

## Perfectly Pleasing Pears Spice Up Home Gatherings



**This pear and goat cheese appetizer is simple yet elegant.**

(NAPSA)—You don't have to break the bank to make home entertaining special. In fact, something as simple as a few pieces of fruit can make an elegant and festive decoration—plus, when your guests leave, you can turn your decor into a sweet yet healthy treat.

For instance, rustic-colored, sweet-tasting USA Pears can be used as decor in any room while they're ripening in a beautiful fruit bowl. Just tuck in fresh-cut evergreen from your yard or other items from your boxes of holiday decorations. Try these additional ideas:

- Layer a glass vase with fresh pears in a variety of colors—green, red, yellow and brown. Fill the vase 2/3 full with water. Gently tuck tall branches or flowers between pears for a showstopping, economical centerpiece.

- Use pears to create inexpensive, homemade gift baskets or bags to give to friends, neighbors, teachers and co-workers.

Once you take down your pear decor, the fruit can be transformed into a simple, elegant dessert such as poached pears. Or you might try this appetizer recipe. It's easy to prepare and impressive to serve at a party:

### **Balsamic Glazed Pear and Goat Cheese Crostini**

*Prep time: 10 minutes*

*Cooking time: 4 minutes*

*Makes: 24 pieces*

- 2 USA Pears**
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar**
- 1 tablespoon butter**
- 1 teaspoon honey**
- 24 baguette rounds, toasted**
- ½ cup goat cheese, spreadable**
- ½ cup almonds, slivered, toasted**
- Black pepper, ground, if desired**

**Slice pears stemside up into 12 quarter-inch wide vertical planks. Cut large slices in half lengthwise for a total of 48 slices.**

**Heat vinegar, butter and honey in large frying pan over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring constant, until reduced by half, about 2 tablespoons. Add pear slices and continue cooking for 1 minute, turning once.**

**Place 2 pear slices on each baguette round and top with 1 teaspoon goat cheese. Sprinkle almonds over cheese and garnish with fresh pepper, if desired.**

For more decorating tips and recipes, visit [www.usapears.org](http://www.usapears.org).