

TASTING TABLE

Food Culture Daily

Chefs' Recipes Edition



Charred, I'm Sure *Paley picks a pickled pear*

Tues. 05 Feb '13



The spice-infused pickled and poached pears give this salad a meaty vibe.

Michael Paley likes to play with fire at his new restaurant, [Metropole](#), in Cincinnati, Ohio. The chef built a wood-burning oven and outfitted it with a *plancha* (a flattop-style Spanish grill) for an evenly hot surface used to char or roast most items on the menu, including steaks, foie gras, Roman cauliflower and even olives. In this salad, he finishes spiced, pickled pears on the *plancha* and pairs them with roasted beets, peppery watercress and goat cheese. In our adaptation, we blistered the pickled pears in a ripping-hot cast-iron pan to emulate Paley's signature *singe*.

Charred Pear Salad

Recipe adapted from Michael Paley, Metropole, Cincinnati, OH

Yield: 4 servings
Cook Time: 35 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Pears

2 cups water

1 cup dry white wine

1½ cup distilled white vinegar

3 tablespoons kosher salt

2 cinnamon sticks

5 whole star anise

2 dried bay leaves

2 Anjou pears, halved and cored

Salad

1¼ cup whole pistachios

2 bunches watercress

1¼ cup scallions, ends trimmed and thinly sliced lengthwise

2 tablespoons fresh goat's-milk cheese (chèvre), crumbled

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar

3 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil, divided

1½ teaspoon kosher salt

1¼ teaspoon freshly ground

DIRECTIONS

1. Poach the pears: In a medium saucepan set over medium-high heat, add the water, wine, white vinegar, salt, cinnamon sticks, star anise and bay leaves and bring to a boil. Add the pear halves cut side down, reduce the heat to medium and simmer until a knife easily slips into a pear half, 20 to 25 minutes. Turn off the heat and let the pears cool in the poaching liquid.

2. While the pears poach, make the salad: Preheat the oven to 350°. To a rimmed baking sheet, add the pistachios and bake until toasted, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board to cool, then roughly chop.

3. In a large bowl, add the watercress, scallions, goat cheese and chopped pistachios. In a small bowl, whisk together the red wine vinegar, 3 tablespoons of the olive oil and the salt and pepper. Pour the vinaigrette over the watercress mixture and toss to combine, then add the beets, toss once, and divide among 4 plates.

4. Heat a medium heavy-bottomed skillet (preferably cast iron) over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Add the remaining 1 teaspoon of olive oil and set the pears in the skillet cut side down, cooking until they are browned and caramelized, 1½ to 2 minutes. Set each pear half on top of each salad, sprinkle with flaky salt and serve.

NEXT STEP

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black pepper

1½ cups [cooked baby beets](#) or
3 medium cooked beets,
quartered

Flaky sea salt, for serving



ABOUT THE CHEF

[Michael Paley](#) started his restaurant career as a busboy in his hometown of Washington, New Jersey. After completing culinary school in southern Florida and working under chefs and operators including [Daniel Boulud](#) and [Drew Nieporent](#), he moved to Louisville, Kentucky, to open [Proof on Main](#) at the 21c Museum Hotel. Paley is the chef-owner at [Garage Bar](#), also in Louisville, and is the executive chef at [Metropole](#), in the 21c Museum Hotel in Cincinnati, Ohio.

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