

**Seasonal Eating**  
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**Pears Take Center Stage for a Fall Dessert**  
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Apples and pears just make me think of fall. They get along so well with all of the warm spices like cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, ginger and cloves that make the house smell divine. While apples are commonly used in baked dishes, pears are seen less often cooked and more in salads and raw applications. So this month I experimented with baking pears in a dessert and came up with Baked Cranberry Pears with Walnut Streusel. This dish will change the tide, putting pears front and center in a baked dessert that smells and tastes like fall on a plate.



I used green Bartlett pears which are very sweet and quite soft when ripe. It is the standard for canned pears and has that mild pear flavor and typical pear shape. Look for ripe pears that have turned from green to yellow and give slightly to pressure but are not bruised. If you have firm, green pears, leave them at room temperature and they will ripen.

Because pears turn brown so quickly in the air, prepare the sauce and streusel first and peel the fruit last when everything is ready to assemble.

The sauce for the pears is based on maple syrup, brown sugar and dried cranberries which add a little tartness. Also to help offset the sweetness there is a little balsamic vinegar and a pinch of salt. This is poured over the pears and into the cavities where the core is removed. The best tool to remove the core is a melon baller. It is the perfect size and leaves a round hollow to fill with the cranberries and syrup.

The top layer of this dessert is a spice infused streusel with cinnamon and allspice. The streusel browns on the top creating a crunchy contrast to the warm, soft pears underneath. Adding to the crunch are the toasted walnuts. Don't skip the toasting step. I just put mine in a dry non-stick skillet and heat on the burner until fragrant, stirring so they don't burn. Cool them slightly before adding to the butter, flour and oat mixture.

If you're looking for a homey, warm dessert, give pears a try. Add a scoop of vanilla ice cream and you're in fall heaven!

Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating ([bedford.tennessee.edu](http://bedford.tennessee.edu)).

## **Baked Cranberry Pears with Walnut Streusel**

1/4 cup maple syrup  
1 tablespoon brown sugar  
1/4 teaspoon balsamic vinegar  
Pinch of kosher salt  
1/4 cup dried cranberries  
1/4 cup brown sugar  
1/4 cup rolled oats  
1/4 cup flour  
Pinch of kosher salt  
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/8 teaspoon ground allspice  
2 tablespoons melted butter  
1/2 cup chopped walnuts, toasted  
4 ripe Bartlett pears

Combine maple syrup, brown sugar, vinegar, salt and dried cranberries. Let stand while preparing streusel and pears. In another bowl, stir together brown sugar, oats, flour, salt, cinnamon and allspice. Add butter and combine well. Stir in the toasted walnuts. Peel the pears and cut in half lengthwise. Use a melon baller to scoop out the core. Place the pears in a 1 1/2 quart baking dish with the scooped out sides up. Pour the maple syrup and cranberry mixture into the hollows of the pears and over the surface of the pears. Top with the streusel mixture. Bake at 375 degrees for 25-30 minutes until browned on top and pears are soft.