

Essential Skills

Poaching Fruit

- ❶ Prepare the fruit as necessary (seed, peel, etc.). The peel can be included with the fruit as it poaches to add flavor.
- ❷ Combine the fruit with enough poaching liquid to cover the fruit and bring it just to a simmer. See Figure 9.9a.
- ❸ Reduce the heat and gently poach the fruit until it is tender. Test the doneness by piercing the fruit with a sharp knife. There should be little or no resistance. See Figure 9.9b.
- ❹ Let the fruit cool in the poaching liquid, or serve immediately.

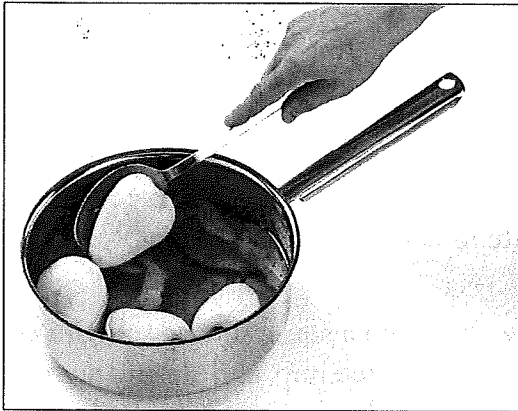


Figure 9.9a: Step 2—Combine fruit with poaching liquid.

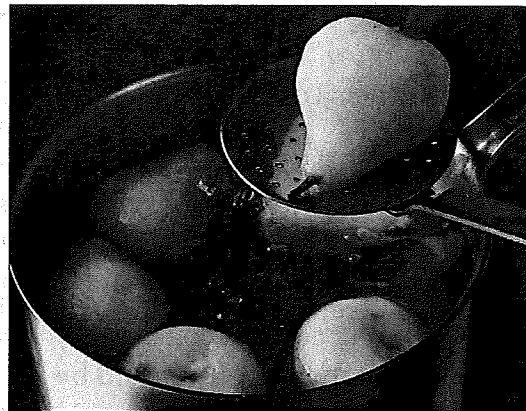


Figure 9.9b: Step 3—Poach the fruit until tender.

Fruit has a rich, syrupy flavor when sautéed in butter, sugar, and spices. Cherries, bananas, pears, and pineapples are ideal for sautéing. When sautéing fruit, peel, core, and seed the fruit and then cut it into uniform sizes. Dessert fruits can be sautéed with sugar to create a caramelized glaze or syrup. It can be used to fill crêpes or as toppings for sponge cakes. Recipes for sautéed fruit that accompany main entrées usually add onions, shallots, or garlic to the mixture. Figure 9.10 shows sautéed fruit as a dessert dish.

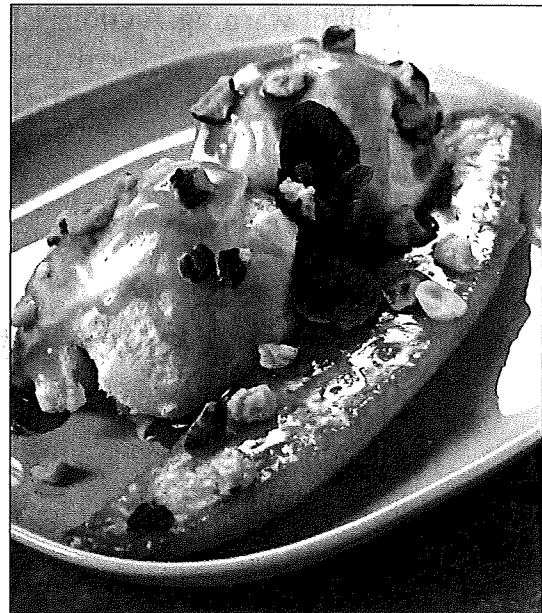


Figure 9.10: Fruits like cherries, bananas, pears, and pineapples are good for sautéing.

Fruit sauces can be made from a variety of fruits. Some of the most popular fruit sauces include applesauce, fresh berry **coulis** (cool-LEE), and compotes. Coulis is a sauce made from a purée of vegetables or fruits that can be served hot or cold. Fruit coulis is most often used on desserts. Raspberry coulis, for example, is especially popular with poached apples. Compotes can be made by simmering dried fruits, such as apricots, currants, and raisins. They are often served either warm or chilled, topped with whipped cream, cinnamon, or vanilla sugar. Fresh berry sauces can be made of cooked or raw fruit. They can also be used as a base for dessert soufflés or as flavoring for Bavarian creams, buttercreams, and other fillings and icings. Ideally, sauce should be made from fresh fruits, but a good-quality sauce can be made by using unsweetened, frozen fruits.

Essential Skills

Strawberry Coulis

You may have seen a drizzle of a puréed, sweetened, and reduced fruit sauce (usually made of berries) called coulis on dessert plates. Chefs like it because it can be drizzled directly onto the plate to add excitement to the presentation. It can also garnish the dessert itself.

Make the coulis a consistency that flows through a squirt-bottle tip with only a little squeezing. It should be about as thick as ketchup, and should stand up in a bead. It should not be so thick that it clogs the bottle's tip or comes out in a clump. Also, if it is too runny it will be a mess. Coulis requires practice, especially if it is to be presented in swirls or other artistic shapes.

A bit of warning: A coulis can also be a distraction from the dessert itself. Coulis should be an artistic way to apply an important ingredient of the dish. Salvaging a less-than-perfect dessert or presentation with a squirt of berry sauce is not the idea.

Use the coulis to create delicious and flavorful beauty on the blank canvas of the dessert plate, in harmony with a high-quality dessert.

Ingredients for Strawberry Coulis

½ pint fresh strawberries, stemmed and rinsed, or 10 ounces frozen strawberries

¼ cup granulated sugar

Juice of ½ lemon, or to taste

Directions

In a blender or food processor, purée strawberries with sugar and lemon juice. See Figure 9.11. Taste and add more sugar or lemon juice as needed. Strain seeds from strawberries, if desired. Cover and refrigerate the coulis until ready to serve. Makes 10 servings.

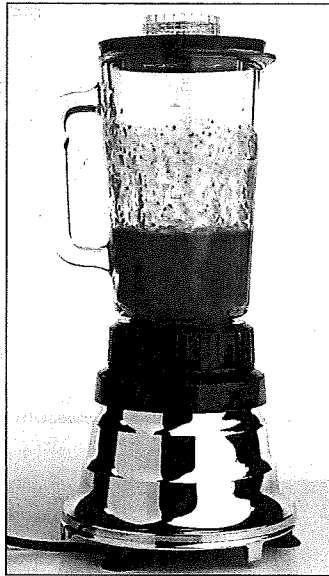


Figure 9.11: Strawberry coulis can be used as a base for souffles, as a filling, or icing.

Fruit sauces are made by cooking the fruit in liquid until the fruit has been broken down. Then a sweetener, such as sugar, honey, or syrup, is added. Once the sauce has cooled, spices and other flavorings are added to give it the finishing touch.

Essential Skills

Making a Fruit Sauce

- ① Peel the fruit and cut it into small pieces for faster cooking. *Alternative:* Purée the fruit in a blender, food processor, food mill, or through a drum sieve. See Figure 9.12a.
- ② Add the appropriate amount of liquid, and heat the purée in a saucepan until it is almost boiling. Lower the heat to a simmer, and cover the pan.
- ③ Cook, stirring occasionally, until the fruit has broken down. See Figure 9.12b.
- ④ Sweeten as desired with sugar, honey, or syrup.

- 5 Add any additional spices or other flavorings, such as vanilla, once the sauce has cooled slightly.

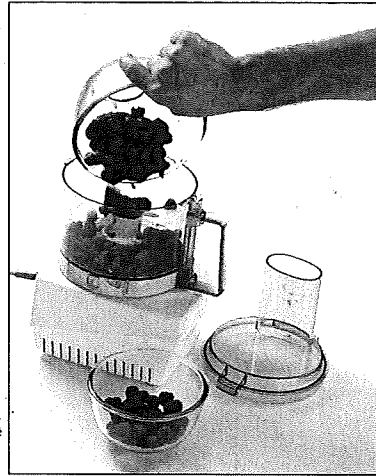


Figure 9.12a: Step 1—Peel fruit or use a blender to purée.

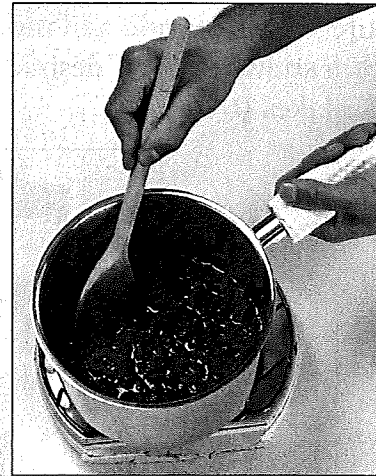


Figure 9.12b: Step 3—Break down fruit by cooking, stirring occasionally.



Figure 9.13: Firm fruits like apples, pears, and bananas are good for baking.

Fruits can also be baked or prepared in a microwave oven. When *baking* fruits, you should choose firm fruits that are whole or cut into large pieces, such as apples, pears, and bananas. Apples, especially the Rome Beauty variety, are the most popular baked fruit because they are easy to prepare. Baked fruits are a healthy and nutritious dessert. Figure 9.13 shows baked pears.

Essential Skills

Baking Apples

- 1 Core apples from the top by removing the stem with a parisienne scoop and scooping out the center of the fruit until all seeds are removed and the cavity is large enough to accommodate the desired amount of stuffing. See Figure 9.14a.

- ② Cut a thin strip of skin from around the middle of each apple to prevent them from splitting during baking.
- ③ Fill each apple's core cavity with cinnamon, nutmeg, raisins, or dates for variety and flavor. See Figure 9.14b.
- ④ Place the apples in $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of hot water in a baking dish.
- ⑤ Bake at 350°F until tender, or about 45 to 60 minutes. See Figure 9.14c.

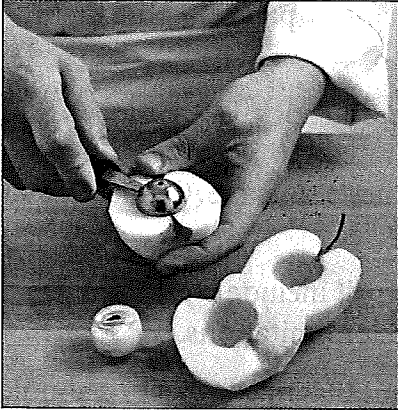


Figure 9.14a: Step 1—Core apples from the top.

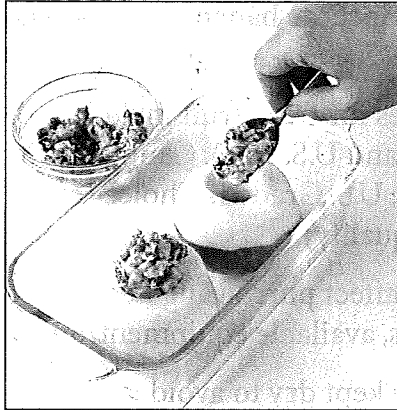


Figure 9.14b: Step 3—Fill the cavity of the apple.



Figure 9.14c: Step 5—Bake at 350°F until tender.

When microwaving fruits, watch the cooking time carefully. It's easy to overcook fresh fruits because they are so tender. Always cover fruits when microwaving them, but leave a small opening from which excess steam can escape. When cooking whole fruits, such as plums or pears, in the microwave, puncture them with a fork in several places to keep them from bursting.

Serving Fruits

Fruit plates and salads are a popular way to serve fruit. Serve fruit at room temperature to make sure it has the best flavor. Fresh fruit can be served as a garnish with entrées and desserts. For example, use fresh fruit to top cereal or yogurt, add fresh berries on a chocolate cake, or add a slice of melon with an omelet at breakfast. Figure 9.15 shows pound cake being served with fresh fruit.

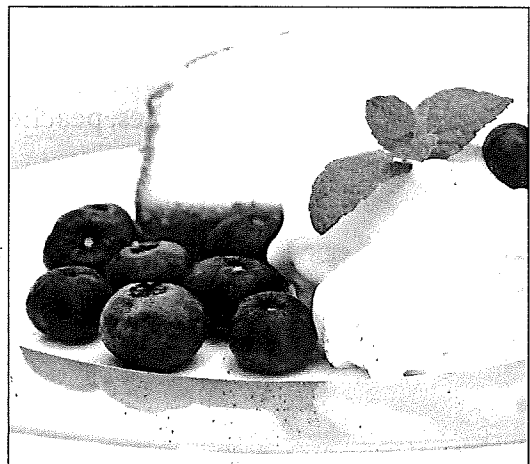


Figure 9.15: Fruit is used as a garnish on dessert.

Summary

In this section, you learned the following:

- The three main groups of fruit are summer, winter, and tropical:
 - Summer fruits include berries, cherries, grapes, melons, peaches, nectarines, plums, and pears.
 - Winter fruits include citrus fruits and apples.
 - Tropical fruits include bananas, figs, kiwis, mangos, papayas, pineapple, and coconut.
- The USDA grades for fresh fruit include U.S. Extra Fancy, U.S. Fancy, U.S. No. 1, U.S. No.2, and U.S. No 3. Canned fruit is rated U.S. Grade A Fancy (highest quality), U.S. Grade B Choice (second best), and U.S. Grade C standard (poor quality).
- The factors that affect purchasing decisions of fruit include recipe requirements, staff skills, available equipment, and vendor limitations.
- Fruit needs to be kept dry to avoid spoiling. Fruit that needs to ripen should be stored at room temperatures of 65°F to 70°F.
- Preparing fruit for service may include any combination of cleaning, peeling, seeding, trimming, cutting, juicing, and puréeing.
- Fruit can be grilled, broiled, poached, sautéed, baked, or microwaved:
 - Some fruits, such as apples, pears, bananas, and peaches, undergo enzymatic browning when the oxygen in the air comes in contact with the flesh of cut fruit.
 - Avoid overcooking fruits, as they will become soft or mushy.
 - Pineapples, apples, and bananas are good fruits to grill or broil.
 - Plums, apples, peaches, and pears are good fruits to poach.

Section 9.1 Review Questions

- 1 List the appropriate cooking method for each type of fruit. Some fruits may be suitable for more than one cooking method.
 - a. Raspberries
 - b. Pineapples
 - c. Peaches
 - d. Apples
 - e. Pears
 - f. Grapefruits
 - g. Bananas
- 2 What are the different quality grades given to fresh fruit and canned produce by the USDA?
- 3 For each fruit, identify whether it is a tropical, summer, or winter fruit.
 - a. Apple
 - b. Cherry
 - c. Coconut
 - d. Fig
 - e. Grape
 - f. Grapefruit
 - g. Kiwi
 - h. Papaya
 - i. Peach
 - j. Tangerine
- 4 If you cut up an apple and leave it on the counter for 30 minutes, it will probably look brown. Why does this happen?
- 5 Daron Kinder remarks that there is a noticeable difference in quality and flavor when a particular product is in season. Can you provide examples of a dessert for each season that uses a seasonal fruit?
- 6 What fresh fruits can Chef Jean add to the menu that are in season?
- 7 Is dried fruit more nutritious than fresh fruit? Why or why not?
- 8 What is enzymatic browning, and how can it affect fresh fruit?

Section 9.1 Activities

1. Study Skills/Group Activity: Name That Fruit

In a small group, play “Name That Fruit,” beginning with citrus fruit. Race to make a list of all the citrus fruit you can think of in one minute. Compare the lists with the other members of your group. The group member with the longest accurate list wins 10 points. For round two, try varieties of apples; for round three, types of drupes. Continue with melons, berries, tropical fruit, and any other category you choose.

2. Activity: Dessert Anyone?

Put together a dessert menu that consists of recipes using at least three fruits from each of the summer, winter, and tropical fruit categories. Below each recipe, include a “fun fact” about one of the fruits used in the recipe.

3. Critical Thinking: Watermelon

How many creative things can you think to do with a whole watermelon? List 10 menu or buffet items that use watermelon as part of the ingredients and/or presentation. Describe each on paper using words and/or sketches.

