

Shared by Benjamin Lesser

Compote

YIELD: 4-6 SERVINGS

TIME: 20 MINUTES

Auschwitz-Birkenau survivor Benjamin Lesser shared this recipe and story in "[Honey Cake & Latkes: Recipes from the Old World by the Auschwitz-Birkenau Survivors](#)." It is reprinted here with permission of the Auschwitz Birkenau Memorial Foundation.

“The story of this compote goes back to Munkatch, Hungary. My grandfather had a stately home on a major street called Sugar—an appropriate name for that sweet home. He had a big orchard and gardens (in the rose garden there was a sukkah made of wine bottles, and I remember seeing prisms of sunlight through the glass). Many kinds of berries and fruits grew in the orchard: raspberries, blueberries, apples, plums, and pears. The orchard also had a red lattice walkway with hanging grapes. Every year, we would line up there and somebody on the tree would drop pears to us. We’d make a big chain all the way to the house, maybe twenty kids. We’d put those pears in tissue paper in the attic to ripen. And of course, we made compote.

When I was a child, we would always pick the fruit while it was hard, not yet ripe. Then we would put all of it in the attic to ripen. Once ripe, pears and all the other fruit picked from my grandfather’s orchard would be sliced and then cooked in the water.

When I make this recipe, I pick fresh pears from my trees, or if I need more fruit, I buy it dried, especially prunes, and place them in the water to achieve the same result.”

Explore more recipes from Holocaust survivors in "[Recipes from the Kitchens of Holocaust Survivors](#)".

Ingredients

3 cups pitted dried prunes

3 cups pitted dried apricots

3 cups dried peaches

1 cup dried pears

1 cup dried apple rings

1 cup raisins/cranberries

1 or 2 lemon slices

½ cup packed light brown sugar

½ cup orange juice

2 tablespoons maple syrup

½ cup sweet wine, or to taste

½ cup water

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Pinch cloves

Preparation

STEP 1

Combine the dried fruit and lemon slices in a 6-quart pot and place over medium heat. Add the brown sugar, orange juice, maple syrup, wine, water and spices and bring to a low boil.

STEP 2

Cover, reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Set aside to cool; the fruit will swell as it cools. Store in airtight containers and refrigerate, or enjoy warm (fantastic over ice cream!)