

# An Unlikely Culinary Column: Falling in Love with Fall

By Karen Kain

It is officially one year since we have moved to Halfway. We are thrilled to be part of this community and have learned much in this first year. I am falling in love with fall and all of its beauty and gifts. Our neighbors have blessed us with a large basket of pears and here are some of the recipes that I have enjoyed.

One of my old time favorites is Poached Pears in Red Wine. This is the simplest desert I have ever made. It is decadent and when topped with cream your guests will think that you have gone to a great effort. Any kind of red wine works. Leaving the pears, vanilla and wine simmering for hours will fill up your home with a lovely aroma. This is the perfect desert for having company.

As a California girl making Apple Butter has always sounded romantic. I have made it twice before but find myself never eating it. I tried making Pear Butter for the first time this year and realized that I prefer Pear Butter to almost any fruit that I have canned. This recipe is simple and uses honey instead of sugar so there is no guilt when you eat it alone or put it on EVERYTHING!

For those of you who are eating sugar, chocolate and nuts, this is a fun recipe that you will want to share simply to keep from eating the entire batch yourself. I found this a bit messy but definitely delicious. The temperature of the caramel is key, testing it in a glass of ice water is the best way to ensure that you get the perfect texture. Be patient, mine should have been cooked longer but I didn't hear anyone complaining.

I hope you enjoy these recipes and an abundance of pears, and as always, please let me know what you are cooking.

## Poached Pears In Red Wine

### Ingredients:

- 4 Pears, skinned, halved and the seeds scooped out (using a small melon ball scoop makes it easy)
- ¾ Bottle of red wine, more if needed
- ¾ Cup sugar
- Vanilla bean or 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Heavy cream

### Directions:

Pour the wine in a medium saucepan with the pears, sugar and vanilla. Bring to a boil and then down to a simmer and cook for 1 ½ to 4 hours, until the pears are soft to poke with a fork. Top with cream.



## Pear Butter

### Ingredients:

- 3 Pounds ripe pears, peeled, cored and diced
- 3 Tablespoons honey
- 1 Tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 Teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 Teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 Teaspoon salt
- Pinch of ground nutmeg
- Pinch of ground cloves

### Directions:

Stir all ingredients in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium high heat and reduce to a simmer and cook for 50 minutes. Keep covered with the lid slightly open and stir occasionally making sure the bottom does not burn. It should reduce slightly and become thickened. Let the mixture cool then put into a food processor and pulse until smooth. You can also leave it chunky if desired. Transfer to canning jars and put into a hot bath for 20 minutes. I used this same recipe with apples to make apple butter and added a bit of brown sugar. My favorite is the pear butter.



corn syrup. Stir until blended and microwave on high for 14-20 minutes. The total time will depend on your microwave. Stir every 3 minutes. When it has reached the right consistency add the vanilla to the caramel and stir. If you cook it too long the candy will get hard and too short will make it sticky. You can test the caramel by putting a small bit on the tip of a spoon in ice wa-

ter. Wait a few seconds and then test the consistency. If it falls apart, it needs to cook longer. If it is too hard it will be over cooked. Start testing after 14 minutes. Once the caramel has been heated to the correct temperature let it stand for one minute. When dipping pears you will want to select the pears with long stems. Take the pears by the stem and dip into the caramel and turn to coat all the sides. Hold the pear above the caramel and let the excess drip off. I used the aid of a butter knife to scrape the bottom. Place on a parchment paper. You can enjoy with just the caramel or sprinkle with salt and or nuts. If you would like to dip into chocolate, heat the chocolate as directed and dip a portion of the pears into the chocolate and then sprinkle with sea salt or nuts if desired. Enjoy!

## Caramel Dipped Pears

### Ingredients:

- Pears (about 12)
- 1 Cup butter
- 2¼ Ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 Cup light corn syrup
- 1 Teaspoon vanilla
- Dolci Frutta, dipping chocolate (found in the produce isle)
- Sea Salt
- Nuts (I used walnuts)

### Directions:

Melt the butter in a large microwave safe bowl. Be sure that the bowl is large enough in case you have caramel overflow. Add the brown sugar, milk and

## Henry Heimuller for Columbia County Commissioner

I'm working to build **safe, livable communities** in Columbia County. I want local families to have **good-paying jobs** and **great schools**, and **local businesses to thrive**.



### Creating Local Jobs

Nearly 75% of our county's workforce commutes out of the area to work. Commuting is expensive and it reduces the time people can spend with their families and in their communities. We need diversity of jobs --- I am impressed with the "ingenuity Innovation Center, a new local company focused on building community collaboration to support new ventures. **I'm working to bring good-paying jobs back to our county.**

### Focusing on Health and Safety

My experience in transit and emergency response gives me unique insight into safety and transportation issues that affect local people and businesses. My recent appointment to the Oregon Department of Transportation's Rail Hazardous Materials Advisory Committee gives Columbia County a voice in rail policy and safety. **I'm working to ensure our roads, rivers, and rails are safe.**

### Here to Serve You

I've served as a public employee and small business owner. I excel at public-private partnerships, collaboration and teamwork. **As a lifelong resident and your county commissioner for the past 4 years, I am here to serve you.**

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Paid for by the Henry Heimuller for Columbia County Commissioner Committee, 224 S 15th Street, St. Helens, OR 97051