

# Sticky Date & Spiced Pear Puddings with Cognac Spiked Caramel Sauce

# Gather & Feast

By Ashley Alexander

These puddings are a definite crowd pleaser and ideal for any occasion. Not only are they visually stunning, but they also offer the convenience of preparing multiple desserts simultaneously. Perfect for those moments when you crave something quick yet impressive. And don't get me started on that lush and silky cognac caramel sauce. Divine!

**SERVES** 6 | **PREP TIME** 25 minutes | **COOK TIME** 25 minutes | **TOTAL TIME** 50 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

### Puddings

- 225g Medjool dates, pitted and roughly chopped
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 375ml (1 1/4 cups) hot water, freshly boiled
- 1 egg
- 150g (3/4 cup) raw castor sugar, raw sugar or castor sugar
- 2 tablespoons vanilla extract
- 180g (1 1/4 cups) plain/all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon ground clove
- 1-2 firm pears, thinly sliced

### Cognac spiked caramel sauce

- 70g (2.45oz) salted butter
- 300g (1 1/2 cups) brown sugar
- 250ml (1 cup) thickened cream/heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon vanilla bean paste or extract
- 1 teaspoon sea salt flakes
- 3 tablespoons cognac, you could also use whisky or brandy, or leave it out
- Crème fraîche to serve



## METHOD

### Puddings

1. Lightly grease 6 individual pudding moulds, 250ml capacity in each, I've used 85x55mm sized moulds, and set aside.
2. Place the pitted dates in a medium-sized bowl.
3. Add the baking soda and freshly boiled hot water.
4. Allow the mixture to sit for 5-10 minutes to soften the dates.
5. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the egg, sugar, and vanilla extract until light and fluffy.
6. Mash the softened dates with a fork until pulpy.
7. Fold the date mixture into the whipped egg and sugar.
8. Add the flour, baking powder, salt, allspice, and clove. Fold until well combined.
9. Place 3-4 slices of pear at the bottom of each prepared pudding mould.
10. Divide the date batter evenly among the moulds.
11. Steam the puddings at 100°C for 25 minutes.
12. Remove from the steam oven and let them sit for 5 minutes.

### Cognac spiked caramel sauce

1. While the puddings are steaming is a great time to make the caramel sauce.
2. Add the butter, brown sugar, thickened cream, and vanilla to a heavy-based saucepan.
3. Stir on medium heat until the butter has melted and the sugar has dissolved.
4. Simmer the sauce on low heat for 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally until slightly thickened.
5. Remove from heat and stir in the cognac (if using) and sea salt flakes. Set aside.

### Serving

1. To serve, turn out the puddings onto serving plates. Drizzle the warm caramel sauce over the puddings and serve with a dollop of crème fraîche or fresh cream.

## NOTES

Dates Preparation: Ensure that the dates are pitted and roughly chopped before adding them to the hot water and baking soda mixture. This step allows the dates to soften and blend smoothly into the batter.

Pudding Moulds: Lightly grease the pudding moulds before assembling the puddings to prevent sticking. Silicone moulds or traditional metal dariole moulds work well for this recipe. They need to be about 250ml capacity in each, I've used 85x55mm sized moulds.

Steaming: If you don't have a steamer, you can improvise by using a large pot with a steaming basket or rack. Ensure that there is enough water in the pot to create steam but not so much that it touches the bottom of the pudding moulds.

Alcohol Substitution: If you prefer not to use cognac in the caramel sauce, you can substitute it with whisky, brandy, or simply omit it altogether for a non-alcoholic version.

Gluten-Free Option: To make this recipe gluten-free, use a gluten-free all-purpose flour blend in place of regular flour.

Storage: These puddings are best enjoyed fresh but can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2-3 days. Reheat individual servings in the microwave or oven before serving.

Caramel Sauce: the sauce can be made a day or two in advance and stored in an airtight container in the fridge and then gently reheated on the stove when serving.



**Find the recipe and watch the video online:**

*<https://www.gatherandfeast.com/sticky-date-spiced-pear-puddings-cognac-spiked-caramel-sauce>*

Let me know if you make the recipe! x **@gatherandfeast**