Dark Chocolate & Red Wine Poached Pears

Serves: 4 people

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 30–40 minutes

Ingredients:

- 4 ripe but firm pears, peeled (leave stems on for presentation)
- 500ml red wine (same or similar to the stew pairing)
- 100g sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2-star anise
- 1 vanilla pod (or 1 tsp vanilla extract)
- 50g dark chocolate (70% cocoa), melted
- Crème fraîche or vanilla ice cream, to serve

Method:

1. **Prepare the poaching liquid:** In a saucepan, combine the red wine, sugar, cinnamon stick, star anise, and vanilla. Bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat.
2. **Poach the pears:** Add the peeled pears to the pan and simmer for 25-30 minutes, turning occasionally, until they are tender and deeply coloured.

3. **Reduce the sauce:** Remove the pears and let them cool slightly. Simmer the poaching liquid for another 10 minutes until it thickens into a syrup.
4. **Serve:** Drizzle the melted dark chocolate over the pears, spoon some syrup on top, and serve with a dollop of crème fraîche or vanilla ice cream.