



Bella Vita

MEDITERRANEAN TASTE

Abate Fetel Pears (Pyrus Communis)



General Overview

Pronounced ah-BAH-tay fuh-TEL. Originating in Italy, but developed in France in 1866 by the monk Abbé Fétel, the sweet, and aromatic Abate Fetel pear is very popular in Italy and considered to be among the best in the world. Although most production is in the Italian region of Emilia Romagna, some are grown in Argentina, Chile, South Africa, and California.

Sweet, and aromatic, the Abate Fetel has a pronounced and delicate flavor making it a favorite heirloom variety in Italy. The long, slightly banana-shaped Abate Fetel pears are a yellowish-green with a russet coat. Their white flesh has a slightly crisp texture and a sweet flavor with tones of honey. Abate Fetel pears are ready to eat when they are just barely soft to the touch. Test your Abate Fetel for ripeness by pressing gently on the stem end with your thumb. If the fruit gives slightly, it is ready to eat. If not, leave it in a paper bag at room temperature for a few days.

Its texture is crisp and the fruit has an extraordinary sweet honey flavor that is bolder and more intense than pears of the Anjou and Bartlett varieties. The entire pear is edible, including the seed bed (but not the seeds themselves). Abate Fetel pears have a small seed pocket.

Abate pears ripen quickly, so it is important to keep them refrigerated until one or two days before they are ready for use. They are absolutely delicious eaten on their own, yet also exceptional in baked goods or even tossed in a salad. In Italy, it is traditional to enjoy an Abate Fetel pear with a wedge of high quality parmesan, provolone, taleggio, or even with blue cheese like Gorgonzola.

Economic Importance

Italy is blessed with an extraordinary variety of pears: the first appear in the markets in mid-summer, and then there is a steady stream of pears through the fall and winter months.

Italy is the second largest grower in the world of pears, with about 950,000 MT in 2011 (FAOSTAT). About 35% of the Italian production is represented by the Abate Fetel variety.

Characteristics

Abate Fetel are commercially green with some blush. All pears are covered with more or less russet, depending on growing area.

The Pera Abate ripens in September and October, so Fall is the perfect time for them. Once ripe they soften quickly, and therefore if you buy them you should only buy as many as you plan to use within 2 weeks.

From a nutritional standpoint, Pere Abate are richer in fructose and other simple sugars than most pears, and are therefore ideal when one needs a burst

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of energy. They are also a good source of fiber, mineral salts, and mallic and citric acid, which are antioxidant.

The minimum brix requested for BellaVita Abate Fetel pears is 13°, but by the time they cross the ocean they mostly reach 15-17° Brix.

When green color becomes lighter, the Abate Fetel pear becomes very juicy. Depending on the use and consumer preferences people can choose to eat them green or to let them ripen taking them out from the refrigerator and leaving them at room temperature.

"Con il formaggio e la pera ho creato l'atmosfera"

Though one can do other things with them, the classic Italian way of enjoying a pear is with a moderately firm wedge of Parmesan, or a Pecorino Toscano or Sardo (not Romano, which is much saltier). Indeed, there's a saying: "Non far sapere al contadino quanto é buona la pera col pecorino", don't let the farmer know how good a pear is with pecorino, presumably because if the farmer ever cottoned on to the combination, the supply of pears and cheese would dry up. The other saying mentioned as title on this section is about "creating the good atmosphere for a romantic dinner with pear and cheese, and maybe good Italian red wine.

Uses and Recipes

Italian Recipes With Pears:

Baked Pasta with Pears and Ham (Speck), Pasta Al Forno con Pere e Speck

Duck Stuffed with Pears, Anatra Ripiena con le Pere

Elisabetta's Quick String Bean Salad (with pears)

Fried Apples or Pears Farmer Style, Frittura di Mele o Pere alla Contadinesca

Pears in Wine, Pere al Vino

<http://www.thekitchn.com/abate-fetel-pears-83295>