

Peaches Roasted in Vermouth

Serves 4-6 | 10 minutes prep + 20 minutes cook time

The season for peaches here in the Pacific Northwest is short and glorious. The region's peaches aren't nationally celebrated like the fuzzy stone fruit from Georgia or California, and neither Oregon nor Washington make the list of the top ten peach producers. But good weather and experienced orchardists can produce the juicy, sweet peaches of your dreams. And they're ripened on the tree, not picked hard and green so they survive travel from far-flung orchards.

When the local peaches arrive, I follow the example of Portland's favorite eater, James Beard. Eat as many as I can while they're here.

I might preserve some, usually in a simple jam-like spread like our German-inspired pflirsichmus. I'll usually make at least one olive oil cake with peaches (like this but with stone fruit instead of rhubarb), a batch of peach gazpacho, and a peachy version of the Italian bread salad called panzanella. More often than not I'm standing over the kitchen sink with juice running down my arm while biting into a peach, and I'm eating bowls of sliced peaches drizzled with cream several times a week.

If I want something that seems sophisticated, I roast peaches in sweet vermouth. The herby, slightly bitter vermouth plays well with the sweet, acidic fruit, and a drizzle of the Italian syrup made from the buds of the dwarf mugo pine gives the peaches a subtle, evergreen finish. Blackberries ripen around the same time as peaches, so add a few along with some fresh mint if you've got them.

4-6 peaches, halved and pitted

1 cup sweet vermouth

Pine cone bud syrup

**blackberries, to serve
(optional)**

mint, to serve (optional)

**whipped cream or Greek-style
yogurt, to serve (optional)**

Step 1 Preheat oven to 350F.

Step 2 Use a skillet or baking dish that just holds the peaches when arranged cut side down. Pour the vermouth into the skillet, add the peaches, and turn them over a few times so they are coated with the vermouth.

Step 3 Roast for about 20 minutes. Remove from the oven, turn the peaches over so the uncut sides are glazed with the cooking liquid, and let cool. Drizzle with a little of the pine cone bud syrup.

Step 4 Eat as is or add a few fresh berries and, if some creaminess is desired, a dollop of whipped cream or Greek-style yogurt.