

Carrot Pudding with Raisins and Pistachios

Adapted from *Madhur Jaffery's Indian Cooking*, Barron's, 1983

I start this recipe by condensing the milk, but you can start with half the amount of milk, and a can of sweetened condensed milk, if you want your halva to come together faster. The rose water is the biggest deviation from tradition in this recipe, but K.M. and I both like the addition. But don't hesitate to leave it out if you can't find it, or want a more authentic taste.

2 quarts whole milk – preferably non-homogenized
½ cup sugar
½ teaspoon salt
12 cardamom pods
1 ½ inch stick of cinnamon
½ cup raisins
¼ cup rose water
1 cup pistachios, shelled, toasted
4 tablespoons Cardamom sugar (recipe follows)
1 lb. carrots, grated

Heat the milk in a heavy sauce pan over medium heat. Add the sugar and spices and then stir until the sugar dissolves. Try to keep the milk simmering just below a boil, and stir it frequently, reducing the heat as necessary to prevent a burn. Your goal is to reduce the milk by half, which will take at least an hour or more – depending on the size of your pan; the wider the pan, the faster the reduction.

While the milk reduces warm the rose water in the microwave for about 40 second, and then soak the raisins in the water – you can also do this the night before. Keep the raisins in the water for a least an hour.

Using the pulse setting on the food processor roughly chop the pistachios. Add the rosewater soaked raisins and cardamom sugar and pulse on more time. (I usually get the nuts out of the food processor and grate the carrots using the machine at this point too.)

When the milk has reduced remove the spices, using a spoon or a strainer. Add the carrots to the milk, and bring the pudding to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low, and stir every so often, until the milk has evaporated.

Remove the pot from the heat. Stir in the pistachio mixture until well combined. Serve at room temperature, or warmed, with cream, vanilla ice cream, or on its own. This is a rich dessert, and I serve it in small portions, but it keeps very well in the refrigerator, and can even be frozen. For me, this recipe makes about 16 servings.

Cardamom Sugar

8 whole cardamom pods

½ cup sugar

Make the sugar at least a day before you plan to use it. Split open the cardamom pods and remove the seeds. Grind them in a spice grinder and add the powder to the sugar. Stir to combine and store in an airtight container.