



# Goat Cheese Mousse with Red Wine Caramel

## INGREDIENTS

2 c dry red wine  
1/2 c ruby port  
1 tsp whole black peppercorns  
1 shallot, minced  
2 thyme sprigs plus 1/2 teaspoon chopped thyme  
1 1/2 c sugar  
4 c strawberries, hulled (2 pints)  
2 tsp finely grated orange zest  
2 tbsp water  
1- 11-ounce log of fresh goat cheese, softened  
2 tbsp heavy cream  
Pinch of freshly ground pepper  
Crostini and toasted walnuts, for serving

## DIRECTIONS

1. In a saucepan, bring the wine, port, black peppercorns, shallot, thyme sprigs and 1 cup of the sugar to a boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Using a moistened pastry brush, wash down any sugar crystals on the side of the pan. Cook over moderate heat, without stirring, until syrupy and reduced to 1 cup, about 35 minutes. Strain and discard the solids. Let the caramel cool slightly. Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan, toss the strawberries, orange zest, water and the remaining 1/2 cup of sugar and let stand until juicy, about 30 minutes.
2. Bring the strawberries to a boil and simmer over moderate heat until slightly thickened and jammy, about 15 minutes. Transfer the compote to a bowl and let cool.
3. In a medium bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the goat cheese, cream, ground pepper and chopped thyme until creamy. Spoon the mousse into a bowl and serve with the compote, caramel, crostini and walnuts so guests can assemble their own.