



## Ken Mayer

Cell: 602-750-3678  
Office: 480- 603-3310  
Email: ken@huntrealestateaz.com

One of the best ways to make a house into a home is to invite some friends over for a meal. If you try this recipe, let me know how it turns out for you. And if you have a favorite recipe of your own, send it my way.

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## Tim's Poached Pears In Port Sauce

A friend of mine served this for dessert recently, and it made a great ending to a wonderful dinner. The fresh fruit makes a flavorful & healthy base, the pecans & cream filling offer contrasting textures, and the port sauce adds a nice kick to the dish.

1 1/2 cups ruby Port  
2 cups water  
1 cup plain sugar  
1/2 cup brown sugar  
1 cinnamon stick  
4 large Anjou pears, peeled & cored, with stem intact  
1/2 cup Mascarpone cheese  
1/4 cup powdered sugar  
1 1/2 teaspoons Amaretto  
1/2 cup pecans, roasted & slightly chopped

1. Pour port, water, plain & brown sugar, and cinnamon stick into a medium saucepan. Stir well, dissolving all sugar.
2. Stand pears in liquid, stem side up. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and simmer, uncovered, about 10 minutes. (Don't over-cook the pears or they will get mushy.) Remove the pears to a plate or Tupperware and refrigerate.
3. Continue to boil the sauce, stirring frequently, until it is reduced to about a cup. Remove the cinnamon, and allow the mixture to cool.
4. Mix Mascarpone & powdered sugar. Add Amaretto and mix until well blended. Fill each pear with 1/4 of the filling & set on serving plates. Drizzle port sauce over pears & sprinkle with roasted pecans, and serve immediately.

Tip #1: Keep a close eye on the port sauce while you are reducing it; if you let it get too hot, it will caramelize. The sauce will still be runny while hot, but will thicken as it cools.

Tip #2: The pears will soften as they simmer, so it's okay if they aren't quite ripe at the start.

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## Hunt Real Estate ERA, Lucas Division

4040 W Ray Road  
Suite #8  
Chandler, AZ 85226

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