

Peaches in Raspberry Crème Anglaise

For the Peaches

4 freestone peaches
2 quarts water
2½ cups sugar
Juice of 1 lemon
4-inch piece ginger
2-inch piece vanilla bean

For the Raspberry Coulis

8 ounces fresh raspberries
4-6 tablespoons sugar
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1 tablespoon framboise, kirsch, or cognac

For the Peaches

In a kettle, bring 2 quarts of water to a boil with the sugar, lemon juice, the peeled ginger cut into small pieces, and the vanilla bean, split down the middle. Boil this mixture for 10 minutes, then lower the heat to a simmer.

Wash the peaches. With a sharp paring knife, cut the peach all the way around along the seam. Gently twist the 2 halves apart, and remove the pits. Add the peach halves to the simmering syrup, place a smaller pot lid atop the peaches to keep them submerged, and poach for a few minutes—generally, 3-5 minutes, just until barely tender. (Don't overcook or they will be quite difficult to peel.)

Remove the peaches from the syrup with slotted spoon. Let them cool until you can handle them. Peel the skin from each half and discard. Return the peach halves to the poaching syrup, place the small pot lid on top so they remain submerged, and refrigerate until ready to serve.

For the Raspberry Coulis

In a food processor, purée the raspberries with the lemon juice, and 4 tablespoons sugar. Taste the purée for sweetness. If not sweet enough, add the remaining 2 tablespoons of sugar, and purée again. Press the purée through a fine-mesh sieve to remove the seeds. Stir in the liqueur of your choice, cover with plastic wrap, and chill until serving time.

For the Crème Anglaise

In a medium-sized heavy-bottomed pot, beat the egg yolks with a whisk. Very gradually, add the sugar, and continue beating until the mixture forms a slowly dissolving ribbon when dropped from the whisk. Beat in the cornstarch.

In the meantime, heat the milk in a small kettle until it boils. By droplets, beat the hot milk into the egg-yolk mixture. Once all the milk has been beaten in, place the kettle over

For the Crème Anglaise

4 large egg yolks
½ cup sugar
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1¼ cups milk
¾ cup raspberry coulis
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 teaspoons framboise, kirsch, or cognac

To Serve

6-8 small Amaretti biscuits

medium heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. Be careful not to let the mixture come anywhere near the simmer, or it will scramble. You want the sauce just to be thick enough to coat your wooden spoon. The maximum temperature before the sauce begins to curdle is 165°.

Remove the kettle from the heat, place it in ice water, and beat with your whisk until the sauce cools. If the sauce has any curdling or lumping, force it through a fine-meshed sieve. Beat in the vanilla, liqueur, and about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the raspberry coulis. Cover and refrigerate the crème until ready to serve. Return the remaining raspberry coulis to the refrigerator until serving time.

To Serve

Place the Amaretti biscuits in a plastic bag, and crush them with a rolling pin until coarse crumbs are formed.

In a serving bowl or plate, spoon a layer of the raspberry crème Anglaise. Remove the peach halves from the poaching liquid with a slotted spoon. Carefully place 1 or 2 peach halves, cut-side-up, onto the crème Anglaise. Spoon a bit of the remaining raspberry coulis over the peaches. Sprinkle the Amaretti crumbs over the top.