

Dried Fruit Poached in Port

- 12 prunes
- 8 figs
- 4 apricot/peach halves
- 4 pear halves
- 3 pieces candied ginger
- 1 clove
- 5 allspice berries
- 5 peppercorns
- 1 star anise
- 1-inch cinnamon stick
- 1 cup port
- 1. Combine all ingredients in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Turn heat very low and cover. Cook about 30 min., at which point most of the port will have been absorbed.
- 2. If the fruit is tender, it's done. If not add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, bring to a boil again, cover and cook another 15 min. Repeat as necessary.
- 3. Remove the fruit with a slotted spoon, then strain the liquid to remove the spices. Serve a portion of the fruit warm, cold or at room temperature with a spoonful or two of its juice.

Mark Bittman is Noel's cooking hero. This is from his book, *The Minimalist Cooks at Home* (Broadway Books, 1999).