

Olive's Kitchen

Poached Whole Quinces - With a hint of orange

This recipe is an adaptation of one in Stephanie Alexander's "The Cook's Companion", which itself is based on a recipe of Maggie Beer. Choose quinces at the greenish-yellow stage and ensure they are in good condition and bug free. Wash them well to remove any fluff or stains. Unless they are small ones, one whole quince is probably enough for two people. The orange zest and vanilla can be omitted but they make a real difference to the final result.

For four to eight people:

- 4 medium-large quinces
- 600 ml water
- 1 cup sugar
- zest of 1 orange without white pith, in pieces or shreds
- a half or full vanilla bean (optional)
- lemon juice (optional)
- quality double cream



You want the quinces to retain their shape so ensure the heat is not too high and turn them carefully while cooking. Warn guests they will find small pips and core residuals when they eat their quince.

Method:

Turn the oven to 150°C or even just to 130°C if you have a 'hot' oven. Combine the water and sugar in a heavy saucepan or casserole big enough to hold the quinces and bring to the boil to dissolve sugar. Add the quinces and bring to a simmer but not a rapid boil. Cover.

Place in the oven for two hours or so, carefully turning the quinces once or twice to ensure even cooking. Alternatively cook them at a slow simmer on the stove top.

Using a potato peeler or paring knife, peel off the zest of the orange, then remove any white pith with a sharp knife. Cut into thin strips if desired. Add the zest to the quinces along with the vanilla bean after two hours. Cook for another two to three hours, gently turning occasionally.

Remove the cooked quinces, zest and vanilla bean to a bowl. On the stove, reduce the syrup to the desired consistency and taste, adding lemon juice if needed. Pour over the quinces.

Serve:

Serves 4 to 8 with a half or full quince each. Serve warm or chilled with some syrup and cream.

Equipment:

Flameproof and ovenproof saucepan or casserole with a lid.

Difficulty and Time:

Not difficult (2/5). 10 minutes to prepare. Five hours to cook.

Notes and variations:

- The quinces can be cooked well ahead of time and reheated later if desired.
- Use any leftovers for breakfast, or to make a fool, a parfait or quince ice-cream.