered pears.
2. Caramelize pears on all sides, about two minutes per side.
3. Sprinkle with vanilla and lemon juice. Saute for two or three minutes.
4. Remove from heat and scatter pecans over the fruit.

<https://juliagreenkitchen.com/fried-asian-pears/>



Food 52

Savory Asian Pear, Onion and Fennel Galette

Serves 6

Ingredients

Dough

½ pound cold unsalted butter, cut into ½ inch pieces

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon kosher salt

¼ cup ice water

Pear, Onion and Fennel Filling

2 medium yellow onions, peeled and thinly sliced cross-wise

1 small/medium fennel bulb, outer layer removed, and white/light green parts thinly sliced crosswise (discard dark green parts)

3 large, ripe but firm Asian pears, peeled, cored and cut into thin slices

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

2 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

½ teaspoon kosher salt

¼ cup dry sherry

1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh rosemary

6 ounce Brie (a mild, double-cream works best)

1 cup grated Manchego cheese

1 egg

1 tablespoon water

Salt and freshly ground pepper

Preparation

Dough

1. Put the flour and salt in a food processor and pulse a few times to combine.
2. Add the butter, tossing quickly to coat each piece with flour to prevent pieces from sticking together. Pulse until combined, and mixture is the texture of course sand.
3. Add the ice water with the motor running. Process until dough comes together, stopping before it becomes a solid mass.
4. Turn contents onto a clean work surface and press together with your hands, forming a ball, and then flatten into a rough disk.
5. Cover dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least an hour, or up to 2 days.

Pear, Onion and Fennel Filling

6. Heat butter and olive oil in a large saute pan over medium-high heat.
7. Add onions and fennel to pan and saute until soft and translucent, stirring occasionally, about 15-20 min. Add ½ tsp. kosher salt.
8. When liquid from onions has evaporated and mixture is beginning to brown around edges and stick to bottom of pan, add sherry to deglaze the pan, scraping the brown bits from the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon.
9. Reduce heat to low and add pears and rosemary, tossing with wooden spoon to combine. Cook for 1-2 minutes until flavors combine and pears begin to soften slightly. Add ground pepper and more salt to taste. Remove pan from heat and set aside.
10. Heat oven to 450 degrees.
11. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface with a rolling pin into a free-form circle, about 10-12 inches in diameter. Transfer the dough to the center of a baking sheet.
12. Remove the rind from Brie, and spread it in an even layer onto the dough leaving a 1½ - inch border on the outside. Spread pear and onion mixture over brie, and top with grated Manchego.
13. Fold the border over the filling, gently pinching to form soft pleats every inch or so all the way around. Shape should be rustic and free-form.
14. Make an egg wash by whisking egg and water together in a small bowl. Use a pastry brush to lightly coat the dough of the tart with egg wash.
15. Bake the tart in the center of the oven for about 25 minutes, until the crust is golden, and the filling is bubbling with and browned on top. Cool slightly and serve warm or at room temperature.



Cooking with Manali

Roasted Butternut Squash - Asian Pear Salad

In this recipe adapted from Cooking with Manali, roasted butternut squash is layered beneath Asian pears, walnuts, dried cranberries and drizzled with a creamy dressing made with tahini and olive oil.

Serves 4

Ingredients

4 cups peppery greens (arugula, chicory, shredded purple cabbage)
3 cups butternut squash cubes (1 pound butternut squash cut into 1-inch cubes)
1-2 Asian pears, sliced thinly
½ cup toasted, chopped walnuts
2 tablespoons dried cranberries
2 ounces goat cheese, crumbled

Dressing

3½ tablespoons olive oil
1½ tablespoons tahini
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
½ teaspoon dijon mustard
¼ teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon black pepper (or to taste)

Preparation

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees. In small bowl, stir together dressing/marinade ingredients. In large bowl, gently toss squash cubes with $\frac{3}{4}$ of the mixture, reserving the remaining amount.
2. Transfer squash cubes to a baking sheet and bake for 15 to 20 minutes until tender but with a bit of bite.
3. Meanwhile, slice pear(s) into even slices.
4. Arrange the salad in layers: Greens first, then roasted squash, then sliced Asian pear, walnuts, dried cranberries and crumbled goat cheese. Drizzle lightly with remaining dressing.

<https://www.cookwithmanali.com/butternut-squash-salad-tahini-dressing/>



Suzy Karadsheh

Asian Pear and Sweet Potato Gratin

In this adaptation, Asian pears and sweet potato slices are tossed together in extra virgin olive oil and melted butter, then seasoned with rosemary, nutmeg and cinnamon before a turn in the oven that melds flavors.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced into 1/4-inch-thick-rounds
- 1 Asian pear, cored and sliced into 1/4-inch-thick-rounds
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon melted butter
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon dried rosemary
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 ounces crumbled Gorgonzola cheese
- ⅓ cup chopped toasted walnuts or pecans
- ⅓ cup raisins or dried cranberries

Preparation

1. Heat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. In small bowl, stir together the olive oil, melted butter, lemon juice, rosemary, nutmeg, cinnamon, salt, and pepper.
3. In a large bowl, combine the sweet potato and pear slices. Toss gently with dressing, then arrange the seasoned potato and pear slices in a gratin dish or large cast iron skillet.
4. Bake for 45 minutes, or until potatoes are just fork-tender. Remove from oven and while still hot, add crumbled cheese, walnuts, and raisins or cranberries.

<https://www.themediterraneandish.com/pear-and-sweet-potato-gratin/>



Bon Appetit

Pickled Asian Pears

Makes 1½ cups

Ingredients

- 1 cup unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 2-inch piece of ginger, peeled, thinly sliced
- 1 small red or green chile (such as jalapeño, serrano, or Thai), with seeds, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- ½ teaspoon gochugaru (Korean red pepper powder) or crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 Asian pear, large unripe Anjou pear, or Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored, cut into 1-inch cubes

Preparation

1. Combine all ingredients except pear in a small saucepan. Add ½ cup water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 5 minutes to meld flavors. Remove from heat and let sit until warm.
2. Place pear cubes in a 12-oz. jar with a tight-sealing lid. Add warm pickling liquid. Let cool at room temperature for 30 minutes. Cover and chill. Keep refrigerated

<https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/pickled-pears>



Love and Lemons

Asian Pear Pizza

*This savory pie can be served as an appetizer or as a main dish.
Double or triple the recipe and host a pizza-making party.*

Serves 2

Ingredients

pizza dough, rolled thin
olive oil with some minced garlic
1 Asian pear, thinly sliced (about 1/8 inch)
1/3 cup (or more), grated pecorino
1 ball of fresh mozzarella, sliced
part of a red onion, thinly sliced
1/4 cup good feta cheese
1/4 cup pine nuts
handful of arugula
sage leaves, fried
salt
optional: a few pinches of red pepper flakes
optional: drizzle of honey

Preparation

1. Heat oven to 450 degrees.
2. Brush pizza dough with olive oil, garlic and a bit of salt.
3. Evenly sprinkle with grated pecorino.
4. Near the edge, place a layer of pears in a circle, then slightly overlap the pear layer with a circle of sliced mozzarella, then another circle of pears, etc.
5. Top with red onion slices, crumbled feta and pine nuts. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle on a few pinches of salt.
6. Bake until browned and bubbly, about 8-10 minutes.
7. Meanwhile, in a small skillet, heat olive oil. When oil begins to shimmer, fry sage leaves for about 5 seconds each. Remove, sprinkle with salt, and place on a paper towel to cool.
8. Remove pizza from the oven and top with arugula and sage leaves.
Serve with red pepper flakes and honey, if desired.

<https://www.loveandlemons.com/pear-pizza-with-fried-sage/>

