

**THE MILLENNIAL COOK**  
FARIHA AMBER



# Delicious dishes featuring pistachios

Pistachio is undeniably one of the best gifts of nature. A precious ingredient that invigorates both senses, being not only stimulating to the taste palate, but also appealing to the eyes with its subtle green hue. Albeit being a simple ingredient with humble origins, a little bit of pistachio adds a touch of royalty to any dish.

The versatile nature of pistachio makes it applicable to use in a variety of food, both savoury and sweet, and this is just one reason why we tend to love it so much! Apart from adding a depth of flavour and finesse to every dish, this nutty element is as good by itself to be enjoyed as a snack, or an accoutrement to complement other dishes.

The aroma of pistachio, its soothing colour along with its distinct taste makes it the perfect package of deliciousness. Thus, here are some exquisite dessert recipes made using pistachios that scream royalty.

## BAKLAVA FOLDS

*This contemporary twist on the traditional baklava is for those individuals who like a decadent dessert and yet try to consume lesser calories. This rendition of baklava is light and delicate, with all the deliciousness of the sinfully indulgent dessert, minus the grease!*

### Ingredients

12 sheets filo pastry  
1 cup pistachio nuts  
½ cup ghee  
½ cup butter  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup water  
¼ cup cinnamon sugar  
½ cup green candy melts  
½ cup chocolate buttons  
Flower decorations for garnish

### Method

Firstly, prepare the simple syrup, which is simply a syrup made with equal parts sugar and water. Heat

them together and allow the sugar to dissolve and set this mixture aside. Next, heat the butter and ghee together to make a homogenous mixture and preheat your oven at 160° C.

Pulse the pistachio nuts to a coarse mixture and grease a baking tray with butter. Work with one filo sheet at a time and cover the rest until they are needed. Generously brush the butter and ghee mixture over the filo sheet and heavily coat it with a single layer of ground pistachio nuts.

Fold it in half and sprinkle over some cinnamon sugar. Fold it twice until you are left with a manageable rectangle. Brush the top and edges with more butter and let them bake in the oven for 15 – 20 minutes. Meanwhile, separately melt green and chocolate candy melts for later use.

Take the baklava folds out of the oven and immediately spoon the simple syrup over them so that it is absorbed while they're still hot. Let them cool slightly and pour over a spoonful of molten chocolate on each. Sprinkle over some more ground pistachios and garnish them

with flower decorations.



## PISTA FLAN

*Fusion food at its best, this recipe combines the creaminess of a flan with the crunch of vermicelli and pistachios. Every spoonful of this delightful dessert is packed with layers of delectable flavour and amazing textures.*

### Ingredients

2 eggs  
170g sterilized cream  
¾ cup condensed milk  
¾ cup ground pistachio nuts  
1 tsp cardamom powder  
110g vermicelli  
2 tbsp ghee  
Chopped almonds for garnish

### Method

To make the flan, beat the eggs until they are foamy and add in half cup condensed milk along with cream. Mix them well before adding in half a cup of finely ground pistachio nuts and a teaspoon of cardamom powder. Beat everything together until it becomes a thick and creamy mixture.

Pour this in your serving dish and cover with aluminium foil. Let it steam for 30 – 40 minutes on medium-high heat. Crush the vermicelli strands into very small pieces and lightly roast them with ghee in a pan. Add a tablespoon of ground pistachio nuts along with a quarter cup of condensed milk into this mixture and combine.

Once the flan is done, remove the foil and allow it to cool slightly. Press the vermicelli mixture over it evenly before densely coating the entire top with ground pistachio nuts. Decorate the top with almonds as you like.

## PISTA SHERBET

*This regal drink is as indulgent as it is nutritious. Packed with the goodness of almonds and pistachios where every sip has a soothing effect, which not only cools down the stomach and throat, but is sublime to the eyes as well.*

### Ingredients

4 cups milk  
½ cup chopped pistachios  
¼ cup almond paste  
3 tbsp honey  
½ tsp cardamom powder  
Few saffron strands

### Method

Heat four cups of milk in a pan and allow it to come to a boil. Separate a tablespoon of hot milk and add in the saffron strands to this; let it infuse. Bring the milk to a boil again and then add in the almond paste along with cardamom powder and

honey. Stir everything together and then add in the saffron-infused milk along with chopped pistachio nuts.

Keep stirring continuously until the milk is visibly reduced and thicker. Take this off the heat and allow it to cool in room temperature before chilling it in the refrigerator. Sprinkle atop some slithered pistachio nuts and serve this chilled, but do not add ice as that will water it down.

## VERMICELLI BARFI

*This unique barfi is not your ordinary vermicelli dessert, which contains a delicious crunch and nutty aroma. Speaking from personal experience, for years, I have had guests hounding me for the recipe of this distinctive dessert, so here goes!*

### Ingredients

200g vermicelli  
4 tbsp ghee  
¼ cup desiccated coconut  
¾ cup ground pistachios  
300g condensed milk

### Method

Crush one pack of vermicelli into very fine pieces and toast them on medium-heat in a pan with ghee. Stir continuously while toasting and add in desiccated coconut along with half cup ground pistachio nuts after 4-5 minutes, then cook for a couple minutes more.

Pour in condensed milk into this mixture and combine everything together. At this stage, it should be a slightly gooey mixture that holds its shape. Grease a dish with ghee and drop the barfi mixture in it and press the top to even out the surface.

Then, densely coat the top with ground pistachio nuts and press hard against the surface. Cool this at room temperature for half an hour before chilling it in the refrigerator. Once chilled, cut them into your desired shapes before serving.

**By Fariha Amber**  
**Food and Photo: Fariha Amber**

