



Middle Eastern Sweets



Middle

Salma Hage




Eastern

Desserts, Pastries, Creams & Treats

Sweets





	Introduction 06	
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
Cookies 12	Pancakes 34	
Filo & Dough 48		
Sweets, Syrups & Confectionery 78		
Ice Cream 106	Cakes 126	
Fruit 158	Sweet Breads & Dough 186	
Creams & Puddings 202	Drinks 216	
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		 <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Glossary 230	Index 234	



Introduction

06



Cookies
12

Pancakes
34

Filo & Dough
48

Sweets, Syrups & Confectionery
78

Ice Cream
106

Cakes
126

Fruit
158

Sweet Breads & Dough
186

Creams & Puddings
202

Drinks
216



Glossary
230

Index
234



Introduction

Salma Hage



For many of us, our first experiences in the kitchen involve flour, butter, and sugar. Cutting cookies into stars, suns, and moons, rolling out dough, and of course, licking the spoon after making cake batter or icing, all make entertaining work for little hands, and there are few childhood pleasures more rewarding than turning seemingly random ingredients into a delectable treat to be offered to family and friends. As someone from a large family, it's perhaps not surprising that I began cooking at a young age, watching my mother and grandmother prepare *ma'moul* (Lebanese stuffed cookies), with fragrant, heavy melons, juicy grapes and figs to look forward to, even before the savory meal had been served. The fruit bowl is, after all, the way most Middle Eastern families will end a meal. Food, and particularly sweet things, is one of the most ubiquitous languages of love, transcending countries, generations, and dialects. Although we might not all share the same early experiences (whereas you may have specialized in shortbread first, for me it was *ma'moul*), we can always recognize an offering of adoration in a carefully decorated cake, or a warm batch of cookies straight from the oven.



I struggle to think of any sweet scents more evocative of my childhood than those of orange blossom and rose waters. These fragrant waters are in fact by-products of the distillation of rose and orange flower petals for their essential oils, and are used to flavor syrups and permeate their delicate aroma through batters and fillings, giving a distinctive taste of the pastry counters and cake stands of the Middle East, as well as the flaky pastries served in homes to mark the end of a meal. The aroma is so appealing, exotic, and has the potency to transform the humblest of sponges into a regal cake, fit for the most special guests around the table. Often the flavor is described as bitter, which is fitting, as they are used in some of the most sugary syrups and pastries to cut through the sweetness. Trade routes brought orange blossom and rose waters to European kitchens and courts in the Middle Ages, where they were first used to mask unpleasant smells, to wash hands before eating and to strengthen organs. Subsequently, flower waters became more common as culinary ingredients to flavor fruit-based desserts, almond cakes, and French delicacies, such as madeleines and *canelés*. I felt grateful to have easy access to a familiar, nostalgic ingredient when I chose to start a new life with my husband Heni and young son, Joe.



After leaving Lebanon for London in my twenties with my family, I had subsequent decades of cooking in kitchens, both at home and professionally, to furnish me with the knowledge that nothing can light up a table like a dessert. Lebanese hospitality has always been about generosity, abundance and over-catering. Nothing strikes more fear into a Lebanese home cook than the risk of running out of food before the last guests have left. It's fitting, then, that just as we have our baklavas, layered with honeyed nuts and spices, we're also generous with our respect and delight for the sweet specialties of the cultures that have married with ours over the years.

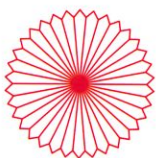
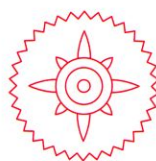
“I struggle to think of any sweet scents more evocative of my childhood than those of orange blossom and rose waters.”

The French and European influence that percolated through Lebanon and other areas of the Middle East from the 1920s, after the establishment of the French Protectorate and the growth of the colonial empire, brought cosmopolitan Beirut a reputation as ‘the Paris of the Middle East’, with plenty of opportunity to enjoy French pâtisseries, gâteaux, and tarts in the homes, cafés, and streets of the region. As a young woman, I remember the joy and revelation of biting into my first piece of pâtisserie, with its crisp, flaky edges and buttery, toasty perfume, which wafted from the bakeries, luring in passers-by.

At the outset of developing the recipes for this book, I felt somewhat conflicted: was it a sensible endeavor, writing a book in which, crudely, the unifying ingredient is sugar in a time when sugar itself is a kind of culinary pariah? After all, we live in an age where vegetables are juiced almost as much as they are cooked, and chips (crisps) are made from kale. If you’re picking up this book because the idea of a collection of sweet Middle Eastern desserts thrills you, then like me, you may have a complex relationship with sugar and sweet things (or perhaps you are simply keen to learn how to make halva!). An awareness of my health and that of my family means that I indulge less than perhaps I would if I was free to eat what I please, in spite of the consequences. That being said, I’m a firm believer in the expression ‘a little of what you fancy does you good’, and, as life is all about balance, I often fancy a little something sweet after something savory. Even though we lead busier and busier lives, for me there’s nothing as grounding, satisfying and joyful as rolling, baking, and biting into a dessert that I’ve cooked from scratch.

While many of the recipes in this book are versions of traditional sweets and desserts that have been handed down and tweaked, generation by generation, by the Lebanese women in my family, I’ve also looked to other cultures in the Middle East to showcase the variety of sweet treats throughout the wider region. While baklava and *kunafa* are found in most cafés around the Middle East, whether you’re in Lebanon or the UAE, om ali is distinctly Egyptian, and pistachio *katmer* is a special flaky pancake, served to newlyweds in Gaziantep, a Turkish city near the border with Syria, for example. In short, the book has been inspired by my family and recipes I cook at home just as much as it’s been influenced by other Middle Eastern cooks I’ve met, stories I’ve heard and desserts I’ve enjoyed over the years. Whatever its origin, each recipe has been tested in my home kitchen and by others, so they can easily be recreated in your oven, freezer or on your stove top without fancy equipment (apart from a few specialist cake molds), techniques or hard-to-come-by ingredients.

Whatever you choose, I hope you’ll see that this is food to make and mark good times: for comforting, confiding, celebrating, and showing love. From my kitchen, to yours, enjoy creating a little sweetness from time to time.





Vegan



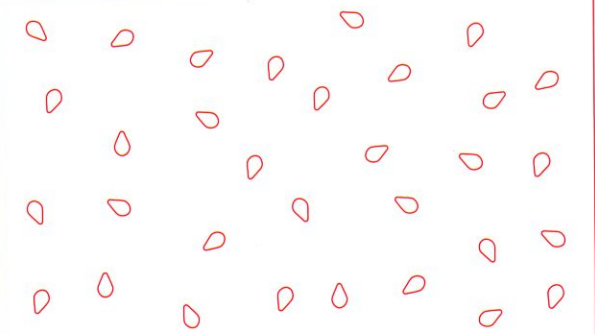
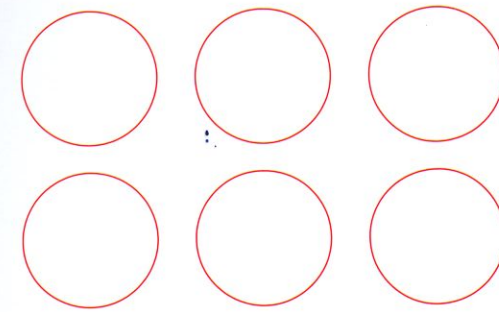
Dairy free



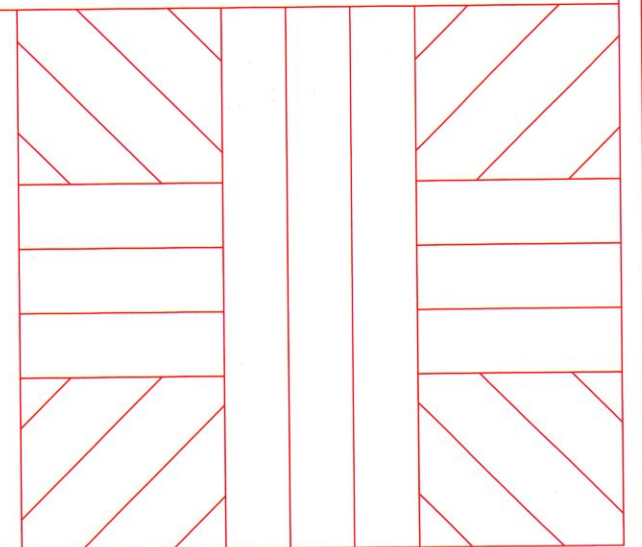
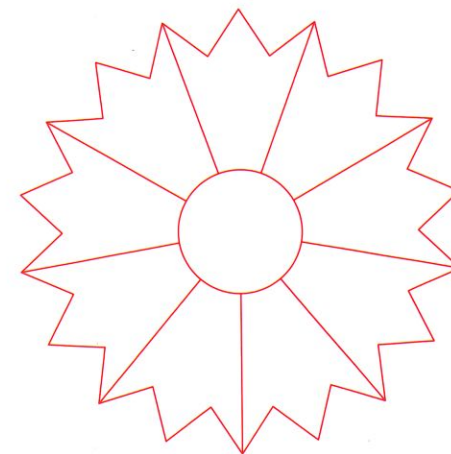
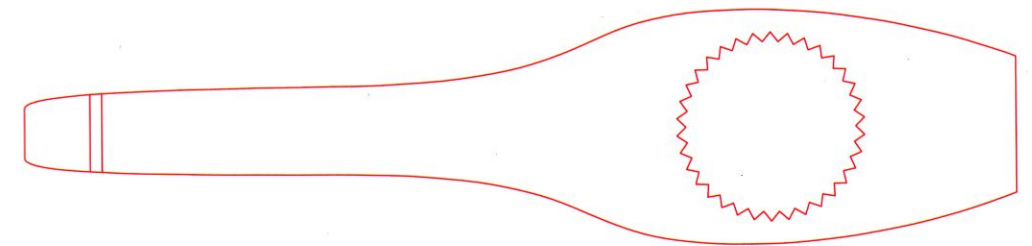
Nut free



Gluten free



Cookies



Syrian Sesame & Pistachio Biscuits (*Barazek*)



These thin, crisp cookies have the best elements of shortbread, baklava, and crunchy ginger snap cookies all in one. With gently toasted nuts and seeds, laced with aromatic honey coating a buttery, light cookie, these are enjoyed all over the Middle East dunked into strong hot tea or Arabic coffee. They're thought to have their origins in Syria, probably because the bakeries in Damascus were historically famous for their *barazek*, sold in decorative tins.

You'll see mahleb (see glossary page 232) in other recipes in this book. Do try to track it down if you haven't yet used it to make the *Ma'moul* on page 23 or the Saffron Cookies on page 28—it's really what makes these cookies taste as though they could be sold in a souk, or indeed a Damascene bakery.

Makes about 25

Prep: 45 minutes

Rest: 20 minutes

Cook: 15 minutes (may need to
be cooked in a few batches)

½ teaspoon fast-acting dried yeast

4 oz/125 g unsalted butter, softened

1½ cups (5½ oz/150 g) confectioners' (icing) sugar

½ teaspoon mahleb

1½ cups (7 oz/200 g) all-purpose (plain) flour

1 cup (5½ oz/150 g) sesame seeds

¾ cup (3½ oz/100 g) raw pistachios,
roughly chopped

For the syrup

½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) superfine (caster) sugar

1 oz/25 g runny honey

- Place the yeast in a small mixing bowl and cover with ¼ cup (2 fl oz/50 ml) of warm water. Set aside for 10 minutes until the liquid begins to foam and smells active (not unlike a brewer's).
- Beat the butter and sugar together with an electric whisk until pale and fluffy. Add the yeast and water and beat again. Sift the mahleb, then the flour, into the bowl, ½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) at a time, beating each time to combine. Shape the dough into a ball and cover with plastic wrap (cling film). Place the dough in a cool spot (not in the fridge) for 20 minutes.
- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- While the dough is resting, make the syrup. Measure the sugar and honey into a medium saucepan and add ½ cup (4 fl oz/125 ml) of water. Bring to the boil, without a lid, then turn the temperature down so the liquid is at a vibrant simmer. Allow to bubble for

8 minutes, until reduced in volume by a third and just starting to thicken. Remove from the heat.

- Have a bowl of water ready nearby. Sprinkle the sesame seeds on a plate and cover with syrup. Mix to distribute the syrup evenly. Arrange the pistachios on a separate plate. Take a teaspoon of the rested dough and roll it into a ball between slightly wet palms (use the water from the ready prepared bowl). Flatten the dough into a thin disc between your hands—it will be difficult to work with, but water between your hands and the dough will prevent everything from becoming too sticky. Press one side of the dough into the pistachios, then flip it on to the sesame seed plate.
- Try to make sure the cookie is generously covered in the nuts. Put the coated cookie on a baking sheet lined with parchment (baking) paper, sesame seed side up.
- Repeat with the remaining dough, coating either side with pistachio and sesame seeds. Leave about 1¼ inches (3 cm) between the cookies on the baking sheet and use two sheets if you need to.
- Bake in the oven for 15 minutes, until deep golden at the edges. Allow the cookies to cool on the baking sheet before transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely. Store in an airtight container for up to a week.



Sour Cherry & Almond Wafers



If you haven't tried sour cherries before, this recipe is the perfect introduction to them. Sour cherries are much more acidic than the fresh cherries that you'd typically see on greengrocers' shelves in the summer months. When they're dried they take on a salty, puckering quality which can be quite a shock the first time around!

These wafers are packed with dried fruit and nuts, so they don't look too dissimilar to Italian biscotti when they're baked. I serve mine with the Cardamom Ice Cream on page 121.

Makes about 48

Prep: 35 minutes

Chill: 3 hours

Cook: 12 minutes (may need to be cooked in a few batches)

2½ cups (14 oz/400 g) all-purpose (plain) flour

½ teaspoon baking soda (bicarbonate of soda)

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground allspice

½ teaspoon fine sea salt

3½ oz/100 g unsalted butter

1½ cups (9 oz/250 g) soft brown sugar

1 teaspoon rose water

1 cup (5½ oz/150 g) whole almonds, skin on

½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) dried sour cherries

½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) golden sultanas

- Sift the flour, baking soda (bicarbonate of soda), spices and salt into a mixing bowl.
- Measure the butter and sugar into a small saucepan and pour in ¼ cup (2 fl oz/60 ml) of water. Bring the pan to the boil, then turn the heat down and simmer very gently for 5–7 minutes, until the sugar is completely dissolved. Remove from the heat and allow to cool for 3 minutes before stirring in the rose water.
- Stir the nuts and dried fruit, along with the butter and sugar mixture, through the flour and spices until a glossy dough forms. Lightly grease and line a 2-lb/900-g loaf tin with parchment (baking) paper and scrape in the dough. Use a spatula to even out the top and cover the tin with plastic wrap (cling film).
- Place in the fridge to chill for at least 3 hours.
- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.

- Line a baking sheet with parchment (baking) paper. Remove the chilled dough from the fridge and lift it out on to a cutting (chopping) board. Peel away the parchment—the dough should be a heavy, solid block. Use your sharpest knife to slice ⅛-inch (2–3-mm) slices of the dough, transferring each one to the baking sheet as you go. Allow about 1¼ inches (3 cm) between the slices on the baking sheet, as they will spread slightly as they cook. Bake for 12 minutes, then remove from the oven.
- Allow the wafers to cool on the baking sheet for 3 minutes, then transfer with a flat cake slice on to a wire (cooling) rack to crisp and cool completely.
- Continue to bake in batches until the dough is used up, or make as many as you need and freeze the rest of the dough for another time. It will keep in the freezer for up to 3 months. Store the cooled wafers in an airtight container for up to 6 days.





Salted Tahini & Chocolate Cookies

If you want to make one recipe from this book to please a crowd, then let this be it. With the richness and unusually high chocolate content of an American-style chocolate chip cookie, this was a hit with the youngest to oldest of my testers while I was developing and writing these recipes. I use tahini here, also inspired by the use of peanut butter in American-style cookies, to lend a creamy, nutty character that is offset by the intensity of dark chocolate.

Don't be tempted to reduce the chilling time when making these, as I've done to my chagrin once or twice, resulting in cookies which spread to make one thin, giant mass. Try serving these with the Arabic Coffee on page 228.

Makes 30

Prep: 40 minutes

Chill: 2+ hours

Cook: 10 minutes

2 cups (9 oz/250 g) wholemeal rye flour
 1½ cups (7 oz/200 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 ½ teaspoon baking soda (bicarbonate of soda)
 1 teaspoon flaky sea salt
 (7 oz/200 g) unsalted butter, softened
 ¼ cup (5½ oz/150 g) tahini
 1¼ cups (13 oz/375 g) light brown sugar
 1 teaspoon vanilla paste or extract
 2 large eggs, plus 2 egg yolks
 9 oz/250 g dark chocolate (at least 65% cocoa solids), roughly chopped
 3½ oz/100 g white chocolate, roughly chopped

- Tip in the flours, baking powder, and baking soda (bicarbonate of soda) into a large mixing bowl. Add the sea salt, mix to combine, then set the bowl aside. Cut the butter into rough cubes and place in a separate large mixing bowl with the tahini, brown sugar, and vanilla. Use an electric beater to beat for 5 minutes on a medium speed until lighter in color and fluffy (this is easiest with a stand mixer, although a handheld electric whisk will work too; you may just need to keep scraping down the sides).
- Add the eggs and yolks to the tahini mixture one by one and whisk to combine, until completely incorporated. Add one-third of the flour mixture and beat to combine, then repeat twice with the remaining flour until no dry patches are visible. Add all the chocolate and mix well. Cover the mixing bowl with plastic wrap (cling film) and chill in the fridge for 2–3 hours, until firm to the touch.

- Preheat the oven to 375°F/190°C/gas mark 5. Roll the dough into golf ball-sized rounds with wet hands, and place on two baking sheets lined with parchment (baking) paper, with ¾ inch (2 cm) between them.
- Bake in the preheated oven for 10 minutes. Allow the cookies to cool on the tray for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack until completely cool.
- Keep in a sealed container for up to 5 days.

Moroccan Sesame Shortbread (*Ghoriba*)



I love the slightly coarse texture of these Moroccan cookies. Using slivered almonds rather than almond meal (ground almonds) has the benefit of retaining some of the nut's crunch as well as its flavor (many of the flavored oils of nuts are lost to the atmosphere when they are ground and stored). If you'd prefer to make a smaller batch, freeze half the dough to bake for another time (it will keep in the freezer for up to 6 months).

Alternatively, I do like the slightly chewy, macaron quality these cookies take on when stored for a few days, so I often make a full batch and enjoy them over a couple of weeks.

Makes about 40

Prep: 45 minutes

Chill: 1 hour

Cook: 15 minutes

1 oz/30 g slivered almonds, toasted

1 oz/30 g sesame seeds, toasted

1 teaspoon rose water

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/50 g) superfine (caster) sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ oz/20 g demerara sugar

4 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/125 g butter

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (5 fl oz/150 ml) vegetable oil

2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups (13 oz/ 375 g) all-purpose (plain) flour

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (2 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz/75 g) confectioners' (icing) sugar

1 teaspoon baking powder

- Blitz the almonds in a food processor until a fine crumb forms. Decant into a bowl with the sesame seeds and mix with the rose water, superfine (caster) and demerara sugars. Set aside.
- In a small saucepan, gently melt the butter with the oil. Tip into a large mixing bowl. Sift the flour, confectioners' (icing) sugar, and baking powder into the bowl and mix to combine. Add the almond and sesame mixture, mix to combine and form into a ball of dough. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap (cling film) and chill in the fridge for at least an hour, until firm.
- Heat the oven to 325°F/170°C/gas mark 3.
- Line two baking sheets with parchment (baking) paper. Take a walnut-sized piece of dough and roll it into a ball. Place the rolled dough on the paper and press down in the center with your thumb to form an indent. Repeat with the remaining dough, spacing the cookies $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (2 cm) apart.

- Bake in the oven for 15 minutes—they will be lightly golden and will still be soft when you take them out. Allow them to cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- Once cool, transfer to an airtight container. The shortbread cookies will keep like this for up to 2 weeks.



Persian Chickpea Shortbread

Gram flour, made from ground chickpeas, is a wonder ingredient in my kitchen. I use it to make vegan omelets for my grandson, and here to make crunchy, gluten-free shortbread cookies. Because of its high protein content, gram flour can feel quite dense and tough to work with, but when baked it yields a lovely crisp shortbread.

I use ground cardamom in these Persian cookies because I love its warming, exotic flavor (the aroma is divine while they're being baked in the oven). I'm sure a pinch of saffron would be a lovely addition too if you're feeling flash, just be sure to soak the saffron strands in warm water before using.

Makes about 18
Prep: 20 minutes
Chill: 1 hour
Cook: 15 minutes

3½ oz/100 g unsalted butter, softened
1½ cups (5½ oz/150 g) confectioners' (icing) sugar
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
1 teaspoon rose water
1½ cups (7 oz/200 g) chickpea (gram) flour

- Beat the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Stir in the remaining ingredients with your hands, squeezing to form the mixture into a ball of dough. If it feels too dry and doesn't come together, add up to 1 fl oz/30 ml of water, a teaspoon at a time, until it does. Form the dough into a 1¼-inch (3-cm) thick disc, cover with plastic wrap (cling film) and chill in the fridge for at least an hour.
- Heat the oven to 300°F/150°C/gas mark 2. Line a baking sheet with parchment (baking) paper.
- Remove the dough from the fridge and break it into 1¼-inch (3-cm) irregular pieces. Transfer the cookies to the baking sheet and bake in the oven for 15 minutes.
- Allow to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer the shortbread to a wire rack. Allow to cool completely before transferring to an airtight container.

Lebanese Stuffed Cookies (*Ma'moul*)

Ma'moul are familiar throughout the Middle East, but these are my Lebanese version, made with dates, pistachios, or walnuts. My experience is that the shape of the mold dictates the filling (so you can choose your cookie flavor even though the filling is hidden inside). See page 6 for a visual guide to the molds. I know that some cooks don't treat this as a hard-and-fast rule, however, so if you only want to get started with one mold shape, choose your favorite and have fun guessing the mystery flavor!

These cookies might taste a little unusual to those with a sweet tooth, as the sugar volume is low in the cookies themselves, but the filling is sweetened with sugar and flavored with delicate rose water. Delicious variations include figs or dried apricots. I once tasted a moreish version with pine nuts, too.

Makes about 40
Prep: 2 hours, plus 3+ hours resting time
Cook: 30 minutes

For the cookies
9 oz/250 g unsalted butter
3 cups (1 lb 2oz/500 g) coarse semolina
3 tablespoons superfine (caster) sugar
1 tablespoon mahleb
1 cup (5½ oz/150 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
½ teaspoon fast-acting dried yeast
1 tablespoon rose water

For the date filling
2½ cups (10½ oz/300 g) pitted Medjool dates
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground star anise

For the walnut filling
¾ cup (3½ oz/100 g) walnuts
2 tablespoons superfine (caster) sugar
1 tablespoon orange blossom water

For the pistachio filling
¾ cup (3½ oz/100 g) raw pistachios
2 tablespoons superfine (caster) sugar
1 tablespoon rose water

- Melt the butter in a large saucepan and stir in the semolina, sugar, and mahleb. Push the mixture down with the back of a wooden spoon to compact it, then cover and remove from the heat. Let stand for 3 hours or overnight at room temperature.
- To make the date filling, put the dates into a saucepan, add 1 tablespoon of water and cook until softened. Stir in the spices and blend in a food processor. Scrape into a bowl and set aside.

- To make the walnut filling, put the walnuts, sugar, and orange blossom water into the food processor and process to fine crumbs. Scrape into a bowl and set aside.
- To make the pistachio filling, put the pistachios, sugar, and rose water into a food processor and process to fine crumbs. Scrape into a third bowl and set aside.
- Return the semolina mixture to a low heat for a few minutes to loosen, then tip into a large mixing bowl. Add the flour, yeast, and rose water, along with 2 tablespoons of water. Knead the mixture for 10–15 minutes in the bowl until a pliable dough forms.
- Heat the oven to 325°F/160°C/gas mark 3. Take a handful of dough and dust it with flour, then flatten into a 4-inch (10-cm) round disc between your hands. Put 1 tablespoon of filling of your choice in the center, then shape the dough around the filling, pinching it together to encase it completely.
- Dust with flour and press into a *ma'moul* mold or shape into a round if you don't have one (it will taste the same, but will look less authentic). Tap the mold on a work counter to release the cookie and place on a baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining dough and fillings until all the dough is used up. You may have some of one or two of the fillings left over and you could use them in the *Qatayef* recipe on page 38.
- Bake for 30–35 minutes until golden, then transfer to a wire rack to cool.
- Allow the cookies to cool completely before eating, as the dough will still be crumbly. Store in an airtight container for up to a week.

1
Lebanese Stuffed
Cookies (*Ma'moul*)
p. 23

2
Persian Chickpea
Shortbread
p. 22



Ma'karon Cookies



Pistachios lend these cookies a pale green hue, and more importantly a delicious subtle buttery flavor. A less refined version than a French macaron, these don't require any fancy piping or complicated sugar thermometers—rather, the blitzed nuts are mixed with lots of lemon zest and juice to create a light and richly textured cookie.

If, like me, you prefer a slightly chewy center, follow the instructions in the recipe to remove them after 12 minutes in the oven.

Makes 18
Prep: 15 minutes
Cook: 12–15 minutes

For the cookies

1 cup (5½ oz/150 g) almond meal (ground almonds)
¾ cup (4½ oz/125 g) ground pistachios
1 cup (4 oz/110 g) confectioners' (icing) sugar, sifted, plus extra for rolling
½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) all-purpose (plain) flour, sifted
grated zest of 2 unwaxed lemons
1 egg, plus 1 egg white

For the glaze

juice of ½ a lemon
½ teaspoon orange blossom water
6 tablespoons confectioners' (icing) sugar, sifted

until smooth and glossy. Drizzle the glaze over the slightly cooled cookies and allow to cool completely and the glaze to set.

• When cool, transfer to an airtight container between layers of parchment paper. The cookies will keep stored like this for a week.

- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4. Mix all the ingredients for the cookies together in a mixing bowl with a wooden spoon until you have a soft, smooth dough.
- Dust your hands liberally with confectioners' (icing) sugar. Take a walnut-sized piece of the dough and roll it between your palms to form a ball.
- Place on a 10×14-inch (25×35-cm) baking sheet lined with parchment (baking) paper and repeat with the rest of the dough, continuing to dust your hands with confectioners' sugar as you work. Make an indent with your thumb in the center of each round of dough. Bake in the hot oven for 12 minutes for a soft-centered cookie, or 15 minutes for a crisper finish.
- Allow to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes.
- Meanwhile, put the ingredients for the glaze into a small mixing bowl and use a small whisk to combine



Saffron Cookies



These cookies are incredibly delicate, so don't be tempted to leave out the dough chilling time—this will help to keep the dough together when you're cutting them to size (too warm and it will tear easily).

Mahleb is an aromatic spice made from the seeds of a variety of cherry, and is common in Middle Eastern baking (see glossary, page 230)—it appears in a few recipes in this book, so it's well worth tracking down in specialist stores or online. If you're short on time or can't track down mahleb easily, try substituting ¼ teaspoon of almond extract; the cookies won't taste the same but they will still be delicious.

Makes 20
Prep: 25 minutes
Chill: 1 hour
Cook: 15 minutes

pinch of saffron
Scant ½ cup (2¼ oz/80 g) superfine (caster) sugar,
plus a couple of tablespoons for sprinkling
¾ oz/100 g butter, softened
pinch of fine sea salt
1 egg yolk
generous 1 cup (6 oz/175 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
½ oz/10 g cornstarch (cornflour)
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon mahleb
1 oz/25 g almond meal (ground almonds)

- Place the saffron in a small bowl and add 1 tablespoon of hot water from the kettle. Set aside.
- Beat the sugar and butter together with an electric whisk until pale and fluffy, then add the salt, saffron water (and all the saffron strands), and egg yolk. Beat again to combine. Sift over the flour, corn starch (cornflour), and baking powder. Add the mahleb and almond meal (ground almonds) and mix again to combine. Shape the cookie dough into a round, cover with plastic wrap (cling film) and chill in the fridge for an hour.
- Heat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Roll the chilled cookie dough out to ¼-inch (5-mm) thickness and use 2½-inch (6-cm) cutters to cut rounds from the dough. Transfer the rounds to one or two baking sheets lined with parchment (baking) paper. When the rolled dough is too holey to cut any more rounds, bring it back together, roll it out and

repeat until all the dough has been used up. Sprinkle the top of each round with sugar and bake in the oven for 15 minutes, until golden brown all over. Remove the cookies from the oven and allow them to cool for a few minutes before lifting each one on to a wire rack.

- Let the cookies cool completely before transferring them to an airtight container. They will keep like this for a week.



Fig Jam Thumbprint Cookies



Thumbprint cookies are a perfect thing to make with children, and are so simple that after a few batches you're unlikely to need to look at the recipe apart from a cursory confirmation of weights and measures.

This fig jam has a sophisticated 'adult' flavor (see the recipe on page 179), but if you're cooking for little ones who prefer strawberry or raspberry jam, by all means use that instead.

Makes 24

Prep: 15 minutes

Chill: 20 minutes

Cook: 10–12 minutes

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (2 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/80 g) confectioners' (icing) sugar

5 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/150 g unsalted butter, softened

1 egg yolk

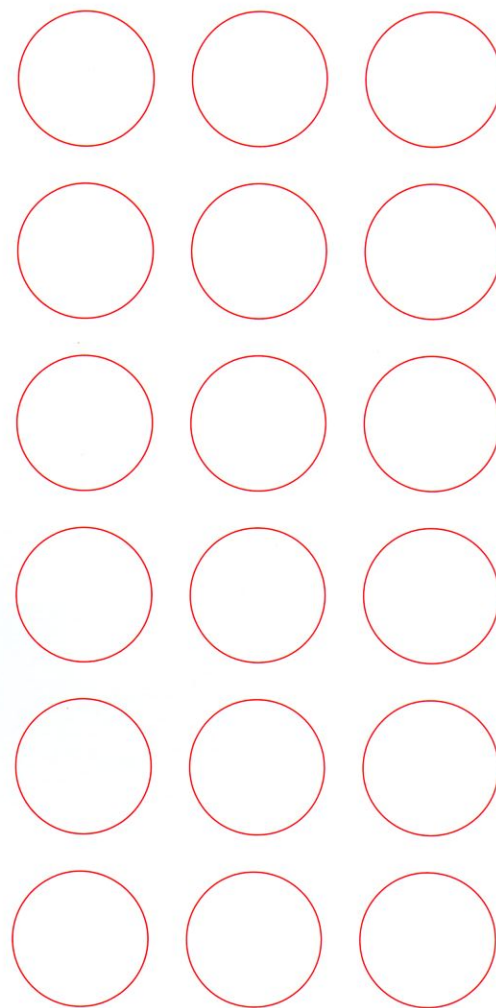
grated zest of 1 orange

$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon fine sea salt

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (7 oz/200 g) all-purpose (plain) flour

5 tablespoons Fig Jam (see page 179)

- Cream the sugar, butter, egg yolk, and orange zest together with an electric mixer. Add the salt and the flour, $\frac{1}{8}$ cup (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/50 g) at a time, until a soft, pliable dough forms.
- Roll the dough into a ball and chill in the fridge for 20 minutes.
- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- When you're ready to assemble, have an electronic scale nearby and line a baking sheet with parchment (baking) paper. Weigh out $\frac{3}{4}$ oz/20 g of the dough (about the size of a walnut) and roll it between your palms to form a ball. Place it on the baking sheet and push down with your thumb to make an indent in the center. Spoon in a little of the fig jam and repeat with the remaining dough and jam.
- Bake in the oven for 10–12 minutes. Allow to cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. The cookies will keep in a sealed container for 3 days.





Bitter Orange Amaretti



Orange bitters are a botanical tincture available from specialist bar stores and some larger supermarkets. Usually they're used as a robust, citrus flavor boost in cocktails, but not having much cause to practice mixology at home, I use it in baking to give a distinctive hint of bitterness and complexity. If you can't track down orange bitters, use orange blossom water, which is much more floral.

A quick scan of the recipe will show you that there are a few stages of shaping and chilling, so this is a recipe to make when you are pottering around the house for the day rather than a quick recipe to make when you have a spare hour. The texture of these almond cookies is soft and plump, quite unlike any store-bought amaretti I've ever tasted, so your time and effort will be rewarded.

Makes 24

Prep: 15 minutes

Chill: 1 hour, plus 4 hours or overnight

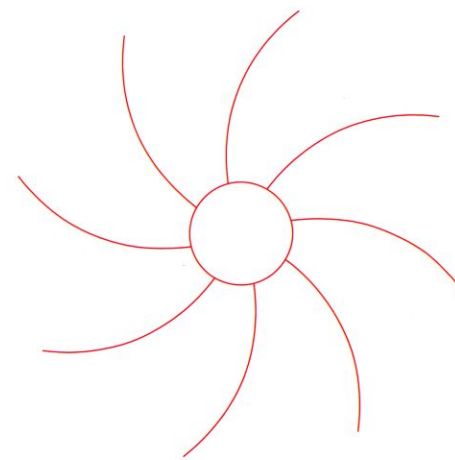
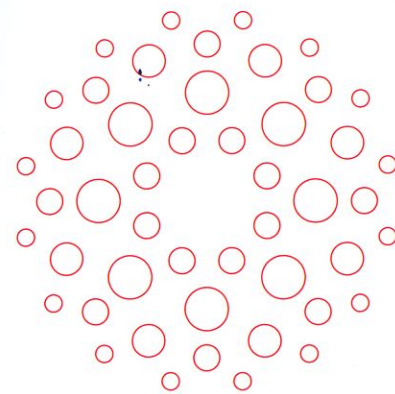
Cook: 15 minutes

1½ cups (8 oz/225 g) almond meal (ground almonds)
generous ½ cup (4 oz/120 g) superfine (caster) sugar
grated zest of 1 lemon
grated zest of 2 oranges
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
2 large egg whites
scant ¼ cup (1½ oz/40 g) runny honey
½ teaspoon orange bitters
¼ teaspoon best quality almond extract
1¼ cups (3½ oz/100 g) slivered (flaked) almonds
scant ½ cup (1½ oz/40 g) confectioners' (icing) sugar, for dusting

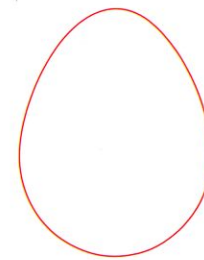
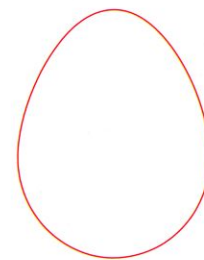
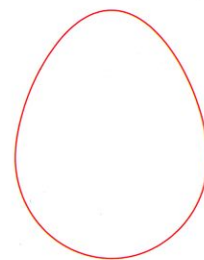
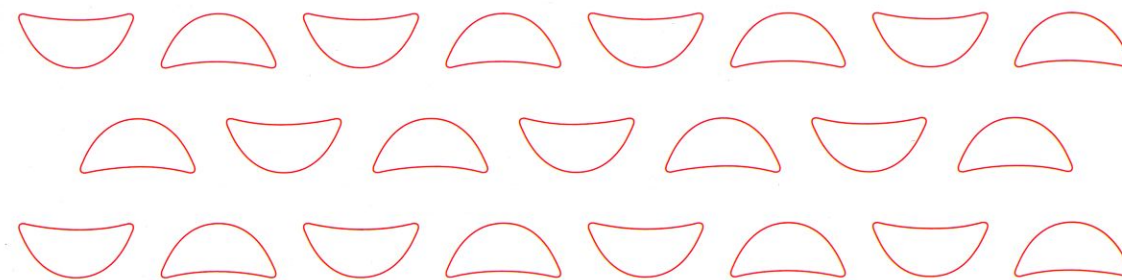
- Combine the almond meal (ground almonds) and superfine (caster) sugar together in a bowl. Rub in the citrus zests and salt with your fingers (this will bring out as much of the aromatic oils from the zest as possible). Set aside.
- Whisk the egg whites in a very clean bowl with an electric mixer until they form stiff peaks. Heat the honey in a small saucepan over a medium heat.
- Bring it to the boil, then allow it to boil for 30 seconds before removing the pan from the heat. Slowly pour the hot honey into the whisked egg whites, all the while continuing to whisk on a high speed (this is easiest to do with a helper or using a stand mixer).
- Fold the almond and sugar mixture into the egg whites, along with the orange bitters and almond extract, to form a soft dough. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap (cling film) and transfer to the fridge for an hour for the

dough to cool and firm up. After this time, the dough will still be very soft, but the chilling time will help enormously with the next stage.

- Line a large baking sheet or tray, one that will fit into your fridge, with parchment (baking) paper. Once the dough is chilled, sprinkle a quarter of the slivered (flaked) almonds on a clean work counter. Take a handful of the dough (roughly a quarter) and, using wet hands, roll it backwards and forwards over the almonds into a thin log about ¾ inch (2 cm) across and 12 inches (30 cm) long. Use a clean ruler or steady hands to transfer the log to the lined baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining almonds and dough to make 4 logs altogether. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for at least 4 hours, or ideally overnight.
- When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4 and line two more baking trays with parchment (baking) paper.
- Remove the trays from the fridge and cut each log into 6 small pieces about the size of your thumb. Sift the confectioners' (icing) sugar on to a clean work counter or shallow plate and roll each piece so it's coated in sugar.
- Spread the cookies on the baking trays, spaced ¾ inch (2 cm) apart, and bake for 15–17 minutes, until the cookies are turning golden at the edges.
- Remove from the oven and cool the cookies on the tray for 5 minutes before lifting them on to a wire rack to cool completely.



Pancakes



Sweet Potato Latkes with Pecan Brittle



Over the course of writing this book, I felt it necessary to mix in as many 'healthy' ingredients as I could—for selfish reasons as much as anything else; there are only so many sweet treats one woman can cook and taste to make sure they are perfect! In my view, it's as much of a reflection of the way we eat these days too; looking to incorporate as many fruits and vegetables as we can to impact more lightly on the planet when we decide what to put on our plates.

Sweet potatoes are an easy win in a book about sweets, but that's not to say that these latkes aren't richly flavored and delicious. The pecan brittle adds a luxurious crunch and delicious nutty flavor that pairs so well with sweet potatoes.

Serves 4

Prep: 30 minutes, plus 1 hour draining

Cook: 30 minutes

2 lb 4 oz/1 kg sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1½-inch (3-cm) pieces

½ cup (2¼ oz/60 g) raisins

pinch of ground cinnamon

1 egg, beaten

¾ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) all-purpose (plain) flour, plus extra for dipping

3½ oz/100 g feta cheese

unsalted butter, for frying

¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) Greek yogurt

honey, for drizzling

For the pecan brittle

¾ cup (3½ oz/100 g) pecans, roughly chopped

1 oz/30 g maple syrup

1 oz/30 g unsalted butter

pinch of flaky sea salt

- Place the sweet potatoes in a steamer and steam until completely soft to the point of a knife, about 20 minutes. Drain in a colander for about half an hour, until cool.
- Meanwhile, to make the pecan brittle, wipe the frying pan with a piece of kitchen paper (there's no need to wash it). Have a piece of parchment (baking) paper ready on the counter nearby. Add all the ingredients for the pecan brittle to the pan at the same time and stir to combine. Cook over a medium heat for 5 minutes, until the mixture is bubbling vigorously and beginning to thicken. Tip the pecan mixture on to the paper and allow to cool completely, then roughly chop into shard-like pieces.

- In a large mixing bowl, mash the sweet potatoes with a fork until smooth.
- Stir in the raisins, cinnamon, and egg, then sift in the flour. Mix to combine. Sprinkle enough flour on a plate to cover. Take a golf ball-sized amount of the sweet potato mix in slightly wet hands and flatten in your palms. Break off a postage-stamp-sized piece of feta and place it in the center of the sweet potato mix. Gather the sides up and shape into a ball again, then flatten into a disc. Dip the pancakes into the flour and place on a baking sheet that will fit into the fridge. Chill for 20 minutes.
- Heat a large (11-inch/28-cm) frying pan over a medium heat and add a small knob of butter. Fry the pancakes 4 at a time for 5 minutes each side, until golden and crisp. Keep warm in a low oven until all the pancake mixture has been used up.
- Serve a few pancakes per person with dollops of the Greek yogurt on top and honey for drizzling over. Scatter over the pecan brittle and serve straight away.



Stuffed Arabic Pancakes (*Qatayef*)

Qatayef are much greater than the sum of their parts; after they've been stuffed, these little pillowy pancakes can be frozen until you're ready to eat them. Some recipes call for them to be deep fried once they've been sealed, but I prefer this lighter version, which is as common and, in my opinion, allows the flavors of the filling to sing.

One of the earliest mentions of *qatayef* is in *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, by Ibn Sayyar Al-Warraq, a tenth-century cookbook that is well worth a read in itself. I love cooking these little pancakes, imagining them being enjoyed in palaces in another era entirely.

Serves 8

Prep: 50 minutes
Cook: 20 minutes

For the pancakes

- 1½ cups (9 oz/250 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
- 1 tablespoon superfine (caster) sugar
- 1 tablespoon milk
- ½ oz/5 g fast-acting dried yeast
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- butter, for frying

For the pistachio filling

- 1 cup (5½ oz/150 g) raw pistachios
- 1 tablespoon rose water
- 1 tablespoon superfine (caster) sugar

For the walnut filling

- 1 cup (5½ oz/150 g) walnuts
- 1 tablespoon superfine (caster) sugar
- 1 tablespoon rose water

For the ricotta filling

- 1 cup (7 oz/200 g) ricotta
- 1 tablespoon superfine (caster) sugar
- 1 tablespoon rose water

To serve

- 1 × quantity of Rose Water Syrup (see page 83)

- Mix the flour, sugar, milk, yeast, and baking powder in a bowl and pour in 1¼ cups (15 fl oz/425 ml) of warm water. Whisk until no lumps are visible.
- Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and set aside for an hour, until bubbles appear on top of the mixture.
- While the batter is resting, make the fillings.
- Blitz the pistachios in a food processor with

the rose water and sugar until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Decant into a bowl and set aside.

- Blitz the walnuts in the food processor (no need to rinse it out) with the sugar and rose water until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Decant into a separate bowl and set aside.
- Mix the ricotta with the sugar and rose water in a third bowl. Cover and place in the fridge to chill until ready to use.
- Heat a small knob of butter in a large (11-inch/28-cm) frying pan and pour in tablespoons of the pancake mixture, making little 4-inch (10-cm) round pancakes. Cook for 4 minutes over a medium heat on one side, until the top is dry and the bottom is deep golden. Do not flip them. Remove to a plate and allow to cool. Continue to cook, adding more butter to the pan if needed, until all the mixture is used up. You should have about 30 little pancakes.
- Use teaspoons to spoon one of the fillings into the center of each pancake, then use your fingers to pinch the edges together to seal. You may find that they don't stick easily—try dipping your finger in cold water and running it around the edge, and don't be afraid to pinch the pancakes quite hard, as this should make the edges hold together well. Repeat with the rest of the fillings and pancakes. If serving the pancakes straight away, arrange on a platter and drizzle over the Rose Water Syrup.
- Any extra filling can be used to fill *ma'moul* (see page 23). Store the *qatayef* in an airtight container in the fridge for up to a week, or for 3 months in the freezer. Allow to come to room temperature, or defrost, before drizzling over the syrup.

Semolina & Cheese Pancakes (*Halawet el Jibn*)

A dough made with cheese may seem incredibly unusual and indulgent, but rolled thin and filled with fragrant lemon-laced cream, this Levantine specialty is a dessert I create at home again and again during times of celebration. It really is the jewel in the crown of Middle Eastern desserts, so it's well worth trying to recreate it at home at least once. The process and ingredients (such as Lebanese clotted cream) may seem alien to Western cooks, but swaps can be easily made; use standard clotted cream if that's easier, and trust that the cooking process is actually incredibly simple, even though cooking a dough before rolling it may seem like you're doing things the wrong way round!

Halawet el jibn are commonly thought to originate in Syria, but like many Arabic desserts, they are now enjoyed across the region. When translated, the name means 'the sweetness of cheese', and I couldn't agree more.

Serves 6

Prep: 45 minutes
Chill: 1 hour

For the rolls

- ½ cup (2¼ oz/75 g) superfine (caster) sugar
- 9 oz/250 g mozzarella, grated
- ½ cup (2¼ oz/60 g) fine semolina
- 1 tablespoon rose water

For the filling

- 1 cup (7 oz/200 g) *ashta* or *kaymak* (Lebanese or Turkish clotted cream), or clotted cream
- grated zest of 1 lemon
- ¼ oz/20 g confectioners' (icing) sugar

For the syrup

- ¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) superfine (caster) sugar
- grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tablespoon rose water

To serve

- ¼ cup (1½ oz/40 g) raw pistachios, very finely chopped

- Put the sugar into a saucepan with ¾ cup (5 fl oz/150 ml) of water and heat until the sugar has completely dissolved. Stir in the mozzarella and continue to cook over a low heat until the cheese has melted (it will separate from the water). Stir in the semolina and rose water and cook over a medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture is amalgamated.
- Cook for a further 5 minutes, until the mixture comes away from the sides of the pan in a ball. Allow it to cool for 5 minutes.
- Meanwhile, beat the *ashta* with the lemon zest. Sift over the confectioners' (icing) sugar and beat again until thickened. Place in the fridge to chill for 20 minutes.
- Allow the dough to cool slightly, then use clean hands to pinch and separate it into 6 pieces roughly 1½ oz/40 g each. Place each piece between two sheets of plastic wrap (cling film) and use a rolling pin to very gently roll the dough out to roughly 4 × 6 inches (10 × 15 cm). Repeat with the rest of the dough.
- Spoon the filling into a piping bag. One by one, lift the top layer of plastic wrap off one of the rectangles of rolled dough and pipe the cream down the length of the dough, roughly ¾ inch (2 cm) away from the top, bottom, and long edge. Use the cling film to help roll the dough into a long sausage shape. Twist the ends of the plastic wrap to seal, then repeat with the rest of the dough and filling. Place all the wrapped dough in the fridge for at least 1 hour.
- While the dough is chilling, make the syrup. Place the sugar in a saucepan with ¾ cup (5 fl oz/150 ml) of water. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 8–10 minutes, until the sugar is completely dissolved and the liquid has thickened to a syrup consistency. Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon zest, juice, and rose water.
- Unroll the dough from the plastic wrap and trim the ends of the pastry to create a clean edge. Slice the rolls into 1¼-inch (3-cm) pieces and arrange on a plate. Drizzle over the syrup and sprinkle over the pistachios.

1
Stuffed Arabic
Pancakes (*Qatayef*)
p. 38

2
Semolina & Cheese
Pancakes
(*Halawet el Jibn*)
p. 39



Pistachio Pancakes with Caramelized Apricots



The delicate aroma of pistachios will win over even the most traditional pancake eaters. I make these when apricots are at their best in the early days of summer, but you could swap them for peaches or plums when the seasons change.

If you fancy making your own pistachio butter instead of using a store-bought version, use the method for the almond butter on page 46, swapping the almonds for pistachios but using the same technique.

Serves 4–6

Prep: 15 minutes

Cook: 15 minutes

For the pancakes

scant 1 cup (4½ oz/125 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda (bicarbonate of soda)

¼ cup (1½ oz/40 g) raw pistachios, finely ground

2 tablespoons golden superfine (caster) sugar

¼ teaspoon fine sea salt

2 eggs, beaten

1½ cups (10 fl oz/300 ml) whole milk

2 tablespoons pistachio butter

1 teaspoon vanilla paste

grated zest of 1 orange

1½ oz/50 g unsalted butter

For the caramelized apricots

9 apricots, halved and pitted

generous ½ cup (4½ g/125 g) runny honey

To serve

Greek yogurt

date syrup

- Start with the caramelized apricots. Turn the broiler (grill) on to medium and arrange the apricots cut side up on a baking sheet. Drizzle the honey over the apricots, and place under the broiler for 5–7 minutes, until softened and caramelized. Keep warm and set aside.
- Sift the flour into a large mixing bowl with the baking powder and baking soda. Add the ground pistachios, sugar, and salt and mix with a spoon to combine. Slowly whisk in the eggs and milk, followed by the pistachio butter, vanilla paste and orange zest.

- Melt a small amount of the butter in an 11-inch (28-cm) frying pan and, when it's foaming, use a ladle to pour ½ cup (3½ fl oz/100 ml) of the pancake batter into the pan. Cook for 3 minutes on one side over a medium heat, until bubbles appear on the surface of the uncooked side and the pancake looks dry around the edges. Use a spatula to flip and cook the other side for 3 minutes. Keep the pancakes warm in a low oven and continue to cook until all the batter has been used up.
- Serve a couple of pancakes per person with a few caramelized apricots and some Greek yogurt, with date syrup for drizzling over.





Moroccan 1,000-hole Pancakes (*Baghir*)



These lacy pancakes are cooked only on one side, which gives them an incredibly light and delicate texture. Thanks to the yeast in the batter, tiny holes begin to appear on the surface as soon as the batter meets the pan, which has the added benefit of absorbing flavors from whatever toppings are chosen to anoint the pancakes.

I like to serve these with the spiced compote on page 168, but you could use berry jam or honey instead. The less traditional side of me has also been known to drizzle over hot chocolate sauce. Any uneaten *baghir* can be covered and kept in the freezer for up to 3 months. A quick 30 seconds in the microwave will bring them back to life, or you can wrap a stack in a clean dish towel and warm them through in a low oven.

Serves 4

Prep: 5 minutes,
plus 1 hour resting
Cook: 20 minutes

1½ cups (8 oz/225 g) fine semolina
½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
2 heaped tablespoons golden superfine
(caster) sugar
¼ oz (7 g) fast-acting dried yeast
¼ teaspoon fine salt
2 cups (16 fl oz/475 ml) warm water
1½ teaspoons baking powder
butter, for frying

To serve

Spiced Apricot Compote (see page 168)
Greek yogurt
honey, for drizzling

parchment (baking) paper between them (otherwise they will stick).

- Serve with the compote, yogurt and a drizzle of honey.

- Measure the semolina, flour, sugar, yeast, and salt into a blender, add a quarter of the water, and blend over a medium-low speed until the mixture is completely smooth and no lumps are visible.
- Add the rest of the water and the baking powder and blend again for a few seconds. Cover the blender with a lid or a clean dish towel and set aside in a warm place for an hour or so.
- Heat a non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat. Melt a small amount of butter in the pan and when it's foaming and the butter is smoking hot, pour about ⅓ cup (2½ fl oz/80 ml) of the batter into the pan and swirl to create a thin pancake. Cook on one side until the top of the pancake is dry and lots of holes are visible on the surface. Do not flip and cook them on the other side, but stack them with pieces of

Cherry Pancakes with Almond Butter & Cherry Jam



More of a breakfast than a dessert or sweet treat, but I do often crave something sweet at the beginning of the day. These fluffy pancakes are perfect for a lazy weekend brunch, and the toppings can be adjusted depending on how much time you have. If you're pressed, use store-bought nut butter instead, but if you do decide to try making it yourself, you'll be rewarded with a richly flavored spread.

The recipe also makes more almond butter than you'll need to top the pancakes, so you can use it in cookies, on toast, or spread on slices of apple or banana for a quick snack. The batter can be made and cooked straight away, or you can make it the night before—just cover and keep it cool in the fridge.

Serves 4

Prep: 25 minutes

Cook: 30 minutes

For the almond butter

1½ cups (7 oz/200 g) whole almonds

¼ teaspoon fine sea salt

For the pancakes

2 cups (10½ oz/300 g) all-purpose (plain) flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

2 tablespoons superfine (caster) sugar

pinch of fine sea salt

scant 2 cups (16 fl oz/450 ml) whole milk

2 eggs

1 cup (7 oz/200 g) pitted frozen cherries

1 tablespoon cornstarch (cornflour)

unsalted butter, for frying

For the cherry jam

1 cup (7 oz/200 g) pitted frozen cherries

grated zest and juice of 1 orange

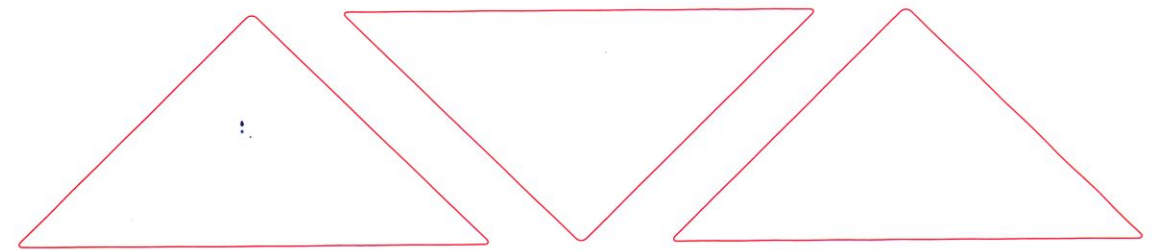
1 tablespoon superfine (caster) sugar

To serve

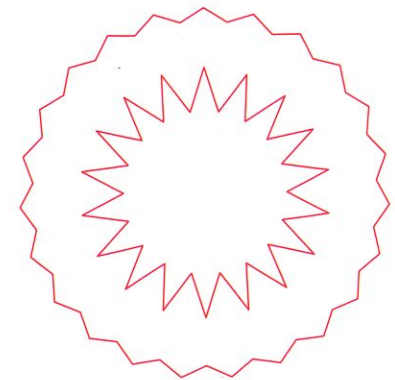
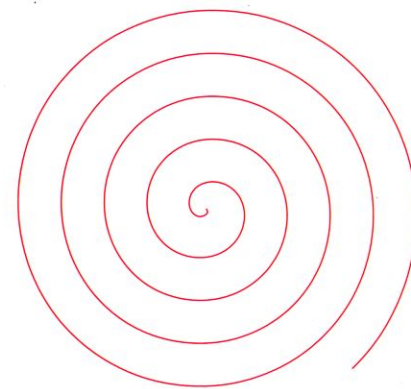
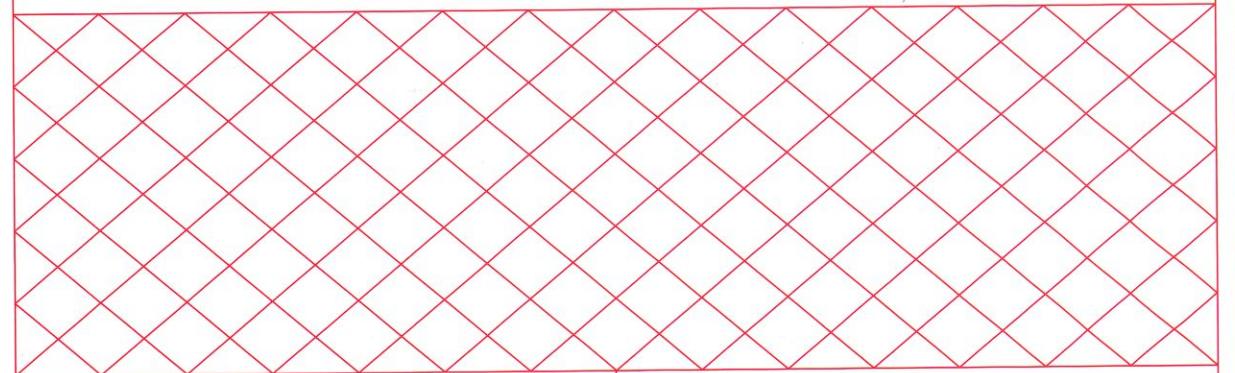
mascarpone (optional)

- Start with the almond butter. Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Spread the almonds on a baking tray and toast them for 8–10 minutes. Allow them to cool for a few minutes, then tip them into a food processor with the salt and process on a high speed for about 10–12 minutes, lifting off the lid and using a spatula to scrape down the sides occasionally until the mixture forms a very thick almond butter. You'll find it needs a little longer than you think, as it makes a claggy paste initially before releasing the oil from the nuts and loosening to form a nut butter. Transfer to a sterilized jar with a lid and keep for up to 3 months.
- Next, make the pancakes. Sift the flour and baking powder into a large mixing bowl, then stir in the sugar and salt. Slowly pour in the milk, whisking as you go (this may be easiest to do with a willing helper who can hold the bowl and pour while you whisk), then mix in the eggs and continue to whisk until no lumps are visible.
- Place the cherries in a small bowl and toss with the cornstarch (cornflour); this will prevent them releasing too much of their juices and turning the batter pink. Mix the cherries into the pancake batter. At this stage you can cook the pancakes straight away, or cover the batter and place in the fridge for up to 24 hours.
- Heat a small knob of butter (about ½ oz/15 g) in a large frying pan over a medium heat. When the butter is melted and foaming, pour just under a ladleful of the batter into the pan, swirling it to create a circle. Don't try and cook more than 2 pancakes at a time, otherwise the pan will quickly overcrowd, making it difficult to flip them. Quickly nudge the cherries if necessary so they're not in a clump (you could use a knife or a spoon for this), and cook the pancakes for 4 minutes, until bubbles appear on the surface and the edges of the pancakes appear dry. Flip and cook for another 4 minutes on the other side. Repeat with the rest of the batter—it should make about 8 pancakes. Keep the cooked pancakes warm in a low oven.
- While the pancakes are cooking, make the quick cherry jam. Tip the cherries into a small saucepan and add the orange zest, juice, and sugar. Cook uncovered for 10 minutes, until the cherries are soft and the liquid has thickened to a syrup consistency.
- Serve a couple of pancakes per person on warmed plates with a teaspoon of the almond butter and spoonfuls of the quick cherry jam. Add a spoonful of mascarpone (if using) on top, and eat while the pancakes are warm.





Filo & Dough



Ricotta & Halva Turnovers



Creamy ricotta pairs beautifully with nutty, honeyed halva in this incredibly simple recipe. Serve these flaky pastries with stewed fruit, such as the Vanilla Poached Quince on page 162, or on their own with a fragrant cup of Arabic coffee.

Any extra filling can be spooned into pancake batter as soon as it hits the pan, or used as a creamy, nutty base for a fruit tart (as you might use a frangipane mix).

Makes 12
Prep: 15 minutes
Chill: 1 hour
Cook: 20 minutes

For the filling
7 oz/200 g Tahini and Pistachio Halva
(see page 96), or use store-bought halva
¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) full fat Greek yogurt
¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) ricotta
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla paste

For the turnovers
3 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons runny honey
6 sheets of filo pastry
2 tablespoons sesame seeds, for sprinkling

- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Finely chop the halva with a sharp knife and place in a mixing bowl. Add the yogurt, ricotta, egg, and vanilla and mix with a fork to combine. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap (cling film) and chill in the fridge for an hour.
- Meanwhile, melt the butter and honey together in a small saucepan until the butter is completely melted and the contents start to bubble.
- Unroll the filo pastry and stack the 6 sheets on top of each other. Use a sharp knife to slice down the length of the sheets, to give 12 large, narrow rectangles of filo pastry. Keep the sheets covered with a clean dish towel while you work, to prevent the pastry from drying out and cracking.
- Take one of the long sheets of filo, keeping the rest covered, and place on a clean, dry work counter. Use

a pastry brush to brush a scant amount of the melted butter mixture along the length of the pastry. Take a couple of tablespoons of the chilled halva mixture and place at the end of the pastry closest to you, leaving about 1¼ inches/3 cm of pastry at the sides and the base. Take the bottom corner of the pastry and fold it over the filling to the opposite side, forming a rough triangle with a pastry tail. Continue to fold up and over until all the pastry is folded over the filling and a neat triangle is formed. Brush the triangle with a little of the butter mixture and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Repeat with the rest of the filling and pastry.

- Bake the filo turnovers for 20 minutes, until crisp and golden all over.



Quince Tarte Tatin

Quince is a rare prize among autumn fruit; available in specialist supermarkets and quickly snapped up at farmers' markets, they are well worth tracking down when they're in season (search them out on greengrocers' shelves and in Middle Eastern stores too).

The fruit turns a beautiful coral pink color when cooked, but do cook it before taking a bite; it is very hard and sour when raw. As this recipe uses the poached quinces from the recipe on page 162, you may be left with some pieces of quince to spare, but these are delicious spooned on to yogurt and granola, or whizzed into sweetened whipped cream to serve alongside this tarte Tatin.

Serves 6–8

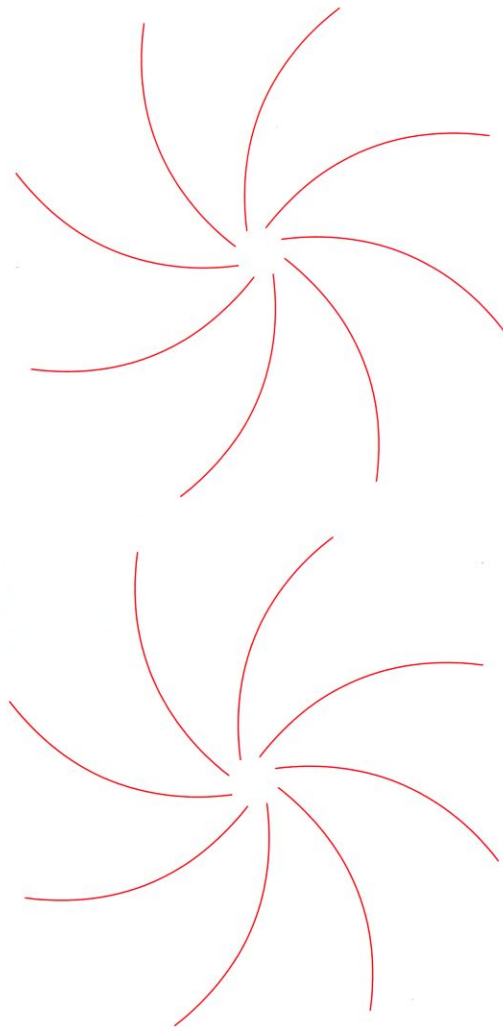
Prep: 15 minutes

Cook: 35 minutes, plus quince cooking time

1 × quantity of Vanilla Poached Quince
(see page 162)

1 tablespoon golden superfine (caster) sugar
1½ oz/50 g unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
1 × 11 oz/320 g sheet of puff pastry

- Grease the sides of a 9-inch (23-cm) cast iron or heavy-bottomed ovenproof frying pan, and pour just under 1 cup (7 fl oz/200 ml) of the quince poaching liquid into the base of the pan. Add the sugar and butter and cook over a medium heat for 8–10 minutes, until the liquid is thick, syrupy and reduced to a depth of ¼ inch (5 mm).
- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Arrange the quince segments over the base of the pan on top of the syrup, making sure none of the base of the pan is visible—you may need to layer some of the quince segments over each other. Unroll the puff pastry and lay it over the quince in the pan. Tuck the pastry around the edges of the pan, so that no quince is visible. Use the back of a dessertspoon to press down any excess pastry around the edge. This will help to keep the fruit secure.
- Bake in the hot oven for 30 minutes.
- Allow the tart to cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then release the sides with a spatula and invert on to a serving plate. Serve with ice cream or crème fraîche.





Pistachio *Katmer*



This princely pastry dessert is akin to a baklava in the sense that ground nuts are encased by crisp, flaky filo pastry, but it's much quicker to rustle up and, without the sugar syrup, much less intensely sweet.

In Gaziantep in Turkey, pistachio *katmer* is traditionally the first meal eaten by the bride and groom after their wedding celebration, to highlight the happy and sweet days together to come.

I like to serve my version of *katmer* with ice cream, as the pistachios aren't that sweet on their own. Stewed fruit or fresh berries would work well too. *Katmer* is traditionally made with *kaymak* (Turkish clotted cream), which is available from Middle Eastern food stores, but mascarpone would work well in its place.

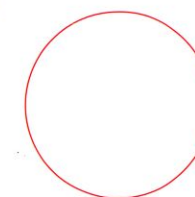
Serves 4

Prep: 15 minutes

Cook: 15 minutes

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (3½ oz/100 g) raw pistachios
2 tablespoons superfine (caster) sugar
1 teaspoon rose water
2 sheets of filo pastry
1 oz/25 g butter, melted, for brushing and greasing
4 teaspoons *kaymak* (Turkish clotted cream),
or mascarpone
vanilla ice cream, to serve
Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.

- Blitz the pistachios in a food processor with the sugar until a fine crumb forms, but stop before the nuts release their oils and begin to change into nut butter. Pour in the rose water and blitz again to combine.
- Unroll one sheet of filo pastry and brush it all over with melted butter.
- Sprinkle over the ground pistachios in a rough square, leaving about 2½ inches (6 cm) on the wider sides and 1¼ inches (3 cm) at the shorter sides.
- Dot half teaspoons of the *kaymak* or mascarpone over the nuts until it is all used up. Lay the other sheet of filo over the top so that all the edges of the filo align, then brush lightly again with melted butter. Fold all the corners of the filo pastry up, one by one like an envelope, to seal, then brush again with melted butter.
- Transfer to a greased or parchment (baking) paper lined baking sheet and bake in the hot oven for 15 minutes. Slice the *katmer* into 4 pieces while the pastry is still hot, and serve with scoops of vanilla ice cream.



Pistachio & Apricot Baklava



Baklava sounds like such an exotic and mysterious pastry, with its connotations of souks piled high with nuts and spices, or syrupy Arabic coffee served alongside, but it's really so easy to make.

Most baklavas are eye-wateringly sweet and sticky, held together with a drenching of sugar syrup, but this version layers dried apricots through the pastry to give it a bass-note sweetness, allowing for less sugar overall.

Makes about 36 pieces

Prep: 15 minutes

Cook: 50 minutes

generous 2 cups (12 oz/350 g) raw pistachios

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/130 g) superfine (caster) sugar

seeds from 10 cardamom pods

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/100 g) soft dried apricots

small pinch of fine sea salt

5 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/150 g unsalted butter, melted

12 sheets of filo pastry

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (5 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/150 g) runny honey

scant $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ fl oz/100 ml) water

grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

Preheat the oven to 325°F/160°C/gas mark 3

- Blitz the pistachios, 2 tablespoons of the sugar (setting the rest aside in a bowl for later), the spices, apricots, and salt together in a food processor until rough crumbs form, but stop before the mixture turns to a paste.
- Brush all the inside edges of the baking pan with melted butter, then lay a sheet of filo across the base. Fold any overhanging edges of pastry in to form a neat rectangle that nestles inside the pan's edges, and brush the top of the pastry with butter. Repeat with 3 more sheets of pastry, brushing with melted butter as you go. Spread half the nut mixture over the fourth layer of pastry so that it's evenly distributed to all four sides.
- Lay 4 more sheets of pastry over the nuts, brushing each one with melted butter before spreading over the remaining nuts. Finish the baklava with a final 4 layers of butter-brushed flaky filo. Cut the pastry into diamonds or squares (slicing right through to the base of the pan) about the size of a passport photo, and

place the tray in the oven for 50 minutes until puffed up and golden on top.

- While the baklava is baking, make the syrup. Place the remaining sugar in a small saucepan with the honey, scant $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ fl oz/100 ml) water, lemon zest and juice. Cook over a medium heat until the sugar has melted and the syrup has turned from golden to a deep caramel color.
- Remove the baklava from the oven and immediately pour over the syrup (warm it through to make it runny if it has cooled down and hardened). Allow the baklava to cool in the tin for 15 minutes, then remove to a plate to serve.
- Keep covered in an airtight container for up to a week.



Vegan Baklava



Baklava has a bad reputation as being an intensely sweet, sticky pastry, but paired with a strong black coffee it's the perfect pick-me-up. Baklava is really all about the syrup, which can be made with orange blossom water or rose water. I use Orange Blossom Syrup here (see page 82), as it pairs so well with the spices.

The trick to making the pastry crisp and flaky is to use scant brushstrokes of dairy-free spread between the pastry layers. Serve with hot coffee or tea.

Makes about 50 pieces

Prep: 15 minutes

Cook: 50 minutes

1½ cups (7 oz/200 g) blanched almonds
¾ cup (3½ oz/100 g) raw pistachios
¼ cup (1½ oz/50 g) superfine (caster) sugar
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
2½ oz/75 g dairy-free spread, melted
12 sheets of filo pastry

To finish

1 × quantity of Orange Blossom Syrup
(see page 82)

¼ cup (1½ oz/50 g) raw pistachios, finely chopped

- Use a sharp knife to cut into diamonds or squares, just smaller than a passport photo, right down to the base of the tin. Bake in the preheated oven for 50 minutes.
- While the baklava is in the oven, make the syrup (see page 82).
- As soon as the nut and pastry mixture has had its time in the oven, remove it and immediately pour over the syrup. Sprinkle chopped pistachios in the center of each piece of baklava. Allow to cool in the tin for at least 5 minutes before lifting out with a cake slice (you may need a sharp knife again here, to separate the pieces of baklava).
- Store in an airtight container for up to a week.
- Preheat the oven to 325°F/160°C/gas mark 3.
- Blitz the almonds and pistachios in a food processor with the sugar and spices until a fine crumb forms. Brush the base of an 8×12-inch (20×30-cm) baking pan with a thin layer of the melted dairy-free spread.
- Unroll the filo pastry and keep it under a clean dish towel to prevent it drying out and cracking. Lay one sheet of filo over the base of the pan, fold in any overhanging pastry and brush again with the melted spread.
- Repeat with 3 more sheets of filo. Scatter over half the nut and spice mix.
- Lay 4 more sheets of filo over the nut mixture and fold in any extra pastry, brushing each sheet with melted dairy-free spread as you go.
- Scatter the remaining nut mixture over the pastry and repeat the filo layering, folding and brushing exercise with the remaining pastry.





Moroccan Snake Cake (*M'banncha*)



This filo pastry showstopper is eaten during feasts and celebrations in Morocco, where almond sweets are highly prized for their delicate perfume.

Sweet spices such as cinnamon and cardamom are used abundantly in North African cooking. They're often found in savory dishes too, such as *pastilla*, an elaborate meat pie layered with sugar and spices, considered to be uniquely Moroccan like this grand filo pie, shaped to resemble a coiled serpent.

Serves 6

Prep: 45 minutes

Cook: 25 minutes

10 sheets of filo pastry

$\frac{1}{2}$ oz/10 g confectioners' (icing) sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/40 g) raw pistachios, roughly chopped

For the filling

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (8 oz/225 g) almond meal (ground almonds)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (2 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/75 g) superfine (caster) sugar

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cardamom

1 fl oz/25 ml orange blossom water

grated zest of 1 orange

1 tablespoon orange juice

1 egg, beaten

pinch of fine sea salt

5 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/150 g unsalted butter, melted

For the egg wash

1 egg yolk

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/40 g butter, melted

For the syrup

3 tablespoons runny honey

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 tablespoon rose water

top and brush with more melted butter. Add teaspoons of the almond mixture down the length of the pastry and shape the filling into a sausage shape, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1 cm) at one side and 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (3 cm) at each end (this should leave lots of pastry on side to roll). Carefully roll the pastry up and over into a thin log and tuck the edges of the pastry into each end so that no filling is visible.

- Repeat until the sheets and filling are used up. Brush a baking sheet with melted butter and dust with confectioners' (icing) sugar. Transfer the filled dough rolls to the baking sheet and shape into a tight coil. Place in the fridge to chill for 20 minutes.

- Preheat the oven to 325°F/170°C/gas mark 3.

- Remove from the fridge. Mix the egg yolk and butter together in a bowl and brush over the pastry. Place in the preheated oven for 25 minutes, until golden. While the snake cake is baking, mix the syrup ingredients together.

- As soon as the cake comes out of the oven, brush all over with the syrup and top with the chopped pistachios. Allow the cake to cool completely before slicing into wedges.

- Mix the almonds, sugar, and spices together in a mixing bowl or food processor. Add the rest of the filling ingredients, keeping back a quarter of the melted butter, and mix again until the mixture is completely combined.

- Lay a sheet of filo out on a board lined with parchment (baking) paper.

- Brush the sheet all over with some of the remaining melted butter, then lay another sheet of pastry over the

Kunafa



This is possibly one of the most ubiquitous pastries across the Middle East, and one of the most intimidating to Western cooks because of the stringy, vermicelli-like *kataifi* pastry that is used to make it. In fact, *kunafa* is such a simple dessert to make that it can be on the table within an hour of turning the oven on to heat.

Traditionally, *kunafa* is made with *akawi* cheese, a salty, halloumi-like cheese common in the Middle East, but as it requires 48 hours of soaking time to draw out the salt I have suggested the more readily available mozzarella, which gives a similar result.

Serves 4

Prep: 10 minutes

Cook: 25 minutes

7 oz/200 g *kataifi* pastry

2¼ oz/80 g butter, melted

4½ oz/125 g mozzarella, grated

½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) ricotta

¾ cup (4 oz/120 g) superfine (caster) sugar

grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

1 tablespoon rose water

½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) raw pistachios, chopped

2 tablespoons dried rose petals

- Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C/gas mark 6.
- Place the pastry in a bowl and pour over the melted butter. Use your hands to separate the strands and distribute the butter evenly among them.
- Pack half the buttery pastry into the base of an 8-inch (20-cm) round ovenproof pan, making sure some of the pastry rises up the sides. Press gently down all over with the base of a glass to ensure the pastry is packed down tightly.
- In a separate mixing bowl, combine the mozzarella and ricotta. Spread the cheese mixture over the pastry in the pan and cover with the remaining pastry. Pack down again with the base of a glass.
- Place the pan in the oven and bake for 25 minutes until crisp and golden.
- While the pastry is baking, make the syrup. Put the sugar into a saucepan with the lemon zest and juice and ½ cup (4 fl oz/120 ml) of water. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 8–10 minutes until the mixture reaches a syrupy consistency.

- Pour the syrup over the pastry as soon as it comes out of the oven, then allow to rest in the pan for 5 minutes before turning out on to a plate.
- Top with the chopped pistachios and rose petals, and cut into 4 slices to serve.



Vegan Kunafa



Kunafa is a creamy, cheesy dessert, usually made with lashings of butter. This vegan version is lighter and is punctuated with strawberries and orange zest.

Kataifi pastry is a stringy, vermicelli-like filo pastry that is used in pastries and baklavas around the Middle East. Mixed with dairy-free spread instead of butter and baked until golden, the pastry becomes crisp and toasted, encasing a sweet-sharp, creamy berry filling. I like to serve this with roasted berries or vegan yogurt.

Serves 4–6
Prep: 20 minutes
Cook: 25 minutes

For the *kunafa*

- ¼ cup (1½ oz/50 g) superfine (caster) sugar
- 7 oz/200 g strawberries, topped and quartered
- 7 oz/200 g *kataifi* pastry
- 1½ oz/50 g dairy-free spread, plus extra for greasing
- ¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) vegan cream cheese (almond or cashew based is best)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup
- grated zest of 1 orange

For the topping

- ¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) vegan cream cheese
- 1 tablespoon confectioners' (icing) sugar

- Toss the sugar and strawberries together in a small saucepan and cover with a lid. Cook gently over a low heat for 5 minutes, until the berries soften and release their vibrant red juices. Set aside to cool.
- Put the *kataifi* pastry into a large mixing bowl and separate the strands with your hands. Melt the dairy-free spread in a microwave or a saucepan, until it's completely melted. Pour the melted spread over the pastry and use your hands to keep pulling the pastry apart and mixing in the spread until it's completely incorporated.
- Use a piece of crumpled parchment (baking) paper to grease an 8-inch (20-cm) ovenproof cast iron pan with dairy-free spread. Press half the separated pastry into the base of the pan, making sure that it rises up around the sides of the pan. Use a glass to press the

pastry down at the bottom, so there is a compacted pastry base with a thin layer of pastry rising up around the sides. Set aside. Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C/gas mark 6.

- Mix the cream cheese, cinnamon, maple syrup, and orange zest together in a mixing bowl. Spread the mixture over the compacted pastry, leaving around ¼ inch (0.5 cm) around the edge of the pan. Spoon half the strawberries over the sweet cream mixture, reserving the rest, then cover with the remaining pastry. Bake in the oven for 25 minutes, until crisp and golden.
- Remove from the oven and allow to cool for 5 minutes before running a spatula around the sides to loosen any stuck on bits of pastry. Place a large flat plate over the top of the pan and quickly invert the pan to release the *kunafa*. In a small mixing bowl, whisk the cream cheese and confectioners' sugar for the topping to combine. Spread over the top of the *kunafa*, leaving ¾ inch (2 cm) around the side, so a circle of pastry is visible round the outside. Top with the reserved strawberries.
- To serve, slice into 4–6 pieces. The *kunafa* can be eaten warm or left to cool.





Green Grape Filo Pie

This recipe has its roots in the tradition of Cyprus, an island where the cuisine is richly layered with history and societal change, with Turkish Cyprus on one side and Greek Cyprus on the other. Perhaps meaningfully, grapes are said to represent peace and altruism, and after cooking and eating this pie a few times in the name of perfecting the recipe, I suspect there is some truth in the claim.

If you've never tried cooking with grapes before, this recipe may encourage you to do so more often. Roasting the grapes intensifies their sugars and sweetness, and therefore less refined sugar is needed to make this delicious dessert.

Serves 6
Prep: 25 minutes
Cook: 40 minutes

1 lb 2 oz/500 g seedless green grapes
¼ cup (2¼ oz/75 g) superfine (caster) sugar, plus
2 tablespoons for sprinkling over the grapes
½ teaspoon anise seeds (or use fennel seeds if you
can't find anise seeds)
2¼ oz/75 g unsalted butter
¼ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) runny honey
6 sheets of filo pastry
1¼ cups (9 oz/250 g) ricotta
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla paste

- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Toss the grapes with the 2 tablespoons of superfine (caster) sugar and the anise seeds. Spread them out in a single layer on a baking sheet and place in the preheated oven for 20 minutes, until the grape skins start to shrivel and burst. Remove from the oven and turn the oven temperature down to 325°F/160°C/gas mark 3.
- Melt the butter and honey together in a small saucepan until the mixture starts to boil, then remove from the heat. Brush a 9-inch (23-cm) loose-bottomed tart pan with the melted butter mixture and lay a sheet of filo in the base of the pan. Brush the pastry sheet with more of the butter mixture and repeat with 3 more sheets of filo, brushing with the sweetened butter mixture each time. Reserve 2 filo sheets for the top of the pie, and keep them covered under a clean dish towel until you're ready to use them. Reserve the remaining melted butter mixture for the topping.

- Mix the ricotta, sugar, eggs and vanilla together in a mixing bowl, then spread across the base of the filo-lined tart pan. Bake in the oven for 25 minutes, until the ricotta filling is just set, with a little wobble in the center when you shake the pan. Remove from the oven and increase the temperature to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4 again.
- Top the ricotta mixture with the grapes, followed by the rest of the filo.
- Tuck the remaining filo sheets around the edge of the pie and brush with the remaining melted butter and honey mixture. Return to the oven for 15 minutes, until deep golden all over. Allow the pie to cool completely before slicing into wedges.

Egyptian Bread Pudding (*Om Ali*)



Similar to a bread pudding, or a bread and butter pudding in the UK, this dessert is given an exotic Middle Eastern twist with the addition of toasted nuts and perfumed rose water.

I like golden raisins (available online and from Middle Eastern stores) for their juicy sweetness. Darker raisins tend to be less juicy and more puckered, so use the same quantity of chopped dried apricots instead if golden raisins are hard to come by.

Serves 6–8
Prep: 20 minutes
Cook: 25 minutes

- 1 × 11 oz/320 g sheet of puff pastry
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (3 oz/85 g) golden raisins
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/50 g) pine nuts, toasted
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/50 g) whole almonds, toasted and roughly chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 oz/25 g) raw pistachios, toasted and roughly chopped
- 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ pints/750 ml) whole milk
- generous 1 cup (9 fl oz/250 ml) heavy (double) cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (2 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/60 g) golden superfine (caster) sugar
- 1 teaspoon rose water
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

- Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C/gas mark 6. Unroll the puff pastry and lay it on a flat baking sheet. Bake in the center of the preheated oven for 12 minutes, until golden and puffed. Turn the oven temperature up to 425°F/220°C/gas mark 7.
- When the pastry has cooled slightly, roughly chop it and arrange it in a baking dish with the raisins and nuts. Pour the milk, cream, and sugar into a saucepan and bring to a simmer. As soon as the mixture starts to bubble, remove from the heat and stir in the rose water. Pour the mixture over the pastry, raisins and nuts. Sprinkle the cinnamon over the top and place in the center of the hot oven.
- Bake for 22–25 minutes, until golden and bubbling. Serve warm.



Filo & Dough

Date & Walnut Filo Cigars

Over the last few years, I have been turning to rich, syrupy dates for sweetness instead of sugar. They add a uniquely satisfying, almost 'cooked' flavor, rather than the high-pitched sweetness that white sugar adds to sweet dishes in large volumes.

These date and walnut filo pastries are delicious served as a canapé, or with a cup of tea in the afternoon. The salty tang of feta lends them a versatility that can be enjoyed in a few mouthfuls. Rolling the cigars takes a little while (hence the longer-than-usual prep time), but as soon as you build a rhythm they are easy, almost therapeutic to make. I often roll a double batch and freeze half for another time.

Makes 12
Prep: 40 minutes
Cook: 20–25 minutes

½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) walnuts
1 teaspoon superfine (caster) sugar
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ cup (2¼ oz/75 g) pitted Medjool dates,
roughly chopped
¼ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) Greek yogurt
1¼ oz/50 g feta cheese, crumbled
1 egg, beaten
½ oz/15 g pine nuts
6 sheets of filo pastry
2¼ oz/75 g unsalted butter
¼ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) runny honey

- Pulse the walnuts in a food processor to break them down. Add the sugar, cinnamon, and dates and pulse again, about 15–20 times, until the mixture resembles Christmas mincemeat. Transfer the walnut and date mixture to a mixing bowl and fold in the yogurt, egg, and pine nuts. Chill in the fridge for half an hour to 'set' the mixture and make it easier to roll.
- Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C/gas mark 6.
- Unroll the filo and stack the sheets on top of each other. Use a sharp knife to cut down the center length of the filo stack to give 12 long rectangles of pastry. Keep the filo covered with a clean dish towel while you work, to prevent it drying out.
- Melt the butter and honey together in a small saucepan over a moderate heat. Place one of the filo rectangles on your work counter, with one of the short edges nearest to you, and use a pastry brush to cover it with a scant amount of the melted honey and butter mixture.

Take a dessertspoonful of the date and walnut mixture and place it about ¾ inch (2 cm) from the edge of the pastry at the end nearest you, leaving an inch or so (a couple of centimeters) at the sides, and a long pastry 'tail' at the far end. Fold the edge closest to you over the mixture, then fold the sides in too and roll up along the length of the filo, folding in any pastry that's escaping from the sides, until you have a neatly folded pastry finger. Brush all over with more of the melted butter mixture and place on a baking sheet lined with parchment (baking) paper. Repeat with the rest of the filo rectangles and melted butter mixture.

- Bake the filo cigars in the preheated oven for 20–25 minutes, until deep golden all over, then transfer to a wire rack to cool. They are ready to eat after 10 minutes' cooling time, and can be reheated up to 3 days after baking.

Lemon Custard Filo Cups

On a trip to Portugal, after one too many of their delicious *pastéis de nata* (Portuguese custard tarts), I started to think about how I could recreate the experience at home. I adapted the flaky, layered pastry and instead used layers of filo pastry, which are brittle, golden and the perfect contrast to the creamy, flavored custard. They are dusted with confectioners' sugar which blisters in the oven to make a burnt sugar top, which is, to my mind one of the defining features of the Portuguese tarts.

I give three different custard filling options for these filo cups over the following pages. I love them all equally, and often make all three to serve at the same time, as they take the same amount of time to cook.

Makes 12
Prep: 25 minutes
Cook: 30 minutes

For the filo cups
4–5 sheets of filo pastry
2¼ oz/75 g unsalted butter, melted
1 tablespoon confectioners' (icing) sugar,
plus extra for the tarts

For the custard
3 medium eggs
grated zest of 3 and juice of 2 lemons
¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) superfine (caster) sugar
2 tablespoons heavy (double) cream
4 oz/115 g unsalted butter, cut into cubes

- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Lay out the filo sheets on a clean work counter and while they're still in a stack, cut them into 4-inch (10-cm) squares. You should have 48–60 squares. Keep them covered under a clean, damp dish towel while you work.
- Brush the holes of a 12-hole muffin pan with melted butter. Working one hole at a time, lay a filo square in the middle of the hole, allowing the edges to come up the sides, brush immediately with melted butter, and use a sieve to sprinkle over some confectioners' (icing) sugar. Repeat with the remaining holes (working in this way will ensure the filo stays pliable and doesn't dry out and crack). Repeat this process until each hole is filled with 4 layers of filo, with melted butter and confectioners' sugar between each layer. Put the pan on the middle shelf of the oven and bake for 12 minutes, until just golden.

- While the filo is baking, beat the eggs, lemon zest and juice, sugar, and cream together in a heatproof bowl, using a wooden spoon. Set over a pan of barely simmering water, making sure the water doesn't touch the base of the bowl. Continue to stir over a very low heat until the mixture thickens and coats the back of the spoon. This should take around 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter, one cube at a time, until smooth and glossy.
- Allow the filo cups and the custard to cool for a few minutes. Turn the oven temperature down to 325°F/160°C/gas mark 3. Divide the custard between the filo cups and sprinkle 2 teaspoons of confectioners' sugar over the tops of the tarts. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes, until the custards are set with a bit of wobble in the middle and the pastry is deep golden.

1
Lemon Custard
Filo Cups
p. 71

2
St Clement's
Filo Cups
p. 75

3
Date & Walnut
Filo Cigars
p. 70

4
Orange Blossom &
Saffron Filo Cups
p. 74



Orange Blossom & Saffron Filo Cups

Floral orange blossom and heady saffron combine in this custard tart to create an enchantingly flavored sweet treat. A tiny pinch of saffron goes a long way, and soaking the strands in hot water before adding them to the custard helps the spice to "bloom", extracting as much of its precious earthy aroma, and distinctive color as possible.

Makes 12
Prep: 25 minutes
Cook: 30 minutes

For the filo cups
4–5 sheets of filo pastry
2¼ oz/75 g unsalted butter, melted
1 tablespoon confectioners' (icing) sugar, plus extra for the tarts

For the custard
pinch of saffron
3 medium eggs
2 teaspoons orange blossom water
grated zest of 2 lemons and juice of 1 lemon
¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) superfine (caster) sugar
2 tablespoons heavy (double) cream
4 oz/115 g unsalted butter, cut into cubes

- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Place the saffron in a small heatproof bowl, pour over a small amount of very hot water, and set aside.
- Lay out the filo sheets on a clean work counter and while they're still in a stack, cut them into 4-inch (10-cm) squares. You should have 48–60 squares. Keep them covered under a clean, damp dish towel while you work.
- Brush the holes of a 12-hole muffin pan with melted butter. Working one hole at a time, lay a filo square in the middle of the hole, allowing the edges to come up the sides, brush immediately with melted butter, and use a sieve to sprinkle over some confectioners' (icing) sugar. Repeat with the remaining holes (working in this way will ensure the filo stays pliable and doesn't dry out and crack). Repeat this process until each hole is filled with 4 layers of filo, with melted butter

and confectioners' sugar between each layer. Put the tray on the middle shelf of the oven and bake for 12 minutes, until just golden.

- While the filo is baking, beat the eggs, orange blossom water, lemon zest and juice, sugar, and cream together in a heatproof bowl, using a wooden spoon. Set over a pan of barely simmering water, making sure the water doesn't touch the base of the bowl. Continue to stir over a very low heat until the mixture thickens and coats the back of the spoon. This should take around 10 minutes. Drain the saffron and add it to the custard. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter, one cube at a time, until smooth and glossy.
- Allow the filo cups and the custard to cool for a few minutes. Turn the oven temperature down to 325°F/160°C/gas mark 3. Divide the custard between the filo cups and sprinkle 2 teaspoons of confectioners' sugar over the tops of the tarts. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes, until the custards are set with a bit of wobble in the middle and the pastry is deep golden.

St Clement's Filo Cups

The marriage of orange and lemon gives this custard an elegant balance of sweetness and bright, citrus sharpness. When it is combined with the filo crunch, it makes the perfect mouthful.

The "St Clements" in the title, to signify oranges and lemons, comes from a traditional English nursery rhyme which begins "oranges and lemons say the bells of St. Clement's". Although there are various theories to account for the meaning of the rhyme, my favorite relates to the churches in the City of London named after St. Clement. In particular, St. Clement Danes and St. Clement Eastcheap are near the wharves where traders and sailors unloaded citrus fruits from Europe. St. Clement Danes still rings its bells to the tune of the nursery rhyme today.

Makes 12
Prep: 25 minutes
Cook: 30 minutes

For the filo cups
4–5 sheets of filo pastry
2¼ oz/75 g unsalted butter, melted
1 tablespoon confectioners' (icing) sugar, plus extra for the tarts

For the custard
3 medium eggs
grated zest and juice of 2 lemons
grated zest and juice of 1 orange
¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) superfine (caster) sugar
2 tablespoons heavy (double) cream
4 oz/115 g unsalted butter, cut into cubes

- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Lay out the filo sheets on a clean work counter and while they're still in a stack, cut the sheets into 4-inch (10-cm) squares. You should have 48–60 squares. Keep them covered under a clean, damp dish towel while you work.
- Brush the holes of a 12-hole muffin pan with melted butter. Working one hole at a time, lay a filo square in the middle of the hole, allowing the edges to come up the sides, brush immediately with melted butter, and use a sieve to sprinkle over some confectioners' (icing) sugar. Repeat with the remaining holes (working in this way will ensure the filo stays pliable and doesn't dry out and crack). Repeat this process until each hole is filled with 4 layers of filo, with melted butter and confectioners' sugar between each layer. Put the pan on the middle shelf in the oven and bake for 12 minutes, until just golden.

- While the filo is baking, beat the eggs, lemon and orange zest and juice, sugar, and heavy cream together in a heatproof bowl, using a wooden spoon. Set over a pan of barely simmering water, making sure the water doesn't touch the base of the bowl. Continue to stir over a very low heat until the mixture thickens and coats the back of the spoon. This should take around 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter, one cube at a time, until smooth and glossy.
- Allow the filo cups and the custard to cool for a few minutes. Turn the oven temperature down to 325°F/160°C/gas mark 3. Divide the custard between the filo cups and sprinkle 2 teaspoons of confectioners' sugar over the tops of the tarts. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes, until the custards are set with a bit of wobble in the middle and the pastry is deep golden.

Apricot & Cardamom Tarte Tatin



If you're unfamiliar with cardamom, I encourage you to seek it out. It's a sweet, pungent spice that is a member of the Zingiberaceae (ginger) family.

In India it's used as one of the spices in the garam masala spice blend, but closer to home, it's often used in baking to draw out its sweet character (think of fragrant, pillowy Swedish buns, which are usually laced with cardamom).

Cardamom is a natural flavor friend for stoned fruit, and in this tart it balances perfectly with the sweet, slight acidity of apricots. The caramel and apricots can be prepared and arranged a day in advance. This tart is best eaten hot, with ice cream, or whipped cream.

Serves 6

Prep: 35 minutes

Cook: 50 minutes

scant ½ cup (3¼ oz/90 g) superfine (caster) sugar

3 tablespoons Marsala

6 cardamom pods, split open and seeds roughly ground in a pestle and mortar

1¼ oz/50 g cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes, plus 1 oz/25 g, melted, for brushing

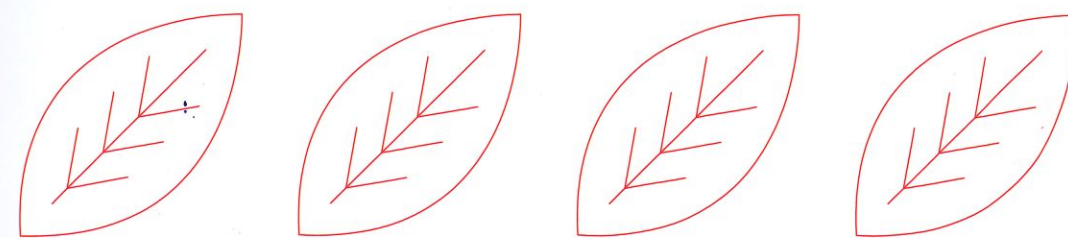
9 apricots, halved and pitted

18 blanch almonds

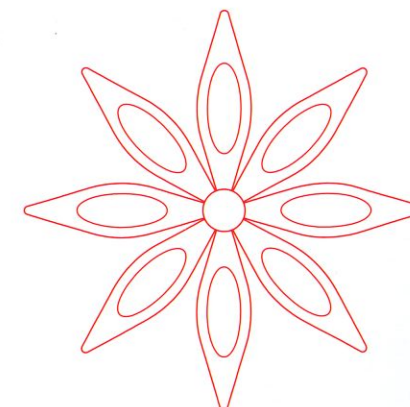
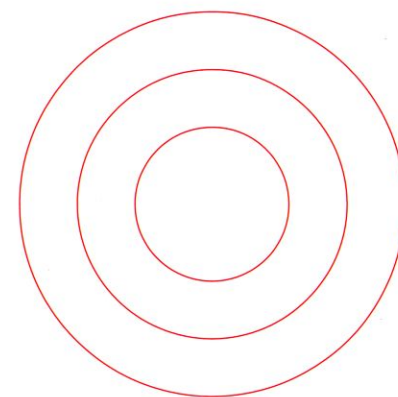
7 oz/200 g puff pastry

- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Pour the sugar and Marsala into an 8-inch (20-cm) Tatin pan, or a frying pan that is oven safe (one with a handle that can go into the oven, or can be clipped off). Bring to a simmer over a moderate heat, then cook for 6–8 minutes, until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture begins to thicken and caramelize, turning a few shades darker. Remove from the heat and stir in the cardamom seeds and the cubed butter, one cube at a time, mixing until the butter has melted.
- Pinch an apricot half between your fingers and nestle a whole almond in the center hollow. Push the apricots into the caramel, with the almond and cut side facing down.
- Roll the pastry out until it's a rough round just larger than the size of the pan. Lay the pastry over the apricots and crimp around the edges so none of the apricots or caramel is visible. Brush the top with the melted butter.
- Bake the tart for 50 minutes, until the pastry has risen and is deep golden, and the tart is bubbling at the sides.
- Leave the tart to rest on the worktop for 5 minutes, then run a spatula around the edge and flip on to a plate (give the base of the pan a good whack before lifting it away, to help loosen any bits from the base). Take great care with this maneuver, as the caramel will still be hot.
- Slice into 6 pieces and serve with ice cream or whipped cream.





Sweets, Syrups & Confectionery



Rose & Raspberry Meringues



These look and taste exactly like traditional meringues, but are made without egg whites. If the idea of chickpea water sounds unusual, trust me—it thickens and holds in the same way as egg white, making it an ideal substitute in vegan cakes and baking. Use the chickpeas for another recipe, to make hummus or stirred through a vegetable stew.

Rose and raspberry pair so elegantly together, with the floral rose balancing out the tartness of the raspberry. I like to serve these meringues with fresh fruit or sorbet.

Makes 10

Prep: 25 minutes

Cook: 1 hour 30 minutes–2 hours

¾ cup (2½ oz/75 g) raspberries
generous ½ cup (4 oz/115 g) superfine (caster) sugar,
plus 1 tablespoon for the raspberries
1 × 14 oz/400 g can of chickpeas
1 teaspoon rose water
½ teaspoon cream of tartar

To serve

¼ cup (1 oz/30 g) raw pistachios,
finely chopped (optional)
fresh fruit, or Saffron and Apricot Sorbet
(see page 125)
confectioners' (icing) sugar

- Preheat the oven to 225°F/100°C/gas mark ¼. Line two large baking sheets with parchment (baking) paper.
- Place the raspberries in a small saucepan and add the tablespoon of sugar. Cook, covered with a lid, over a low heat for 10 minutes, until completely softened and breaking down. Use a fork to mash the raspberries until smooth. Set aside.
- Drain the can of chickpeas in a sieve suspended over a bowl to catch the liquid (aquafaba). Tip the liquid into a large mixing bowl and use an electric whisk to beat it until it turns white and forms stiff peaks. Aquafaba will behave much like egg whites but takes a little longer to go light and airy, so don't despair and keep beating (usually 10–15 minutes).
- Add the rose water and sprinkle over the cream of tartar, then beat again to incorporate. Add the sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, whisking between spoonfuls until the mixture is stiff and glossy white.

- Ripple a scant teaspoon of the raspberry mixture through the meringue and save the rest for later. Use a dessertspoon to scoop spoonfuls of the meringue mixture on to the lined baking sheets.
- Bake in the preheated oven for 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours, until the meringues are starting to take on some color at the sides. Sprinkle over the pistachios (if using) as soon as the meringues come out of the oven, and cool on the oven trays for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.
- Serve with fruit, drizzled with the rest of the raspberry coulis. Sprinkle over enough confectioners' (icing) sugar to lightly dust the fruit or sorbet and meringues.



Simple Lemon Syrup

This syrup is delicious used in cocktails instead of simple syrup for a citrus twist, drizzled on sponge cakes, or in my Melon and Blood Orange Granita recipe (see page 116). If you make it to add to drinks, simply keep it covered in the door of the fridge—it will keep for months.

Makes generous 1 cup (9 fl oz/250 ml)
Prep: 5 minutes
Cook: 10 minutes

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (5½ oz/150 g) superfine (caster) sugar
pared zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 bay leaf

- Put the sugar and 1¼ cups (14 fl oz/400 ml) of water into a saucepan. Add the lemon zest, juice, and bay leaf and bring to the boil, then simmer over a medium heat until all the sugar has dissolved and the liquid has reduced in volume by one-third. Allow to cool, then strain through a sieve into a sterilized jar or bottle.

Orange Blossom Syrup

Orange blossom water, like rose water, is a by-product of distilling the flowers for their essential oils. In the Middle East, its scent is almost omnipresent—wafting out of kitchen windows after being poured over flaky baklava to enjoy with a hot coffee; in the markets; even in water jugs, where it is added to mask unpleasant flavors like high mineral content in tap water.

Most commonly in the kitchen, though, it is used to make orange blossom syrup, a thick, pourable sugar syrup to add sweetness and flavor to all manner of pastries and cakes. Although the flavor is markedly different, it's used in much the same way as rose water syrup in baking.

Makes $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (5 fl oz/150 ml)
Prep: 5 minutes
Cook: 10 minutes

1 cup (7 oz/200 g) golden superfine (caster) sugar
juice of 1 lemon
grated zest of 1 orange
1 tablespoon orange blossom water

- Put the sugar into a saucepan with just under 1 cup (7 fl oz/200 ml) of water. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 8–10 minutes, until the sugar has completely dissolved and the mixture thickens slightly. Remove from the heat and allow to cool for 3 minutes, then stir in the lemon juice and orange zest and the orange blossom water.
- Make sure the syrup is warm when drizzling over the sweet or pastry.

Rose Water Syrup

This is perhaps the most consistent recipe bubbling away on my hob at any one time—I make rose water syrup to anoint myriad pastries, fruits, cakes, sweets, and to flavor drinks and creams.

Makes $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (5 fl oz/150 ml)
Prep: 5 minutes
Cook: 10 minutes

1 cup (7 oz/200 g) golden superfine (caster) sugar
1 bay leaf
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 tablespoon rose water

- Put the sugar into a saucepan with the bay leaf and just under 1 cup (7 fl oz/200 ml) of water. Bring to the boil and simmer gently for 8–10 minutes, until the sugar is completely dissolved and the syrup has thickened slightly so that the bubbles are large and glossy. Remove from the heat and allow to cool for 3 minutes before stirring in the lemon zest and juice and rose water.
- Ensure the syrup is warm when pouring over the sweet or pastry.

Spiced Sugar Syrup

I use this sugar syrup to flavor my Arabic Iced Coffee (see page 228) and to drizzle on cakes I make with brown sugar as soon as they come out of the oven, for an intense warming flavor. I've also heard it's incredible in coffee-flavored cocktails.

This syrup is made using whole spices, which is key. Don't be tempted to substitute ground spices; leaving the odd whole spice out, or swapping it for something else, won't do any harm to the consistency or flavor

Makes generous $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (4 fl oz/130 ml)
Prep: 5 minutes
Cook: 10 minutes

1 cup (7 oz/200 g) dark muscovado sugar
1 star anise
1 cinnamon stick
2 cloves
3 black peppercorns
1 vanilla bean, split with a sharp knife

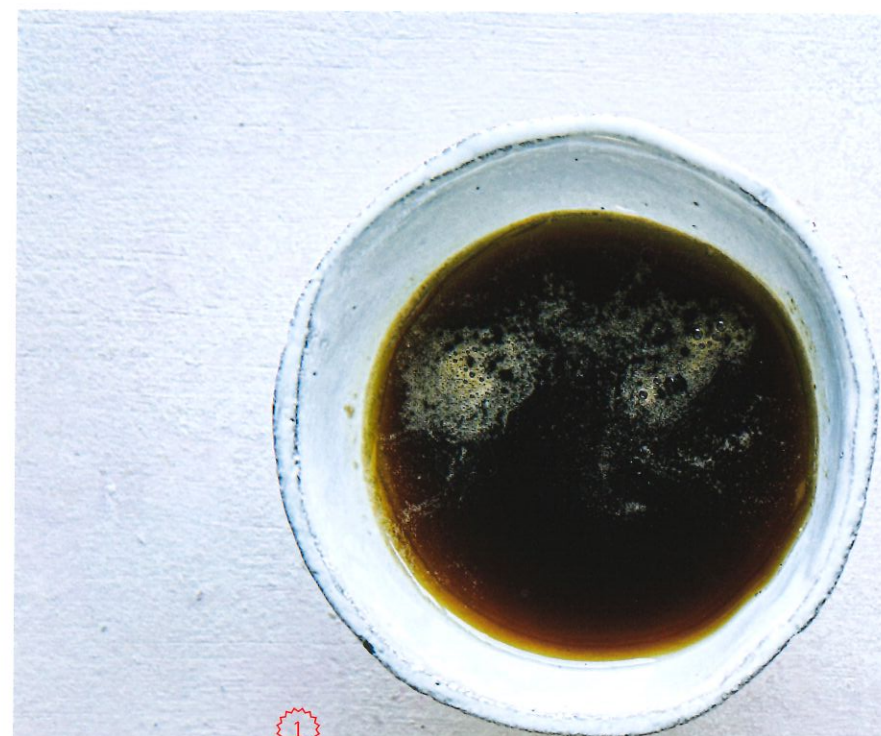
- Place all the syrup ingredients in a saucepan and pour in just under 1 cup (7 fl oz/200 ml) of water. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 8–10 minutes until the sugar has completely dissolved and the syrup thickens slightly.
- Allow to cool slightly, then strain through a fine sieve. Keep covered and store in the fridge for up to a week.

1
Spiced Sugar Syrup
p. 83

2
Simple Lemon Syrup
p. 82

3
Rose Water Syrup
p. 83

4
Orange Blossom
Syrup
p. 82



1



2

3

4

Arabic Coffee Chocolate Truffles



Home-made truffles are so easy to make, requiring no fancy equipment or techniques, and are so impressive to serve to your guests. These truffles are enriched with olive oil for a rich fruitiness and glossy finish—use the best you can find, and make sure it's fresh, as older olive oils can spoil in time and turn bitter.

I use the Arabic Coffee recipe on page 228 to flavor these truffles, and I'm sure they'd be delicious with espresso too if you're short on time.

Makes 20
Prep: 25 minutes
Chill: 5 hours

7 oz/200 g dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids)
¾ cup (5 fl oz/150 ml) heavy (double) cream
1 × quantity of Arabic Coffee (see page 228)

For the chocolate coating
5½ oz/150 g dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids)
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

To top
flaky sea salt
roasted coffee beans

- Break the 7 oz/200 g of chocolate into a heatproof mixing bowl. Pour the cream into a saucepan and bring to just under the boil; when bubbles start to appear at the sides, remove from the heat. Pour the cream over the chocolate and leave for 10 minutes before mixing, stirring until all the chocolate has melted. If there are any solid lumps of chocolate left, set the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water and stir until the mixture is completely smooth without letting the water boil. Add 3 tablespoons of Arabic coffee, and place in the fridge to chill for about 4 hours.
- When you're ready to make the truffles, take them out of the fridge and set a heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water. Break in the chocolate for the coating, and pour in the olive oil. Allow most of the chocolate to melt, then remove from the heat and stir until all the chocolate has melted. Add 2 tablespoons of Arabic coffee.
- Take a baking tray that will fit in the fridge and line it with parchment (baking) paper. Use a melon baller or two teaspoons to make rounds of the chilled chocolate

mixture. Dip each round into the warm melted chocolate and transfer to the prepared tray. As you go, top the melting chocolate with flaky sea salt and/or a roasted coffee bean. Once all the chocolate has been used up, place the tray in the fridge and chill the truffles for at least 1 hour.

- Eat the truffles chilled or at room temperature, but keep them in the fridge until you're ready to eat them (they will need about 45 minutes to come up to room temperature).





Persian Marzipan Sweets (*Toot*)

These little sweets are deceptively simple to make, and as they don't require any time in the oven they are a great hands-on treat to shape with children.

In Persian, toot means mulberry, which inspires the shape of these delicate treats. The Persian mulberry is widely claimed to be the most flavorsome in the world, and so it makes sense that the fruit is symbolically celebrated during Nowruz (Persian New Year) and other times of festivity with delicious toot sweets.

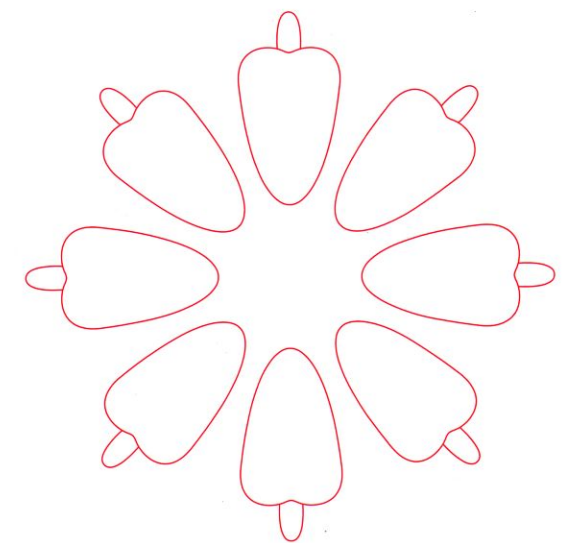
Makes 20

Prep: 10 minutes

Chill: 3 hours

- 1 cup (5½ oz/150 g) almond meal (ground almonds)
- ¼ cup (2¼ oz/75 g) confectioners' (icing) sugar
- 3 pieces of mastic gum
- 1 teaspoon cardamom seeds
- 2 tablespoons rose water
- ½ cup (2¼ oz/75 g) granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons slivered almonds and pistachios

- Place the almond meal (ground almonds) and confectioners' (icing) sugar in a food processor. Grind the mastic with the cardamom seeds in a pestle and mortar until a fine powder forms. Add to the food processor and blitz for a minute to combine. With the motor running slowly, pour in the rose water in a trickle until the mixture comes together when you pinch it between your fingers.
- Take a date-sized piece of the dough and shape it into a cylinder with one end slightly pointed and the other end wider. Repeat with the rest of the dough. Lay the granulated sugar on a plate and roll the shaped sweets in the sugar to coat. Pierce the wider ends of the sweets with a slivered almond or pistachio. Place on a platter, cover with a clean dish towel and put into the fridge to chill for at least 3 hours, or overnight. Keep covered in the fridge until ready to serve, and consume within 5 days.



Tahini & Chocolate Date Truffles

These four-ingredient truffles couldn't be simpler to prepare, and they make wonderful gifts. They're delicious straight from the freezer. I often serve them halved as petits fours with a strong cup of Arabic coffee after a meal.

Truffles are traditionally made with lashings of cream or butter, but here the dates mimic the rich, toothsome texture of a dairy filling with a lighter end result.

Makes 10

Prep: 15 minutes

Freeze: 50 minutes

10 Medjool dates, unpitted

5 teaspoons tahini

5½ oz/150 g dark chocolate
(at least 70% cocoa solids)

½ teaspoon flaky sea salt

- Place the dates on a baking sheet lined with parchment (baking) paper. Use a sharp knife to make an incision from one end of each date to the other.
- Gently lift out the pits and discard them.
- Spoon ½ a teaspoon of tahini into each one, pushing down with the teaspoon to fill the gap left by the stone. Place the filled dates in the freezer for 20 minutes.
- While the dates are in the freezer, place the dark chocolate in a heatproof bowl and suspend over a pan of barely simmering water, making sure the bowl doesn't touch the surface of the water. Remove from the heat before the chocolate has completely melted and stir until the chocolate is smooth and glossy.
- Take the tray of dates from the freezer and use teaspoons to turn each one in the bowl of melted chocolate, to cover completely. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt and place the tray in the freezer for 30 minutes. The dates can be eaten straight from the freezer or kept covered in an airtight container for up to a week.



Orange & Pistachio Turkish Delight

Are there any words more evocative than 'Turkish delight'—full of exotic promise and images of wooden boxes tied with silk ribbon, containing fragrant jellies, flavored with aromatic ingredients?

I've seen a number of Turkish delight recipes which contain gelatin to set them into jellies, but I prefer this naturally vegan version, which requires a sugar thermometer to ensure the sugar cooks to the perfect temperature to set the sweets.

I make a big batch, as the Turkish delight keeps for up to a month and makes the perfect gift.

Makes about 25 pieces

Prep: 25 minutes

Cook: 1 hour 30 minutes

Cool: overnight

3½ cups (1 lb 9 oz/700 g) superfine (caster) sugar
scant 1 cup (7 fl oz/200 ml) orange juice
juice of ½ a lemon

1¼ cups (4 oz/120 g) cornstarch (cornflour)

1 teaspoon cream of tartar

¾ cup (3½ oz/100g) raw pistachios

2 tablespoons orange blossom water

To finish

½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) cornstarch (cornflour)

½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) confectioners' (icing) sugar

- Put the sugar, orange juice, lemon juice, and ¾ cup (6 fl oz/175 ml) water into a large saucepan. You will want to leave a generous amount of space up the sides of the pan, as the sugar will boil up quite high.
- Clip a sugar thermometer to the side of the pan and, stirring gently, allow the sugar to boil for around 15 minutes until the temperature reaches 244°F/118°C.
- Turn the heat off, then, in a separate large pan, heat the cornstarch (cornflour) and cream of tartar with generous 2 cups (18 fl oz/500 ml) of water.
- Use an electric whisk to beat gently and continuously over a medium-low heat until the mixture turns to a wallpaper paste thickness, then from bright white to a light translucent.
- Pour a small amount of the sugar syrup into the thickened cornstarch mixture, then beat again to combine. Continue to add small amounts of the sugar

syrup in stages until it is totally combined and no lumps are visible.

- Turn the heat down to its lowest setting. Cook the mixture for 1 hour 30 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes or so, making sure to scrape down the sides of the pan with a wooden spoon.
- When the 1 hour 30 minutes are up, stir in the pistachios and orange blossom water. Oil a square baking pan measuring roughly 8 × 8 inches (20 × 20 cm), then use a spatula to pour all the Turkish delight mixture into the prepared pan. Use the spatula to level the top.
- Allow to cool overnight, then use a greased pizza slice to cut the Turkish delight into approximately ¾-inch (2-cm) squares.
- To finish, sift together the cornstarch (corn flour) and confectioners' (icing) sugar, then add a few squares of Turkish delight and toss to coat. Add more squares in stages and toss again until all the squares are covered. Put the Turkish delight into an airtight container, add the rest of the cornstarch and sugar mixture to the container and put the lid on.
- The Turkish delight will keep in an airtight container for up to a month, but may need more cornstarch and confectioners' sugar to coat, as these are quickly absorbed by the sweets. Store the container at room temperature.





Greek Hazelnut & Orange Semolina Halva



Completely different in style to tahini halva, this semolina pudding has its roots in Greece, where it is typically served during fasting periods as the recipe contains no eggs or dairy. For this reason, it can also be kept at room temperature in the summer months without risk of spoiling.

I love the combination of orange and hazelnuts, as they taste so festive, but other nuts such as pistachios and almonds also work well, laced with sweet spices—so once you've mastered the method, choose your own adventure with the halva filling.

Serves 6–8

Prep: 5 minutes

Cook: 40 minutes

scant $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ fl oz/100 ml) flavorless oil
 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (7 oz/200 g) fine semolina
 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (10 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/300 g) soft brown sugar
 grated zest and juice of 2 oranges
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/50 g) hazelnuts

To serve

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup (1 oz/30 g) pine nuts
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 pinch freshly grated nutmeg

- Scoop the halva into small bowls and serve, sprinkled with cinnamon, a pinch of freshly grated nutmeg, and the toasted pine nuts.

- Heat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Put the oil and semolina into a pan and heat gently, stirring regularly, for about 15–20 minutes, until the semolina starts to darken and smell toasted.
- Meanwhile, put the sugar, orange zest and juice into another pan with 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups (14 fl oz/400 ml) of water, and place over a medium heat. Boil until the syrup has thickened and reduced by a third.
- Put the hazelnuts on a tray and place in the preheated oven for 8 minutes. Once cooled, put the toasted nuts inside a clean dish towel and rub together to remove the skins. Chop the hazelnuts roughly.
- By now, the semolina should be ready. Remove it from the heat and carefully add the hot syrup and chopped hazelnuts. Stir everything together, then return it to a gentle heat and cook for another 10–15 minutes, until the liquid has been absorbed.
- Toast the pine nuts in a dry pan over a medium heat.

Tahini & Pistachio Halva

Halva is incredibly easy to make, but the success of the sweet setting is dependent on the sugar in the honey reaching the perfect temperature. Pistachios have an incredible woody flavor and satisfying crunch, which work brilliantly throughout this halva.

Don't be tempted to slice the halva before the 24 hours of chilling time is up—it's a little wait, but you'll be rewarded with an incredible flavor and texture.

Makes about 50 squares

Prep: 15 minutes

Chill: 24 hours

You will need:

a sugar thermometer

1½ cups (12 oz/340 g) honey

1½ cups (12 oz/340 g) tahini, stirred until smooth

1 cup (5½ oz/150 g) raw pistachios

1 teaspoon vanilla paste

vegetable oil, for greasing

- Heat the honey in a medium saucepan until it reaches 166°F/130°C. If you don't have a thermometer, after the honey has been boiling for 4 minutes, drop a small amount of it into a glass of cold water. If the honey forms a soft, pliable ball, it's ready. While the honey is heating, warm the tahini over a very gentle heat. It just needs to be warmed—don't let it boil.
- Remove the honey from the heat, stir in the nuts then mix in the warm tahini. Allow to cool for 2 minutes, then stir in the vanilla.
- Pour the mixture into a lightly oiled 8 × 8-inch (20 × 20-cm) baking pan and wrap well with plastic wrap (cling film). Chill in the fridge for at least 24 hours, to allow the halva's characteristic crystals to form.
- Slice into 1¼-inch (3-cm) squares while the halva is cool, but allow it to come to room temperature before serving.
- The halva will keep in the fridge for months if stored in an airtight container.



Sesame Tahini

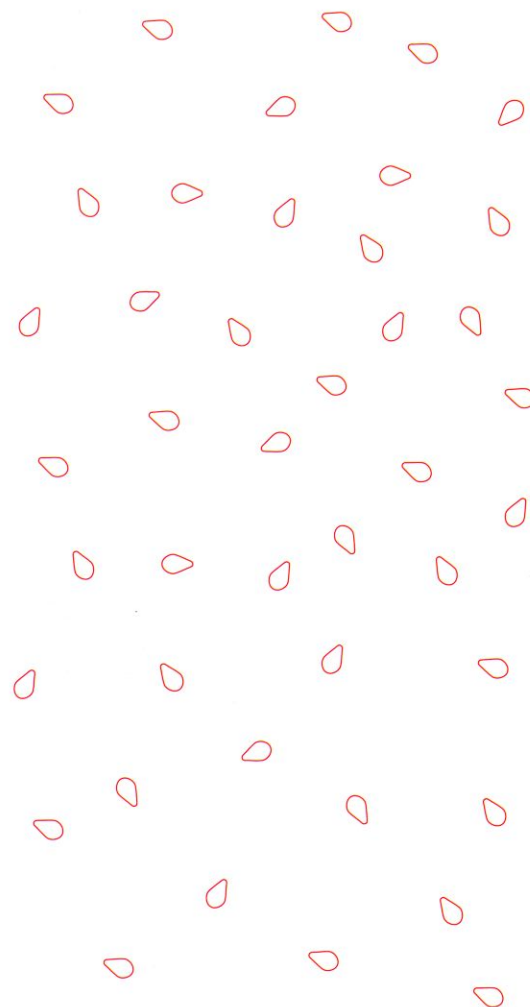


Tahini is a staple across Middle Eastern cuisine, best known for its savory additions to houmous and falafel wraps. It's incredible in sweet baking too, and is well worth making your own. Store-bought tahini can turn bitter and acrid if left opened on the shelf for too long, but this inexpensive make-at-home version will keep sealed in the fridge for months, and is wonderful in my Sweet Tahini Swirls (page 188), as well as the ice cream on page 119.

Makes: 1 × 12 fl oz/350 ml jar
Prep: 5 minutes

1¼ cups (9 oz/ 250 g) toasted, hulled sesame seeds
1 teaspoon fine sea salt
¾ cup (5 fl oz/150 ml) olive oil, depending on taste

- Put the seeds and salt into a food processor or a high-speed blender with half the oil, and process. Scrape down the sides and add the rest of the oil gradually, until a smooth, glossy paste forms.
- Pour into a sterilized jar with a screw-top lid, and store in the fridge for up to a month. If the mixture separates, stir to combine.



Sesame Power Balls

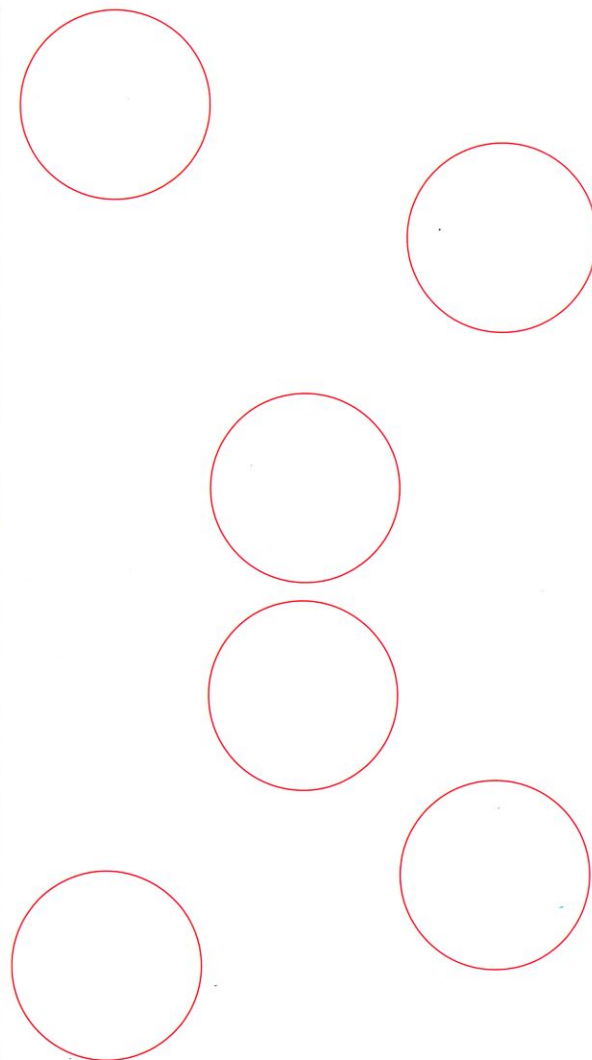
I make a batch of these little power balls and keep them in the fridge when I need an energy lift or when hunger pangs strike in the long stretches between lunch and dinner.

Making them with tahini, seeds and oats means that these power balls are full of slow-release energy. They freeze well too, so I often make a double batch and freeze half for another time. If you do freeze them, make sure to take them out of the freezer a couple of hours before you want to eat them.

Makes 12
Prep: 10 minutes
Chill: 1 hour

½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) jumbo oats
2 cups (9 oz/250 g) pitted Medjool dates,
roughly chopped
¾ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) desiccated coconut
¼ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) tahini
1 teaspoon chia seeds
1 teaspoon sesame seeds
pinch of fine sea salt

- Pulse the oats a few times in a food processor to break them down a bit, but not so much that the mixture starts to look floury.
- Add the remaining ingredients, then pulse again 8–10 times to combine everything together. Remove the lid and pinch the mixture between two fingers.
- If it still feels crumbly and falls apart, pulse again, adding up to 2 teaspoons of water. If the mixture holds, tip the dough into a bowl.
- Gather a handful of the dough in one hand and squeeze it together to compact the mixture into a ball. Don't try to roll it between your palms, as it will fall apart. Use both hands to shape each ball into a golf ball-sized round.
- Place the balls on a baking sheet lined with parchment (baking) paper and chill in the fridge for an hour, then transfer them to a sealed container.
- They will keep for up to 2 weeks like this in the fridge.



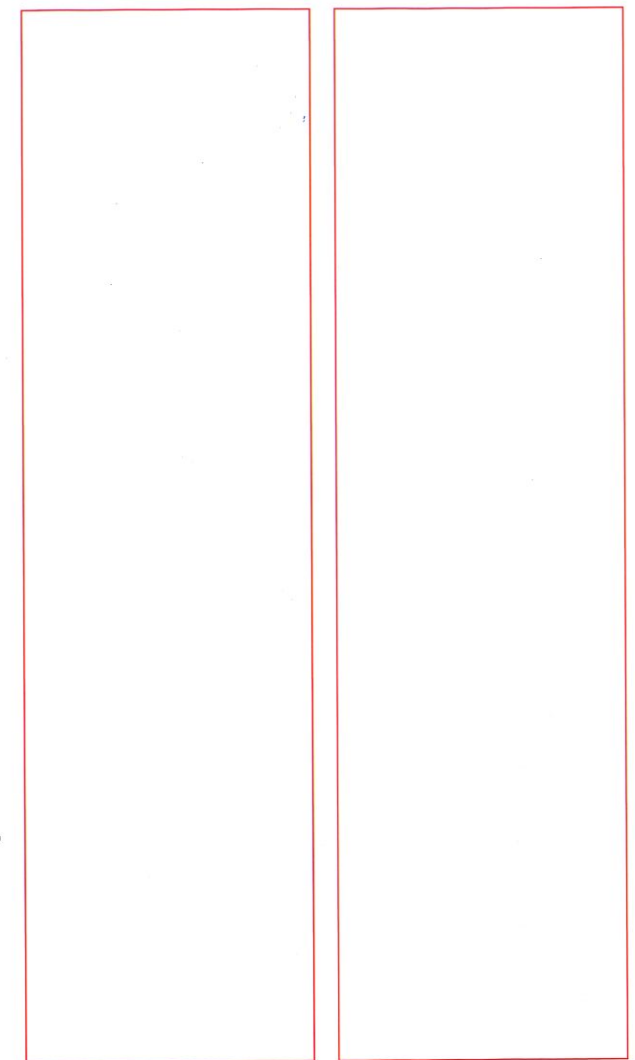
Cacao Hazelnut Halva

Crunchy cacao has none of the sweetness of chocolate, and because it's raw, it's full of antioxidants. It's a punchy, almost savory flavor that cuts through the sweet intensity of the halva. For a non-vegan version, see the recipe on page 96, which uses honey instead of sugar syrup.

Makes about 30 pieces
Prep: 5 minutes
Cook: 20 minutes
Chill: 24 hours

generous 1½ cups (11½ oz/325 g) superfine
(caster) sugar
1½ cups (11½ oz/325 g) tahini
½ cup (1½ oz/40 g) cacao nibs
½ cup (2¼ oz/80 g) hazelnuts, roughly chopped

- Grease a 2-lb/900-g loaf pan and line it with parchment (baking) paper.
- Put the sugar into a medium pan with just under 1½ cups (11 fl oz/325 ml) of water and stir gently over a medium heat until the sugar has dissolved.
- Bring to the boil. Using a thermometer, boil the syrup until it reaches 266°F/130°C—this takes around 20 minutes, but do keep an eye on the temperature as it can quickly go over 266°F/130°C, which can make the sugar tooth-shatteringly hard. Meanwhile, very gently heat the tahini in another pan—you don't want it too hot, just warmed through.
- Remove the pan of sugar syrup from the heat. Stir in the tahini, cacao nibs and hazelnuts and pour into the prepared loaf pan, using a spatula to smooth the top. You should see crystals starting to form almost immediately. Once cooled, cover and chill for 24 hours, then turn out on to a cutting (chopping) board, lift away the paper and slice into pieces.





1
Cacao Hazelnut
Halva
p. 101

2
Sesame Power Balls
p. 100

Sesame Crunch Shards



Toasty, buttery and bittersweet with a drizzle of dark chocolate to balance the caramel, these snacks are perfect with a cup of coffee, in lunchboxes or to take on picnics. With only four ingredients, they are so simple to make, essentially a quick stove top brittle that requires a short time in the freezer before being broken into shards. Use hulled sesame seeds for the best flavor.

Makes enough for 10

Prep: 5 minutes

Cook: 10 minutes

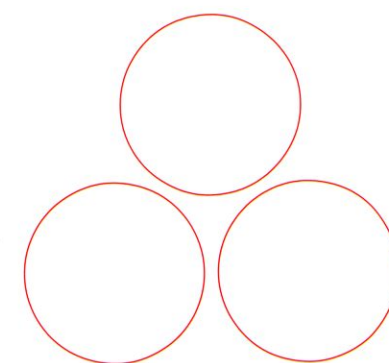
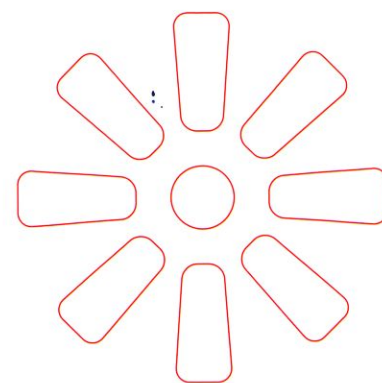
Freeze: 30 minutes

1 cup (5½ oz/150 g) sesame seeds
2½ oz/65 g dairy-free spread, plus extra
for greasing
½ cup (2¼ oz/75 g) superfine (caster) sugar
pinch of fine sea salt
1½ oz/40 g dark chocolate
(at least 70% cocoa solids)

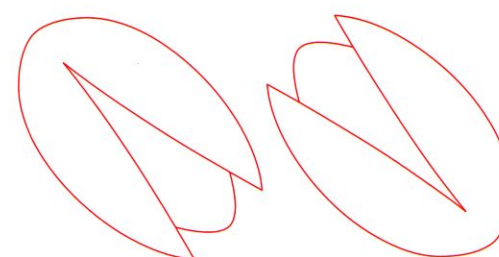
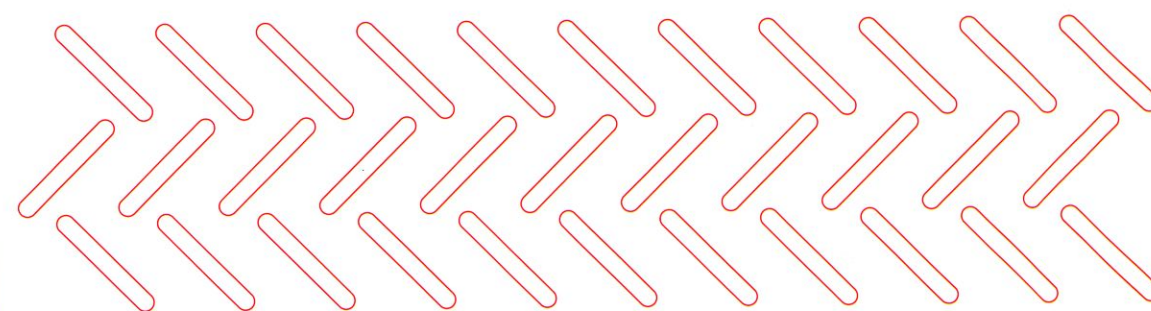
- Grease an 8×8-inch (20×20-cm) baking pan with dairy-free spread and set aside.
- Place the sesame seeds, dairy-free spread, sugar, and salt in a large (11-inch/28-cm) frying pan. Cook over a medium heat for 8 minutes, stirring regularly, until the sesame seeds turn golden and the mixture is fragrant like cookie dough.
- Tip the sesame seed mix into the prepared pan, using a spatula to even out the top and spread the sesame seeds so that they reach all four corners of the pan. Place in the freezer to chill for 15 minutes.
- Break the chocolate into a heatproof bowl. Place the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water, making sure the base of the bowl doesn't touch the surface of the water. Melt gently, then remove from the heat as soon as most of the chocolate has melted. Stir until the mixture is smooth.
- Remove the sesame seed mix from the freezer and use a spoon to drizzle the melted chocolate all over. The chocolate should set quickly on the cold sesame seeds, but place the whole pan in the freezer for another 15 minutes, to be sure.

- Remove the pan from the freezer and use a cake slice to loosen the edges.
- Lift the square on to a cutting (chopping) board and use a sharp knife to cut into rough 1½×¾-inch (4×2-cm) pieces. Store between layers of parchment (baking) paper in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.





Ice Cream



Yogurt & Honey Ice Pops



Healthier than ice cream and incredibly fun (and easy) to make, these frozen yogurt ice pops are a light way to round off a meal or to enjoy on a hot afternoon. I dip the frozen ice pop into ground pistachios, which adds a pleasing crunch and flavor that pairs perfectly with the yogurt and honey.

When my favorite berries are in season, I sometimes mix them through the yogurt and honey before freezing. Blackberries, strawberries, and raspberries all work well.

Serves 6

Prep: 5 minutes

Freeze: 5–6 hours

You will need:

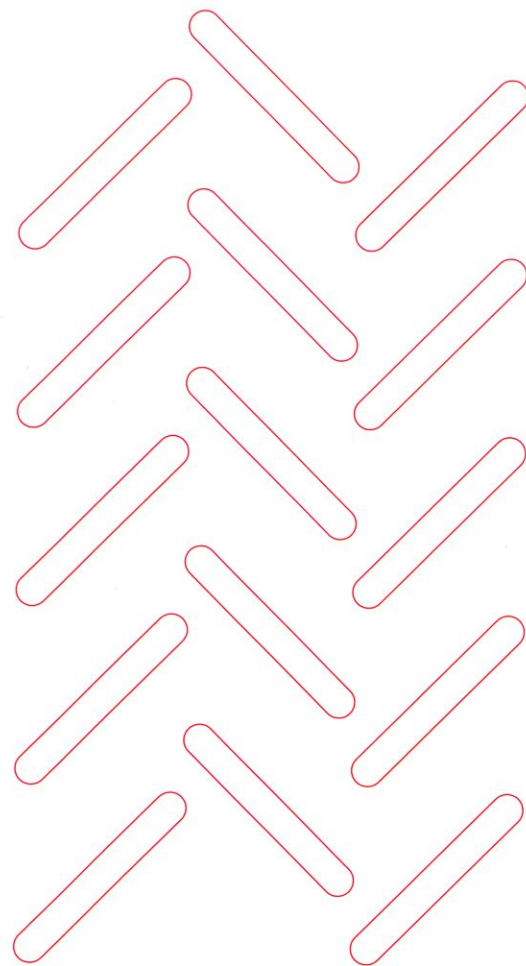
6 × 3 fl oz/100 ml ice pop molds

½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) honey

2½ cups (1 lb 2 oz/500 g) Greek yogurt

½ cup (2¼ oz/80 g) raw pistachios

- Mix the honey and yogurt together and divide between the molds. Freeze for 5–6 hours, or overnight.
- To serve, blitz the pistachios to a fine crumb and place in a bowl. Dip the end of each ice pop into the pistachios to half coat them.



Sultan's Sundae



This is joyful eating at its best. There is something so childlike and light-hearted about making and eating sundaes by the spoonful, and this regal version is layered with heady flavors of the Middle East—from floral rose water and succulent cherries, to crisp *kataifi* pastry and toasted sesame halva.

The cherry jam and salted caramel sauce will make more than you need for this recipe, so store any extra in the fridge and use it to spoon on top of biscuits (scones), stir through cake batter or drizzle on top of sponge cakes.

Serves 2

Prep: 15 minutes

Cook: 20 minutes

For the salted caramel sauce

1 cup (7 oz/200 g) soft brown sugar

2½ oz/75 g unsalted butter, cut into cubes

scant ½ cup (3¼ fl oz/110 ml) heavy (double) cream

¼ heaped teaspoon fine sea salt

For the cherries

½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) frozen cherries

1 teaspoon rose water

1 teaspoon superfine (caster) sugar

grated zest and juice of ½ a lemon

For the sundae

1½ oz/40 g sesame halva, crumbled

4 scoops of vanilla ice cream

1 oz/30 g *kataifi* pastry, strands separated and toasted in a dry frying pan until golden

- Start with the salted caramel. Place the sugar in a small saucepan and warm over a low-medium heat until the mixture starts to bubble and the sugar dissolves (about 3–5 minutes). Be careful not to let the sugar burn. Whisk the butter cubes one by one into the sugar mixture, waiting until each cube melts before adding the next one. Add the cream and whisk constantly to combine and until the caramel mixture rises and comes to the boil. Add the salt and whisk again to combine. Remove from the heat and allow to cool, then pour into a sterilized jar. The caramel will make more than you need for the sundae, so store it in the fridge and use it for drizzling on ice cream, cakes or stirring into cookie dough.

- Put the frozen cherries, rose water, sugar and the lemon zest and juice into a small saucepan. Cook with a lid on over a low heat for 8 minutes, until the cherries are soft, plump and juicy, and warm throughout.
- Place a dessertspoon of the cherries in the base of two sundae glasses and add a crumbling of halva. Add a scoop of vanilla ice cream, then top with a drizzle of salted caramel, a dessertspoon of the toasted *kataifi* and a few more cherries and halva. Add another scoop of ice cream to the sundae glasses, and drizzle over more salted caramel, a few cherries, the rest of the halva, and finish with the remaining *kataifi*.





Pomegranate & Mint Sorbet



Crisp, refreshing and lip-smackingly fresh, pomegranate and mint sorbet is the ultimate palate-cleanser after a rich meal or a summer barbecue.

Natural sweeteners are used in this sorbet instead of refined sugar, which allows the intense, almost tannic qualities of the pomegranate and fresh herbs to shine through. For a really fresh flavor, use whole pomegranates and scoop out the jewel-like seeds, but a good-quality store-bought juice will work well if you're short on time.

Serves 6

Prep: 10 minutes

Freeze: 6+ hours

1½ cups (14 fl oz/400 ml) pomegranate juice
(or seeds from 4 pomegranates)

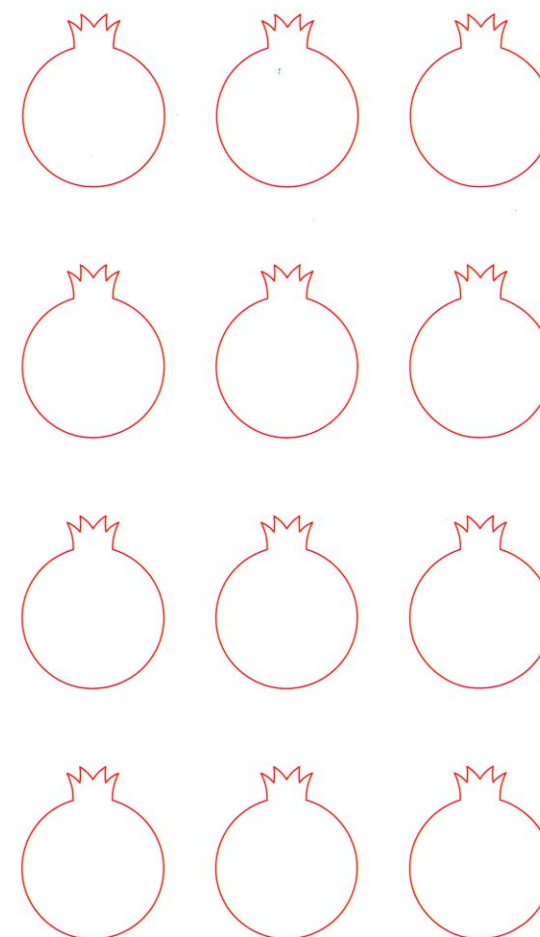
2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses

½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) honey

grated zest and juice of 1 lime

small handful of mint, very finely chopped

- If using fresh pomegranate, put the seeds into a blender and blitz, then strain the juice—1 pomegranate should give roughly scant ½ cup (3½ fl oz/100 ml) of fresh juice.
- Mix all the ingredients together. Pour into a container with a lid and place in the freezer. Stir the mixture every 30 minutes for the first 3 hours—make sure you really break down the crystals each time you stir.
- After the first 3 hours, keep stirring once an hour until frozen.
- Alternatively, churn according to your ice-cream machine instructions for sorbet.



Stretchy Ice Cream (*Booza*)



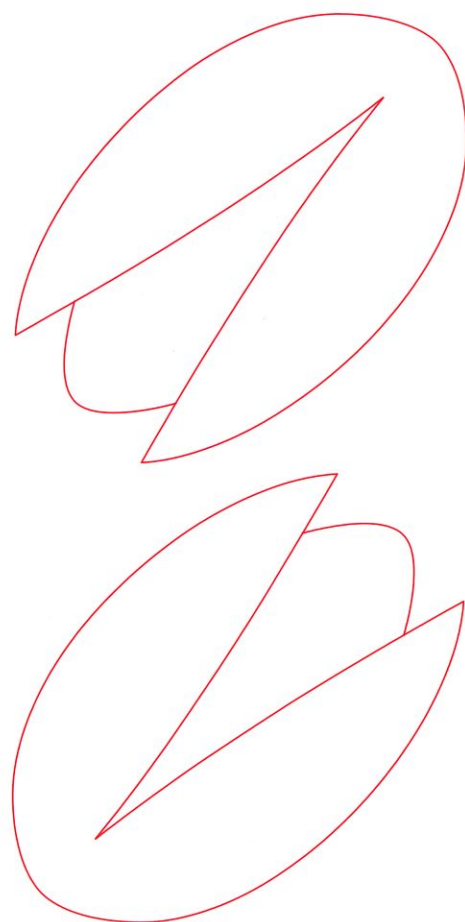
Stretchy ice cream, or *booza*, as it's called in Lebanon, is a popular frozen treat with a consistency similar to mozzarella cheese, and is made by a process of stretching and pounding in the freezer drum, rather than the traditional European churning method. The process is labor intensive and requires particular manual skill.

A shortcut I use at home is to add sahlab powder to the mixture. Sahlab is made with orchid root powder (*salep*), which tastes and smells so evocatively of the Middle East: a combination of flower waters and sweet spices. The *salep* also helps to thicken and stretch the ice cream, creating the unique stretchy quality of Middle Eastern *booza*.

Serves 6
Prep: 20 minutes
Freeze: 6+ hours

4 tablespoons sahlab powder
4 cups (1¾ pints/1 liter) whole milk
1 cup (7 oz/200 g) superfine (caster) sugar
raw pistachios, finely crushed, to serve

- Measure the sahlab powder into a saucepan and add 6 tablespoons of water.
- Whisk continuously over a medium heat until the mixture comes to the boil, then continue to cook, whisking all the time, for 5 minutes, until the mixture thickens and becomes stretchy and sticky.
- Remove from the heat and pour in the milk. Return to the lowest heat and whisk in the sugar. Continue to whisk, not letting the mixture come to the boil, while you cook it gently for around 15–20 minutes, until slightly thicker than when the milk was added. If any lumps are visible at this stage, blend the mixture with a stick blender until smooth and the lumps are gone.
- Transfer the mixture to a container with a lid and allow to cool (not in the fridge), then place in the freezer. Remove every 45 minutes and beat for 2 minutes, breaking down all the ice crystals as you go. After 3 hours, beat every 90 minutes until frozen.
- Remove from the freezer 15 minutes before serving.





Melon & Blood Orange Granita



Put simply, granita is a grown-up ice pop. It also allows much more room for error than ice creams or sorbets, as it demands the large crystals that churning, or toing and froing from the freezer to stir sorbets and ice creams, seeks to avoid.

I love the heady combination of melon with sharp, tangy blood orange, a favorite fruit of mine that's usually available from late December to April. If you want to make this when blood oranges aren't in season, use normal oranges instead and add a few pitted cherries to the mixture before blending to give an attractive pink color.

Makes about 5 cups (2 pints/1.25 liters)

Prep: 10 minutes

Freeze: 5 hours

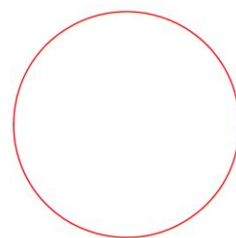
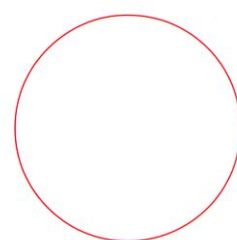
4 cups (1lb 12 oz/800 g) very ripe melon flesh
(seeds and skin discarded)

1 cup (7 oz/200 g) blood orange flesh
(seeds discarded)

grated zest of 1 blood orange

1 × quantity of Simple Lemon Syrup (see page 82)

- Scoop the melon and orange into a food processor or a large mixing bowl and add the blood orange zest. Blitz on a high speed until the fruit forms a purée. Transfer to a large container and stir in the full quantity of lemon syrup until combined.
- Cover the container and transfer to the freezer. After 45 minutes, use a fork to scrape the mixture from one end to the other all over the surface of the mixture. Repeat every hour for 4 hours, until the mixture looks crystallized all over.
- Serve in bowls or glasses.





Dark Chocolate & Tahini Ice Cream



The ultimate indulgent frozen treat. Toasted sesame tahini has a wholesome, nutty flavor that balances out the bitter intensity of dark chocolate. The cocoa solids and flecks of tahini throughout this ice cream means that it's rich, distinctive and luscious to eat, and a small portion goes a long way.

Serve with an Arabic coffee to round off a mezze spread.

Serves 6

Prep: 5 minutes

Cook: 25 minutes

Chill: 8 hours, or overnight

generous 1 cup (9 fl oz/250 ml)
heavy (double) cream

generous 2 cups (18 fl oz/500 ml) whole milk
1 vanilla bean

6 egg yolks

generous ¼ cup (6 oz/170 g) golden
superfine (caster) sugar

7 oz/200 g dark chocolate
(at least 70% cocoa solids)

½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) light tahini (see page 98,
or use store-bought tahini)

¼ teaspoon fine sea salt

- Allow the chocolate and tahini mixture to cool to room temperature, then add it to the milk and cream mixture and beat until it is an even color.
- Cover and chill in the fridge for at least 2 hours.
- Transfer the mixture to a loaf pan or an 8×8-inch (20×20-cm) deep baking dish. Cover and place in the freezer. Remove every 30 minutes and beat with a fork to break up the ice crystals. Repeat this 6 times (over 3 hours). After this time, remove after 2 hours and beat again before returning to the freezer to freeze completely.
- Alternatively, use an ice-cream maker to churn to a soft-serve consistency, then transfer to a container to freeze completely.
- Remove from the freezer 5 minutes before serving.
- Pour the cream and milk into a large saucepan. Split the vanilla bean with a sharp knife and scrape the seeds into the pan. Add the pod too.
- Heat the milk and cream mixture gently until just under the boil.
- Meanwhile, beat the egg yolks with the sugar until pale and thickened. Pour half the hot milk mixture into the beaten yolks and whisk to combine. Pour the egg mixture back into the remaining hot cream in the pan and stir continuously over a low heat until it thickens enough to coat the back of a wooden spoon. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool.
- Break the chocolate into a heatproof bowl and suspend the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water, making sure the base doesn't touch the water.
- Stir occasionally until the chocolate is melted and glossy (about 8 minutes). Pour in the tahini and stir.

Sour Cherry & Vanilla Ice Cream

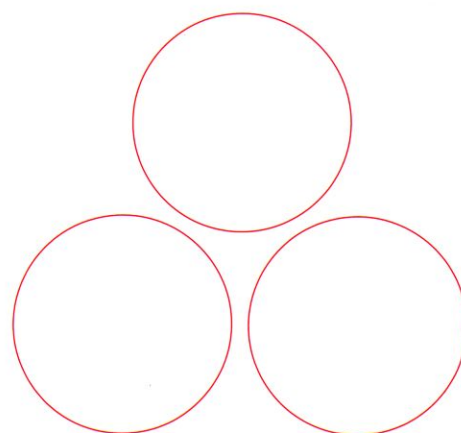


Real sour cherries are available from Middle Eastern stores and online, and they are worth seeking out for their vibrant, bright, slightly salty quality. I make this ice cream with my Sour Cherry Jam (see page 160), which blends fresh, juicy cherries with sour cherries to balance out the sweet and salty notes of each. I serve scoops of this ice cream with a couple of Sour Cherry & Almond Wafers (see page 16) for an intense cherry hit.

Serves 6
Prep: 15 minutes
Freeze: 5 hours
Cook: 20 minutes

generous 1 cup (9 fl oz/250 ml)
heavy (double) cream
generous 2 cups (18 fl oz/500 ml) whole milk
1 teaspoon vanilla paste
5 egg yolks
generous $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (6 oz/170 g) superfine (caster) sugar
5 tablespoons Sour Cherry Jam (see page 160)

- Place the cream and milk in a saucepan with the vanilla and warm over a low-medium heat until the mixture is just under the boil.
- Beat the egg yolks with the sugar until the mixture is pale and voluminous, then pour over the hot milk/cream and beat to combine. Return the mixture to the pan and stir over a low heat continuously with a wooden spoon or rubber spatula until the mixture thickens to the consistency of thick pouring cream. Allow to cool, covered with a dish towel (this will prevent a skin forming on top of the custard). Place in the fridge to chill for a couple of hours once the custard has cooled to room temperature.
- Transfer the chilled custard to an ice-cream maker or a container with a lid, and either churn until thickened and nearly frozen, or beat every 30 minutes for 3 hours until the mixture is thick and almost frozen. At this stage, either remove the ice cream from the ice-cream maker and transfer to a container, or remove the hand-churned ice cream from the freezer. Ripple through the cherry jam, then freeze until completely frozen.
- Remove from the freezer 10 minutes before serving.



Cardamom Ice Cream



Cardamom pods are a mainstay in my kitchen. I crush them to release the seeds and grind them fresh, each time, to preserve their uniquely menthol-meets-cinnamon-and-citrus flavor. Black pepper may seem an unusual choice as a second spice in this ingredients list, but its gentle heat enhances the ambrosial quality of the cardamom.

I make a batch of this to serve with cookies for a simple dessert that impresses and delights every time.

Serves 6
Prep: 20 minutes, plus 30 minutes infusing
Freeze: 5 hours

generous 1 cup (9 fl oz/250 ml)
heavy (double) cream
generous 2 cups (18 fl oz/500 ml) whole milk
8 cardamom pods, split open in a pestle
and mortar and seeds from 6 cardamom pods,
toasted and finely ground
1 teaspoon vanilla paste
6 egg yolks
generous $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (6 oz/170 g) superfine
(caster) sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper

- Put the cream, milk, split cardamom pods, and vanilla paste into a pan. Heat very gently but don't let the mixture boil. Turn off the heat and allow the spices to infuse for 30 minutes.
- Once infused, beat the egg yolks and sugar together in a bowl until pale and thickened. Strain the spiced cream and return it to the pan. Pour half of it into the egg and sugar mix and beat together, then pour this back into the pan containing the remaining spiced cream.
- Heat over a very low heat, stirring all the time with a wooden spoon until the custard thickens and coats the back of the spoon. Be patient, it can take a while—if you rush you can end up with a curdled cream. If this happens, try to catch it quickly—strain it into a bowl through a sieve and give it a good whisk.
- Once your custard is ready, stir in the toasted and ground cardamom seeds and the black pepper. Transfer to a lidded tub or pot, allow to cool, chill for 2 hours, then freeze. If you are using a machine, churn according

the instructions. Transfer the ice cream to a container with a lid and place in the freezer until completely frozen.

- If you are not using a machine, stir the ice cream in the freezer once every 30 minutes for the first 3 hours, then every 90 minutes until fully frozen.
- Remove from the freezer 15 minutes before serving.

1
Saffron & Apricot
Sorbet
p. 125

2
Persian Saffron &
Rose Water
Ice Cream (*Bastani*)
p. 124

3
Cardamom
Ice Cream
p. 121

4
Sour Cherry &
Vanilla Ice Cream
p. 120



Persian Saffron & Rose Water Ice Cream (*Bastani*)

At the time of writing, it's estimated that Iran produces about 92% of the world's saffron output. It makes sense, then, that this exquisite spice has been used in sweet and savory dishes as well as in drinks, snacks, and even dyes throughout Persian history. *Bastani* has its roots in the Persian royal palaces of the early twentieth century, so use the best saffron and rose water you can find and make sure the pistachios are fresh.

Serves 6
Prep: 5 minutes
Cook: 20 minutes
Freeze: 5 hours

generous 1 cup (9 fl oz/250 ml) heavy (double) cream
generous 2 cups (18 fl oz/500 ml) whole milk
pinch of saffron
2 tablespoons rose water
1 teaspoon vanilla paste
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (4½ oz/125 g) superfine (caster) sugar
4 tablespoons set honey
3 egg yolks
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (2½ oz/75 g) slivered pistachios or raw pistachios, roughly chopped

- Place the cream, milk, saffron, rose water, and vanilla in a saucepan. Warm over a low heat until the mixture is steaming. Beat the sugar and honey with the egg yolks until the mixture is pale and voluminous, then pour the hot cream and milk mixture over the egg yolks and beat to combine. Return the egg and milk mixture to the saucepan and cook over a low heat, stirring all the time with a wooden spoon or rubber spatula, until the mixture thickens to the consistency of thick cream.
- Stir in the pistachios, then cover with a dish towel and leave to cool (not in the fridge).
- When the mixture has cooled to room temperature, cover with plastic wrap (cling film) and place in the fridge to chill for a couple of hours.
- Transfer to an ice-cream maker and churn until the mixture is nearly frozen, or place in a container in the freezer and beat every 30 minutes to break up the ice crystals. Repeat for 3 hours until nearly frozen, then

beat every hour until the mixture is frozen. If using an ice-cream maker, when the mixture is nearly frozen, transfer to the freezer until frozen.

- Remove from the freezer 10 minutes before eating.

Saffron & Apricot Sorbet

This bright orange sorbet reminds me of hot, late-summer days whenever I eat it. The saffron adds a sophisticated, exotic flavor, and the blended, whole apricots add a rich, unctuous texture which is so much more satisfying than sorbet which is made with juice alone.

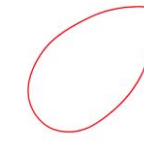
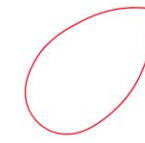
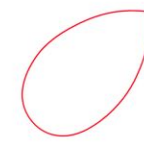
If they are in season, replace the apricots with peaches, which are delicious and aromatic too.

Makes generous 2 cups (18 fl oz/500 ml)

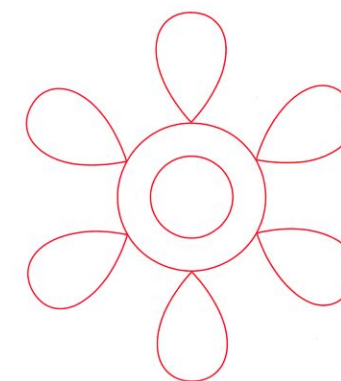
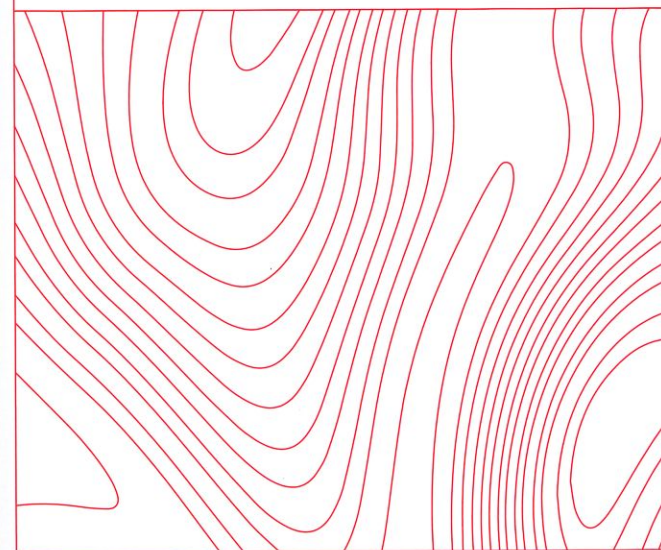
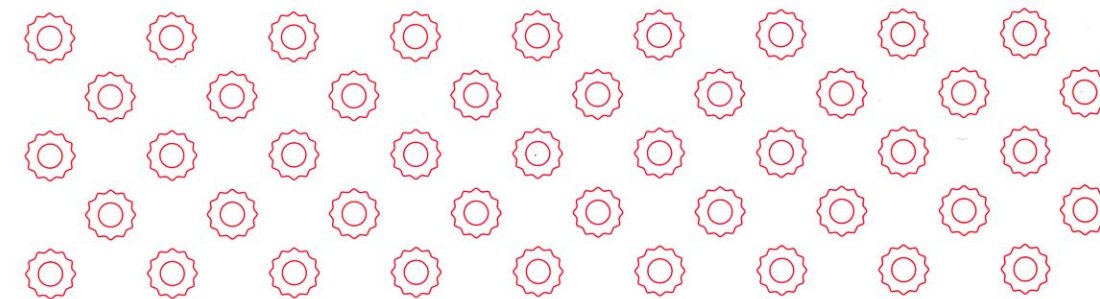
Prep: 10 minutes
Cook: 15 minutes
Freeze: 3+ hours

large pinch of saffron
10½ oz/300 g apricots
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (3½ oz/100 g) golden superfine (caster) sugar
grated zest and juice of 1 orange

- Put the saffron into a medium saucepan and add 2 tablespoons of boiling water, then leave to infuse for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, pit and roughly chop the apricots. Add the apricots to the pan with the sugar and place over a medium heat for 15 minutes, so that the fruit breaks down and releases its juices. Remove from the heat and add the orange zest, juice, and scant $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (2 fl oz/50 ml) of cold water. Leave to cool for 10 minutes, then, using a blender, blitz for 2 minutes until smooth. Allow to cool completely.
- If you have an ice-cream machine, put in the apricot mix and churn until it reaches a soft-serve consistency. Then, if not eating it immediately, place in a container with a lid and freeze for 2–3 hours (or according to the instructions for the machine).
- If you're not using a machine, place the apricot mixture in a container with a lid, put it into the freezer, and stir every 30 minutes for the first 3 hours, then once an hour until frozen.
- Remove from the freezer 10–15 minutes before serving.



Cakes



Orange Blossom *Canelés*



Canelés have seen a bit of a resurgence in recent years, which I can't be more grateful for. While I love buying one from an artisan bakery on the go, nothing beats the satisfaction of making your own.

Canelés originated in Bordeaux, a top wine-producing region of France. Egg whites were used to seal the wine barrels, and the region found itself with a number of spare egg yolks which were incorporated into enriched doughs and baked goods. The first time I made these myself, I thought it impossible that the batter with the consistency of cream would bake into a set cake, but have faith, the key is in the batter resting to hydrate the flour, and the temperature change while it's in the oven.

Makes 12
Prep: 40 minutes
Chill: 24 hours
Cook: 1 hour

You will need: a 12-hole silicon *canelé* mold
generous 2 cups (18 fl oz/500 ml) whole milk
1 vanilla bean, split with a sharp knife
2 tablespoons rum

1 tablespoon orange blossom water
1 oz/30 g unsalted butter, softened, plus
1 tablespoon for greasing
2 eggs, plus 2 egg yolks
scant 1 cup (5 oz/140 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
scant 1½ cups (8½ oz/240 g) superfine (caster) sugar

- Heat the milk and vanilla pod in a saucepan until just under the boil. Stir in the rum, orange blossom water and butter. Set aside to infuse for half an hour.
- Whisk the eggs and egg yolks in a large mixing bowl, then sift in the flour and add the sugar. Whisk to combine. Remove the vanilla bean from the milk, then pour the milk into the flour mixture, a little at a time, stirring with a spatula until completely combined. The mixture will resemble a thin crêpe batter.
- Scrape the sides of the bowl down with a rubber spatula and push a piece of plastic wrap (cling film) over the top of the batter so no air can reach it. Chill in the fridge for 24 hours.
- Preheat the oven to 500°F/250°C/gas mark 10. Grease the holes in the *canelé* mold with butter, then divide the chilled batter between them to about ¾ inch (1.5 cm) below the top. They don't cook so evenly if over-filled.

- Bake the *canelés* for 10 minutes, then turn the temperature down to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4. Bake for a further 50 minutes at the lower temperature until the *canelés* are deep golden.
- Allow to cool for 5 minutes, then release the *canelés* from the molds and allow to cool completely.



Tahini Cheesecake



This no-bake cheesecake (apart from a quick blast in the oven to crisp up the base) is the ultimate sophisticated dessert, with a slight bitterness from the tahini that also adds a deep richness.

Date syrup is available from larger supermarkets and health food stores, and is a natural sweetener which has none of the sharpness associated with pomegranate syrup. The dark, glossy appearance of date syrup could almost be mistaken for chocolate sauce (which would also work extremely well drizzled on top!).

Serves 8

Prep: 15 minutes

Chill: 4 hours

Cook: 10 minutes

For the base

5½ oz/150 g graham crackers (digestive biscuits)
1¼ oz/50 g butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
pinch of fine sea salt

For the cheesecake filling

generous 1 cup (8 fl oz/250 ml) heavy
(double) cream
¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) tahini
2½ cups (1 lb 2oz/500 g) full fat cream cheese
½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) Greek yogurt
¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) superfine (caster) sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla paste or extract

For the topping

1 tablespoon date syrup, for drizzling
1½ oz/40 g halva
raw pistachios, roughly chopped

- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4 and grease a 9-inch (23-cm) springform pan with butter.
- Pulse the graham crackers (digestive biscuits), butter, and salt in a food processor until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Tip the mixture into the pan and press down with a glass to compact it. Bake the base in the oven for 10 minutes. Remove and allow to cool completely, then place in the freezer to chill for at least 20 minutes, and up to 12 hours or overnight.
- While the base is in the freezer, beat the cream with an electric whisk in a mixing bowl until stiff peaks form. Use a spatula to scrape the cream from the whisks into the bowl, then in a separate large mixing

bowl, combine the tahini, cream cheese, Greek yogurt, sugar and vanilla. Use the electric beaters (no need to wash) to beat again until smooth. Use a spatula to fold the cream through the tahini mixture until completely smooth. A spatula is needed here rather than a whisk, to ensure that the cream stays light and airy.

- Use the spatula to scrape the filling on top of the chilled base, and use a spatula to even out the top. Drizzle over the date syrup, then drag the spatula around the top gently to create an attractive marbled pattern. Crumble over the halva and sprinkle over the pistachios, then cover with plastic wrap (cling film) and chill in the fridge for a minimum of 4 hours.
- Use a flat knife to loosen the cake from the sides before releasing the springform pan. Slice into portions. The cake will keep covered in the fridge for up to 5 days.





Rose Water & Quince Pistachio Friands



Friands are typically individual almond-based cakes, light as clouds, which use egg whites as the raising agent. I use a mixture of pistachio and almonds to give an intriguing flavor, which pairs well with the quince paste and rose mixture.

Quince paste, or quince cheese or membrillo, is a coral-colored set quince preserve typically served with cheese. I love using it to glaze cakes and in baking for its intense orchard fruit flavor. It's available year-round from most supermarkets and specialist food stores.

Makes 12

Prep: 35 minutes

Cook: 20 minutes

For the cakes

- 7 oz/200 g unsalted butter, melted, plus 1 oz/25 g for greasing
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/100 g) raw pistachios
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/100 g) blanched almonds
- 2 cups (7 oz/200 g) confectioners' (icing) sugar
- generous $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (3 oz/85 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
- 6 medium egg whites
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (2 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/75 g) red berries (I like strawberries and raspberries) and or pomegranate seeds

For the quince filling

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/100 g) quince paste
- 2 teaspoons rose water

- Grease a 12-hole muffin pan with butter and set aside. Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Put the pistachios and almonds into a food processor with the confectioners' (icing) sugar and blitz until a fine crumb forms. Remove a couple of tablespoons of the nut mixture and set aside. Decant the rest into a large mixing bowl, add the flour, and combine.
- Froth the egg whites lightly with a fork until bubbly throughout, then fold them into the nut mixture with the melted butter until no dry patches are visible.
- Pour the mixture into the prepared muffin pan, stopping $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1 cm) below the top edge of each hole.
- Measure the quince paste and rose water into a small saucepan and add a couple of tablespoons of water. Cook over a low heat for 2–3 minutes, until the quince paste is soft and pliable. Mix the ingredients in the

saucepan with a spatula until smooth and combined. Divide the quince between the muffin tins, placing just shy of a teaspoonful in the center of each hole.

- Top with berries or pomegranate seeds (slice any large raspberries or strawberries) and the reserved nuts.
- Bake in the oven for 20 minutes, until the cakes have risen above the tops of the molds and a skewer inserted comes out clean. Allow to cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then cool completely on a wire rack.

Pistachio & Yogurt Cake



This combination of flavors is an absolute classic for me; it's just as delicious for afternoon tea as it is served with a scoop of Cardamom Ice Cream (see page 121) for a special occasion. Yogurt and carrot work behind the scenes to create the most deliciously moist-textured cake, while flecks of pomegranate seeds give the cake a regal appearance at the table.

Serves 8

Prep: 20 minutes

Cook: 30–35 minutes

- 5½ oz/150 g unsalted butter
- ¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) golden superfine (caster) sugar
- 3 medium eggs, beaten
- scant 1 cup (4½ oz/125 g) raw pistachios, blitzed to a powder
- ¾ cup (3½ oz/100 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 5 tablespoons Greek yogurt
- 1 small carrot, grated (about 2¼ oz/60 g)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla paste
- seeds from ½ a pomegranate
- For the icing
- ½ cup (2½ oz/75 g) Greek yogurt
- 3 tablespoons confectioners' (icing) sugar
- grated zest of 1 orange
- seeds from ½ a pomegranate

- Grease an 8-inch (20-cm) cake pan and line it with parchment (baking) paper.
- Beat the butter and sugar together with an electric whisk until light and fluffy, then slowly mix in the beaten eggs, a little at a time, until fully incorporated. Reserve a tablespoon of the blitzed pistachios to decorate, then fold in the rest of the pistachios, sift in the flour and baking powder, and fold again. Fold in the yogurt, carrot, and vanilla, then place the pomegranate seeds in a sieve and press to extract the juice into the bowl. Mix to combine.
- Pour the cake batter into the prepared pan and even out the top with a spatula. Bake for 30–35 minutes, until a skewer inserted comes out clean.

- While the cake is cooking, beat the yogurt, confectioners' (icing) sugar and orange zest together until slightly thickened.
- After the 30 minutes are up, test that the cake is done by inserting a knife and if it comes out clean, remove the cake to the side to cool. If the knife doesn't come out clean, return the cake to the oven for another 3 minutes and test again.
- Remove the cake from the oven and allow to cool in the pan for 10 minutes.
- After this time, remove the cake from the pan and place on a wire rack to cool. Once cool, spread the yogurt icing over the top and sprinkle with pomegranate seeds and the reserved pistachios.



Semolina & Almond Drizzle Cake (*Basbousa*)

Basbousa, *namoura*, or *hareeseh*, whatever Arabic name you give to this semolina cake, is usually impossibly soft, dense and flecked with texture throughout. Traditionally, the cake pan is greased with tahini, which forms a toasty crust encasing the semolina-flecked cake. I use a square pan, as I love the graphic nature of the grid-pattern made with the almonds, but an 8-inch (20-cm) round pan would work just as well.

Makes 1 × 8-inch (20-cm) square cake

Prep: 20 minutes
Cook: 40 minutes

1 tablespoon tahini, for greasing
2½ cups (12 oz/350 g) fine semolina
½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) superfine (caster) sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda (bicarbonate of soda)
½ cup (4 fl oz/120 ml) milk
½ cup (4 oz/120 g) natural yogurt
3½ oz/100 g unsalted butter, melted
16 blanched almonds

For the syrup

¾ cup (4 oz/120 g) superfine (caster) sugar
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 bay leaf

1 tablespoon rose water or orange blossom water

- Heat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4 and grease an 8-inch (20-cm) square baking pan with the tahini.
- Put all the dry ingredients for the cake into a large mixing bowl and mix to combine. Add the milk, yogurt, and melted butter, then use an electric whisk to beat until it forms a smooth, creamy batter.
- Pour the batter into the prepared pan, then arrange the almonds in a 4 × 4 grid pattern on the cake, so that each slice will have an almond in the center when sliced. Bake in the hot oven for 40 minutes.
- While the cake is cooking, make the syrup by putting all of the ingredients into a saucepan with ½ cup (4 fl oz/120 ml) of water. Let the sugar dissolve over a moderate heat, then turn the heat up and boil until it has a syrupy consistency (about 10 minutes). Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly.

- Remove the cake from the oven and, while it's still hot, pour the syrup all over it. Allow the cake to stand in the pan for 20 minutes to absorb the syrup, then slice into 16 squares and serve.

Pistachio & Orange Blossom Madeleines

Madeleines are a delight to make, requiring a little time in the fridge for the batter to rest, creating the delicate lacy cakes that joyfully pop in the oven (look for the bump in the middle when you remove the tray).

Typically, madeleines are made with brown butter, which lends them a delicious nutty flavor that offsets any bitterness from the orange zest and orange blossom water. Serve them still hot from the oven, with a cup of Arabic Coffee (see page 228).

Makes 36 mini madeleines

Prep: 20 minutes
Chill: 1–12 hours
Cook: 9 minutes

You will need:

a mini madeleine tray

3½ oz/100 g unsalted butter, softened,
plus 1 oz/25 g for greasing
2 large eggs
scant ½ cup (2¼ oz/80 g) superfine (caster) sugar
½ cup (¼ oz/20 g) demerara sugar
pinch of fine sea salt
¼ cup (1½ oz/45 g) raw pistachios
½ cup (2¼ oz/75 g) all-purpose (plain) flour,
plus 1 tablespoon for dusting
½ teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons runny honey
grated zest of 1 orange
2 teaspoons orange blossom water

least an hour, but up to 12 (after this time the baking powder will change the flavor of the batter).

- When you're ready to cook, heat the oven to 375°F/190°C/gas mark 5. Grease the madeleine tray with butter and sprinkle over the tablespoon of flour.
- Knock the tray to remove the excess flour and discard any that comes loose.
- Use a teaspoon to spoon the dough into each hole in the tray, stopping just shy of the top edge (the madeleines will rise as they cook). Chill the filled trays in the fridge until the oven comes up to temperature. Bake the madeleines in the oven for 9 minutes. They are ready when the distinctive bump appears in the middle of each madeleine.
- Allow to cool in the tray for 2 minutes, then lift out with a knife and cool on a wire rack. They are best enjoyed as soon as they're cool enough to eat, but will keep covered in an airtight container for a couple of days.
- Melt the butter in a small saucepan and cook over a low heat until it foams and turns a couple of shades darker. Remove from the heat and pour into a bowl to stop the butter cooking further.
- Beat the eggs with the sugars and salt until light and voluminous. Blitz the pistachios in a food processor until they become a fine crumb but before they become a nut butter. Add the pistachios to the bowl of eggs.
- Sift in the flour and baking powder and fold through the mixture until everything is evenly combined. Add the honey, orange zest, orange blossom water, and brown butter and fold again to combine.
- Push a piece of plastic wrap (cling film) down into the bowl to cover the batter and place in the fridge for at

1
Pistachio & Orange
Blossom Madeleines
p. 137

2
Semolina & Almond
Drizzle Cake
(*Basbousa*)
p. 136

3
Coconut & Orange
Blossom Cakes
p. 157



Lebanese Tea Loaf



An incredibly rich and—dare I say it—moist cake, this Lebanese tea loaf is enriched with nutty tahini and sweet, warming spices to make the rainiest of days feel like the sun is shining on your face.

I use Medjool dates in this cake because I love their bass-note sweetness, which is enhanced by the brown sugar (don't be tempted to swap for white sugar if that's all you have—it won't taste the same). I've tried versions of this cake with other dried fruits such as figs, apricots, and golden raisins—do try them if you have some in the pantry, just use the same weight as specified in the ingredients list below.

Serves 8

Prep: 30 minutes, plus 2 hours soaking

Cook: 1 hour 30 minutes

scant 1½ cups (9½ fl oz/275 ml) strong black

Earl Grey tea

generous 1 cup (5½ oz/150 g) golden sultanas

1½ cups (7 oz/200 g) pitted Medjool dates,
roughly chopped

¾ cup (4 oz/115 g) soft light brown sugar

½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) stem ginger, finely chopped
12 cardamom pods

¾ cup (3½ oz/100 g) almond meal (ground almonds)

¾ cup (3½ oz/100 g) all-purpose (plain) flour

½ cup (2¼ oz/75 g) fine semolina

1 teaspoon baking powder

3 tablespoons tahini

2 eggs, beaten

2 tablespoons dried rose petals

1 tablespoon slivered pistachios

For the syrup

1 tablespoon rose water

¼ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) superfine (caster) sugar

grated zest and juice of ½ a lemon

- Mix the tea with the dried fruit, sugar, and stem ginger in a bowl. Stir until the sugar has dissolved and set aside for at least 2 hours, or overnight, until some of the tea has been absorbed and the fruit is plump and juicy.
- Preheat the oven to 300°F/150°C/gas mark 2 and line a 2-lb/900-g loaf pan with parchment (baking paper).
- Bash the cardamom pods to open them and place the seeds in a pestle and mortar, discarding the pods. Grind the seeds until a powder forms, then transfer to a mixing bowl, add the almond meal (ground almonds),

flour, semolina, and baking powder, and mix to combine. Add the tahini, eggs, and the tea-soaked fruit, along with any remaining soaking liquid, and mix with a rubber spatula until no dry spots are visible.

- Pour the cake mixture into the prepared loaf pan and bake in the oven for 1 hour and 30 minutes, until a skewer inserted comes out clean.
- While the cake is cooking, make the syrup. Place the rose water, sugar, lemon zest and juice in a small saucepan, along with scant ½ cup (3½ fl oz/100 ml) of water. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 8–10 minutes until the liquid reduces by a third and a syrup forms.
- As soon as the cake comes out of the oven, poke holes all over it with a skewer and pour the syrup over. Top with the rose petals and pistachios.
- Allow the cake to cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then lift on to a cooling rack and leave to cool completely.



Labneh Baked Cheesecake



Labneh is the creamy, rich, strained yogurt, almost like a cream cheese, that is ubiquitous around the Middle East. It's delicious in savory dishes, as a cooling foil to baked beetroot or griddled zucchini (courgettes), but I love it just as much in desserts and teatime treats. Labneh needs time to strain, but as soon as it's set up, it requires almost no input.

This impossibly creamy cheesecake is given its rich texture by being baked in a water bath in the oven—which may seem like one step too far, but it creates the perfect environment for the cheesecake filling to cook evenly throughout, making sure none of the cream splits or burns in places.

Serves 8

Prep: 30 minutes, plus 3 hours straining time for the labneh

Cook: 45 minutes

Chill: 4 hours

You will need: a cheesecloth or muslin cloth

For the labneh filling

2½ cups (1 lb 2 oz/500 g) Greek yogurt

1¼ cups (12 oz/340 g) full fat cream cheese

2 eggs, plus 2 egg yolks

2 teaspoons orange blossom water

grated zest of 1 lemon and juice of 2 lemons

1 teaspoon vanilla paste

1 cup (7 oz/200 g) superfine (caster) sugar

scant ½ cup (3½ fl oz/100 ml) heavy (double) cream

For the base

½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) pine nuts

7 oz/200 g graham crackers (digestive biscuits), roughly crushed

2½ oz/70 g unsalted butter, melted, plus

1 tablespoon, softened, for greasing

To decorate

grated zest of 1 lemon

grated zest of 1 orange

- Pour the Greek yogurt into the center of a cheesecloth or muslin cloth lining a sieve or colander suspended over a bowl, then gather the fabric over the top of the yogurt and secure with a clip or rubber band. Allow the yogurt to strain in a cool place for 3 hours.
- Discard the watery whey at the bottom of the bowl (or use it instead of water for making bread), and unroll the cloth to reveal the creamy labneh inside. Place the labneh in a large mixing bowl and set aside.

- Pulse the pine nuts and crackers (biscuits) together in a food processor until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs, then pour in the melted butter. Pulse again until the mixture darkens and has a heavier texture. Grease a 9-inch (23-cm) springform cake pan with the softened butter and spread the base mixture over the base of the tin. Use a spatula to smooth it out and pack it down, bearing in mind it will feel loose at this stage. Place in the freezer to chill while you make the cheesecake filling.
- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Add all of the ingredients except the cream to the bowl of labneh and beat to combine. In a separate bowl, whisk the cream until it holds its shape when you lift the whisk from the bowl. Use a spatula to fold the cream into the filling mixture until combined. Pour the filling into the pan on top of the base.
- Wrap the pan with kitchen foil round the sides (but not over the top of the cheesecake) and place the pan flat on the base of a deep roasting pan. Pour boiling water around the sides until the water comes halfway up the side of the pan, then carefully place the roasting pan on the center shelf in the oven. Bake for 45 minutes, until the middle is just set but still wobbles a bit when you shake the tin.
- Carefully lift the cheesecake out of the roasting pan (there will still be some water around the sides) and place on a work counter. Peel away the foil and allow the cheesecake to cool for 15 minutes, then run a knife around the sides and release it from the springform pan. Chill the cheesecake for 4 hours or overnight, and decorate with the lemon and orange zest before slicing.





Favorite Banana Cake



Although the foundations of my food philosophy are built on my childhood and early adulthood in the Middle East, I've been in the UK for the majority of my adult life and have worked for most of it as a cook.

I first ate banana cake during a break at work with my colleagues, and I remember it tasting so exotic compared to the sponge cakes we were used to. I've made mine a little more familiar with the addition of ground cardamom, which is a little nod to my life bridging the UK and the Middle East.

Serves 10

Prep: 30 minutes

Cook: 1 hour

You will need:

a roughly 9-inch (25-cm) bundt pan

9 oz/250 g unsalted butter, softened,
plus extra for greasing

scant 1 cup (6 oz/175 g) superfine (caster) sugar
4 eggs

1½ teaspoons ground cardamom

4 ripe bananas, mashed

1 dessert apple, cored and grated

1 cup (4 oz/125 g) chopped walnuts

2¼ cups (12 oz/350 g) all-purpose (plain) flour

1 teaspoon baking soda (bicarbonate of soda)

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon fine sea salt

For the glaze (optional)

1 cup (4 oz/115 g) confectioners' (icing) sugar
grated zest and juice of 1 orange

- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4 and grease a roughly 9-inch (25-cm) bundt pan with butter.
- Beat the butter and sugar together with an electric whisk until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, until incorporated. The mixture may look like it's splitting, but if it does this, just add a tablespoon of the flour and beat until smooth.
- Fold in the cardamom, bananas, apples, and walnuts, then sift in the flour, baking soda (bicarbonate of soda), baking powder, and salt and fold again until no dry spots are visible.

- Spoon the batter into the bundt pan and use the back of a spoon or a spatula to smooth the surface. Bake for 1 hour 10 minutes, until risen and a skewer inserted comes out clean. Allow to cool in the pan for 15 minutes, then carefully turn out on to a wire rack to cool. Allow the cake to cool completely before glazing or slicing.

- If glazing the cake, sift the confectioners' (icing) sugar into a small bowl. Add enough of the orange juice to make a glossy glaze, thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Drizzle the glaze over the cooled cake and zest over the orange. Slice into 10 pieces to serve.

- The cake will keep in a sealed container for up to 5 days.

Date Cake



An incidentally vegan cake, using a few key ingredients to give it body and structure. I love Medjool dates for their fudgy sweetness, and here I celebrate them by making them the star of this delicious cake. Aquafaba is a wonder ingredient in my house, as a few members of my family are vegan. It's water left over from cooking chickpeas, usually easiest to come by in cans of cooked chickpeas. It behaves in a similar way to eggs in baking, helping to bind and rise, which makes it brilliant when making cakes.

Serves 8

Prep: 35 minutes

Cook: 45–50 minutes

- 9 oz/250 g dessert apples, such as Braeburn, peeled, cored, and chopped into ½-inch (1-cm) pieces
- 2¼ cups (9 oz/250 g) pitted Medjool dates, chopped into ½-inch (1-cm) pieces
- ½ cup (2½ fl oz/80 ml) aquafaba (chickpea cooking water)
- 2 tablespoons tahini
- ½ cup (4 oz/120 g) coconut oil, melted, plus 1 tablespoon for greasing
- 1 teaspoon vanilla paste
- 1 teaspoon baking soda (bicarbonate of soda)
- 1½ cups (6½ oz/180 g) wholewheat flour

To decorate

- 2 tablespoons confectioners' (icing) sugar
- a few drops of lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon dried rose petals
- grated zest of 1 orange

- Mix the apples and dates together in a mixing bowl and pour over a scant 1 cup/7 fl oz/200 ml of boiling water. Set aside for 15 minutes, until the dates are plump and juicy.
- Preheat the oven to 325°F/170°C/gas mark 3. Grease a 9-inch (23-cm) springform pan and line with parchment (baking) paper.
- Tip the date and apple mixture into a food processor with all their soaking liquid and blitz on a high speed for 1 minute until glossy and pulpy.
- In a large mixing bowl, beat the aquafaba until light and foamy, then beat in the tahini, coconut oil, and

vanilla paste until smooth. Fold the date mixture through the aquafaba mixture until smooth, then add the baking soda (bicarbonate of soda) and flour and fold until no dry patches are visible.

- Pour the batter into the prepared cake pan and place on the middle shelf in the oven. Bake for 45–50 minutes, until a skewer inserted comes out clean.
- Allow to cool for 10 minutes before releasing the springform pan. Mix the confectioners' (icing) sugar in a small bowl together with the lemon juice until a thick glaze forms. Drizzle over the glaze and decorate with the rose petals and orange zest. Eat warm with ice cream.



Tahini & Chocolate Date Brownies



While brownies might not sound like a typically Middle Eastern sweet treat, the addition of tahini blends the culinary traditions of the Levant with more familiar Western flavors.

I use Medjool dates in this recipe to allow for less processed sugar. Dates also add a warm bass-note sweetness that's absent from white sugar. These brownies will keep for up to 3 days in an airtight container, and also freeze well.

Makes 30

Prep: 15 minutes, plus 30 minutes for soaking
Cook: 30–40 minutes

12 pitted Medjool dates
10½ oz/300 g unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
12 oz/350 g dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids), broken into chunks
4 large eggs
1 cup (7 oz/200 g) superfine (caster) sugar
1 tablespoon vanilla paste
1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
generous 1 cup (6 oz/175 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) raw pistachios, roughly chopped
8 teaspoons tahini

- Soak the dates in warm water for 30 minutes.
- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4. Grease an 8×12-inch (20×30-cm) baking pan and line it with parchment (baking) paper.
- Drain the dates and blitz them in a food processor until a paste forms.
- Scrape into a mixing bowl and set aside.
- Place the butter and chocolate in a heatproof bowl and set over a saucepan of barely simmering water. Stir frequently until the chocolate is half melted, then take the saucepan off the heat and continue to stir until the chocolate is completely melted. Set aside to cool.
- Put the eggs, sugar, and vanilla into the mixing bowl of dates and whisk with an electric whisk until the mixture is light and fluffy.
- Fold the cocoa powder and flour through the egg mixture until completely combined. Then, stir in the

melted chocolate and butter along with the pistachios. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan, then dot the tahini on top, in random spots around the pan. Drag a skewer through the tahini to create an attractive lighter swirl on top.

- Bake the brownies in the center of the oven for 30 minutes, until firm to the touch but still soft and gooey in the center—they may need an extra 5 minutes, depending on your oven. The brownies will continue to cook as they cool.
- Allow the brownies to cool completely, then remove them from the pan and cut them into 30 squares.





Cardamom & Saffron Cake



The method used to rustle up this cake couldn't be simpler, but the strongly flavored ingredients make it a bit of a showstopper. Frozen cherries are such a useful ingredient to have on hand; I blitz them into smoothies, mix them into pancake batter, and use them in this cake recipe. I like to serve this cake with iced tea, such as the Hibiscus & Orange Iced Tea on page 227.

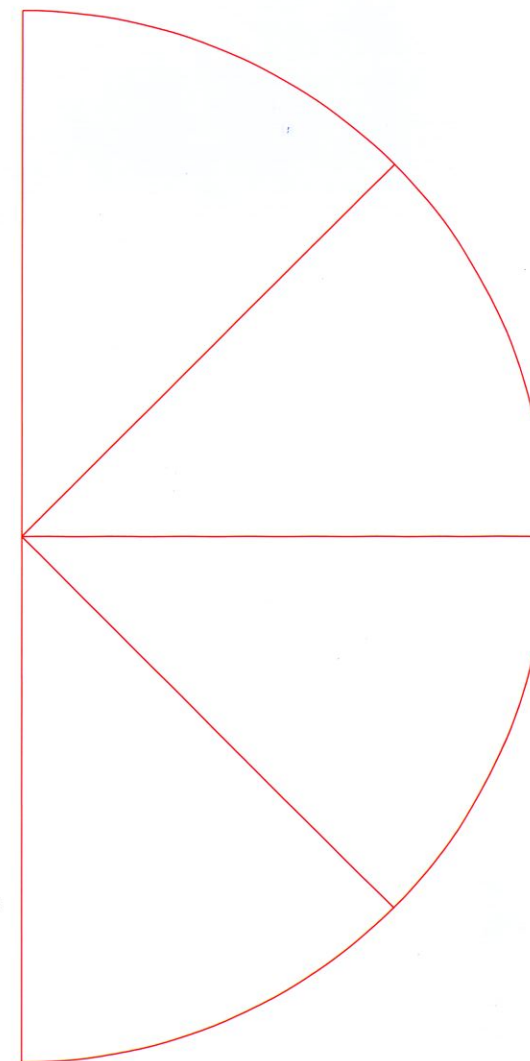
Serves 6

Prep: 25 minutes

Cook: 40–45 minutes

6 oz/180 g unsalted butter, softened
 ¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) soft light brown sugar
 1 teaspoon vanilla paste
 3 eggs
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 1 teaspoon baking soda (bicarbonate of soda)
 1 teaspoon ground cardamom
 pinch of saffron, soaked in 1 tablespoon hot water
 1 teaspoon mahleb
 1 cup (5½ oz/150 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
 ¾ cup (4½ oz/125 g) frozen cherries
 ¾ cup (3½ oz/100 g) almond meal (ground almonds)

- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4 and line the base and sides of an 8-inch (20-cm) springform pan with parchment (baking) paper.
- Using an electric whisk, beat the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Beat in the vanilla paste, then the eggs, one by one. Beat in the baking powder, baking soda (bicarbonate of soda) and the spices, including the saffron and its soaking water, then sift in the flour. Fold in the flour and frozen cherries, along with the almond meal (ground almonds). Don't worry if the batter stiffens slightly as you add the cherries.
- Pour the cake batter into the prepared pan and bake in the preheated oven for 40–45 minutes, until a skewer inserted comes out clean. Allow the cake to cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then run a knife around the sides of the tin and carefully release the springform pan. Lift the cake on to a wire rack to cool completely before slicing. Serve with crème fraîche or Greek yogurt.



Apricot Semolina Cake



Baking with semolina is so satisfying. This coarse, toothsome flour is used to make pasta, porridge and desserts all over the world. Apricots bejewel the top of this cake, and the sweet complexity of cardamom balances the tartness of the fruit. Slice it into wedges and serve with a glass of Hibiscus & Orange Iced Tea (see page 227).

Serves 8

Prep: 15 minutes

Cook: 45 minutes

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/125 g) fine semolina

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (2 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/75 g) almond meal
(ground almonds)

1 teaspoon baking powder

seeds from 4 cardamom pods, bashed in a
pestle and mortar

3 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/100 g butter, melted

2 eggs, beaten

1 cup (7 oz/200 g) golden superfine (caster) sugar

2 tablespoons natural yogurt

6 ripe apricots, halved and pitted

2 tablespoons demerara sugar

- Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C/gas mark 6. Grease a 9-inch (23-cm) springform pan lightly with neutral oil or butter, then line the base and the sides with parchment (baking) paper.
- Mix the semolina, almonds, baking powder and cardamom together in a mixing bowl.
- In a separate bowl, beat the butter, eggs, and sugar together until pale and voluminous. Fold in the yogurt, then use a spatula to fold the butter mixture through the dry ingredients until no dry patches are visible.
- Pour the batter into the prepared pan, then lift the pan up 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (3 cm) off the work counter and drop it back a couple of times to remove any air bubbles.
- Arrange the apricot halves cut side up on top of the batter and sprinkle over the demerara sugar.
- Bake in the hot oven for 15 minutes, then turn the temperature down to 325°F/170°C/gas mark 3 and

continue to bake for 30 minutes, until a skewer inserted comes out clean.

- Allow the cake to cool for 15 minutes before removing from the tin.



Pistachio & Tahini Chocolate Fridge Cake



This no-bake cake is layered with flavor and texture, with crunchy toasted seeds and pops of sharpness from the dried fruit. The ginger cookies add a sweet warmth to the cake, which is best eaten chilled from the fridge.

I sometimes slice the rectangles into three little squares to serve as petits-fours after dinner. For a delicious twist on this cake, I've occasionally replaced the dark chocolate with dark mint chocolate, and I imagine dark orange chocolate would work well too.

Makes 12 rectangles
Prep: 10 minutes
Chill: overnight

- 7 oz/200 g dark chocolate (minimum 70% cocoa solids)
- ½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) tahini
- 3 tablespoons golden syrup
- ½ cup (2¼ oz/80 g) raw pistachios, roughly chopped, plus a handful to decorate
- ½ cup (1½ oz/40 g) dried cranberries
- ½ cup (1½ oz/40 g) golden raisins
- ¼ cup (1 oz/30 g) pumpkin seeds, toasted
- ¼ cup (1 oz/30 g) sesame seeds, toasted
- 7 oz/200 g ginger snap cookies, roughly broken (these are generally vegan, but do check the packet to be sure, if you are making this cake vegan)
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt

- Break the chocolate into ¾-inch (2-cm) pieces and place in a heatproof bowl with the tahini and golden syrup. Put ¾ inch (2 cm) of water into a saucepan and bring to a gentle simmer. Place the chocolate bowl over the top of the saucepan, making sure the base of the bowl doesn't touch the water. Stir until the chocolate is melted. Remove from the heat and mix through the pistachios, dried fruit, and toasted seeds.
- Roughly chop the cookies, then stir into the melted chocolate along with the salt. Pour the chocolate mixture into an 8×8-inch (20×20-cm) pan lined with parchment (baking) paper, sprinkle over the rest of the pistachios, cover with plastic wrap (cling film) and chill in the fridge for at least 3 hours or overnight.
- Slice into 12 rectangles and serve slightly chilled.



Coconut & Orange Blossom Cakes



Deceptively light and pretty in their individual cases, I love serving these cakes at family gatherings and when I make an event of afternoon tea.

The desiccated coconut and semolina creates a toothsome texture and a heady, sweet flavor that pairs so well with the aromatic orange blossom water.

Makes 10

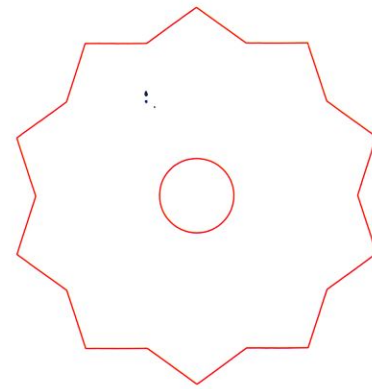
¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) superfine (caster) sugar
5½ oz/150 g unsalted butter, softened and cut into cubes
grated zest of 1 orange
2 eggs, plus 1 egg yolk
¼ cup (1½ oz/50 g) fine semolina
generous ¾ cup (4 oz/120 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
1 tablespoon cornstarch (cornflour)
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ cup (1½ oz/40 g) desiccated coconut
pinch of fine sea salt
2 tablespoons orange blossom water
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For the icing

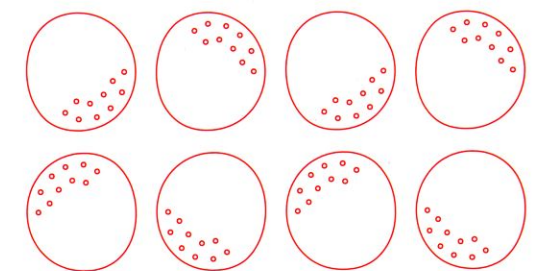
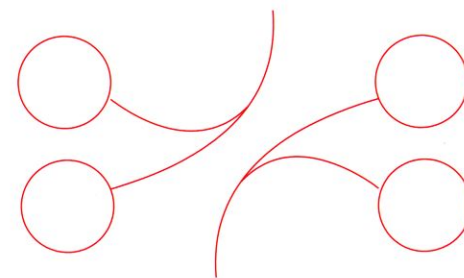
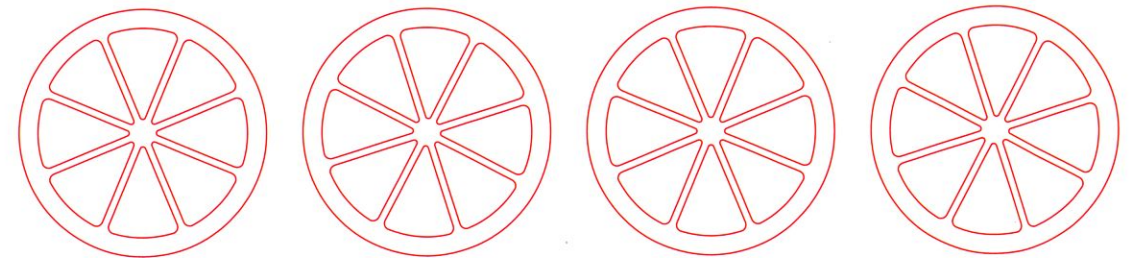
½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) full fat cream cheese
¾ oz/20 g confectioners' (icing) sugar
½ teaspoon orange blossom water

- While the cakes are in the oven, whisk all the icing ingredients together in a bowl and place in the fridge to chill.
 - Remove the cakes from the oven and use the paper to lift them out of each hole in the muffin pan. Transfer them to a wire rack to cool completely.
 - When the cakes are completely cool, use a rubber spatula to spread the icing over the cakes.
 - Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.
- Preheat the oven to 375°F/190°C/gas mark 5 and line 10 holes of a muffin pan with crumpled parchment (baking) paper.
 - Cream the sugar and butter together with the orange zest until pale and fluffy. Beat in the eggs and yolk, one at a time. In a separate bowl, mix together the semolina, flour, cornstarch (cornflour), baking powder, coconut, and salt until combined. Fold the egg mixture into the dry ingredients until no dry spots are visible. Add the orange blossom water and vanilla and fold to combine.
 - Pour the batter into the lined holes in the pan, leaving ½ inch (1 cm) clear at the top, and place in the hot oven for 10 minutes, then turn the temperature down to 325°F/160°C/gas mark 3 and bake for a further 15 minutes, until a skewer inserted comes out clean.





Fruit



Watermelon & Mint Wedges with Rose Water Syrup

A fruit salad for scorching days when you can't face turning the oven on. Watermelons are a food that immediately transport me to my childhood, and the sheer joy of slicing wedges to share hungrily and thirstily with friends and family on dry, baking-hot days.

Here I give watermelons a little more attention, meaning that with scarcely more effort, you can confidently serve this to friends after dinner without any implications of rowdy picnics or long stretches of school holidays.

Serves 6

Prep time: 10 minutes, plus 30 minutes chilling

Cook time: 10 minutes for the syrup

1 medium watermelon (about 2 lb 12 oz/1.2 kg)

6 sprigs of mint

1 × quantity of Rose Water Syrup (see page 83)

- Slice the watermelon into ¾-inch (2-cm) rounds. Cut each round into 4 triangular wedges and arrange them on a platter.
- Pick the mint leaves from the stalks and arrange 6 similar-sized leaves on top of each other. Roll up the stack of leaves tightly from one side to the other like a cigar and use a sharp knife to cut across the stack into thin, ⅛-inch (0.25-cm) ribbons. Repeat with the remaining leaves and sprinkle over the watermelon.
- Drizzle the syrup over the fruit and mint, and cover. Transfer to the fridge to chill for 30 minutes before serving.

Sour Cherry Jam

Bright, acidic and slightly salty, dried sour cherries are one of my favorite store cupboard ingredients. I tend to make batches of this jam in July and August, when cherries are bountiful, juicy and inexpensive. When they're at their best, at the peak of summer, they need few ingredients to draw out their juicy, tannic qualities. Use fresh bay leaves for this jam, as dried leaves won't impart the same flavor.

I use this jam in the ice cream on page 120.

Makes 1 × 11-fl oz (330-ml) jar

Prep: 15 minutes, plus 1 hour for macerating

Cook: 20 minutes

3 cups (1 lb 2 oz/500 g) fresh cherries, pitted

½ cup (2¼ oz/75 g) dried sour cherries, pitted

juice of 1 lemon

generous ½ cup (4 oz/115 g) granulated sugar

1 bay leaf

- As soon as all the fruit has been prepared, combine all the ingredients in a saucepan and mash roughly with a fork or potato masher. Allow the fruit to macerate with the sugar for 1 hour, until some of the cherry juices have been released. Meanwhile, put a couple of saucers into the freezer.
- Put the pan on a medium heat and bring to the boil, then continue to boil for 20 minutes, until the jam begins to thicken. To test for doneness, spoon a small amount of the jam mixture on to one of the chilled saucers.
- After 30 seconds, if it wrinkles slightly when you push it with your finger and the mixture doesn't spread, it's ready to go. If it's not ready, boil it for just a little bit longer and try again.
- Transfer the jam to a sterilized jar and consume within a year.



Vanilla Poached Quince



Quince belongs to the same family as apples and pears, and is similar in appearance to pears with a knobblier, tough-as-nails skin. Quinces have a delicious, coral-colored flesh when cooked, but are bitter when eaten raw, so they benefit from heat and time.

Makes enough to fill a 3½-pint (2-liter) tub

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 60–80 minutes

1 lemon, cut in half

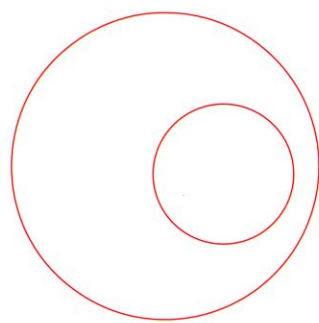
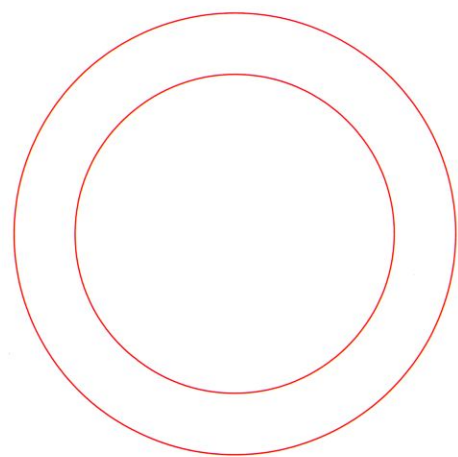
2 cardamom pods

1 vanilla bean, split open with a sharp knife

¾ cup (4½ oz/125 g) golden superfine (caster) sugar

4 quinces

- Pour 5 cups (2 pints/1.25 liters) of water into a large saucepan. Add the lemon, cardamom, vanilla, and sugar and heat gently to dissolve the sugar—do not let it come to the boil.
- While the water is heating, peel and core the quinces (this is easiest with a sharp knife, as they can be tough). Cut the quinces into 8 segments each, dropping the segments quickly into the water as you work, as they can quickly turn brown when exposed to the air. Lower the heat so that the water is simmering very gently.
- Cut out a 14-inch (35-cm) circle of greaseproof paper and crumple it in your hands. Cut out a ½-inch (1-cm) circle from the center of the crumpled paper, then push the paper down to cover the top of the quinces and their poaching liquid. Cook over a very low heat for 60–80 minutes, until the quinces are tender and the liquid has turned pink.
- Allow the liquid and quinces to cool in the pan, then transfer the fruit and liquid to an airtight container. Store in the fridge like this for up to 3 weeks.





Turkish Candied Pumpkin

It's estimated at the time of writing that about 8 million pumpkins, or the equivalent of more than 18,000 tonnes of edible pumpkin flesh, are discarded in the UK alone each year after October. This recipe is an incredibly unique use of this nutty, sweet squash. The pumpkin is slowly macerated in spices and sugar to draw out its juices, which then concentrate and thicken to a glossy syrup as the pumpkin cooks.

In Turkey, this is known as *kabak tsatlisi* and is served with *kaymak*, a kind of clotted cream available from Turkish stores, but clotted cream will work just as well.

Serves 6

Prep: 15 minutes, plus resting 6 hours

Cook: 60–90 minutes

Chill: 1 hour

5 lb 8 oz/2.5 kg pumpkin (about 2 lb

12 oz/1.25 kg trimmed weight)

1½ cups (12 oz/350 g) golden superfine (caster) sugar

pinch of fine sea salt

1 cinnamon stick

4 cardamom pods, crushed with the side of a knife

½ cup (2¼ oz/75 g) walnuts, toasted and

roughly chopped

clotted cream, to serve

- Cover and chill in the fridge for an hour.
- Remove from the fridge, allow to come to room temperature and scatter over the toasted walnuts. Serve with a dollop of clotted cream.

- Using a sharp knife, peel and trim the pumpkin. Scoop out the seeds from the center and discard. Cut the pumpkin into ¾-inch (2-cm) crescent shapes, then cut each of the crescents into 2 or 3 pieces, each about 1¼ inches (3 cm).
- Line the bottom of a large (11-inch/28-cm) heavy-bottomed frying pan with slices of pumpkin. Pour over the sugar, add the salt, cinnamon stick, and cardamom, then cover the pan with a lid. Leave for 6 hours or overnight in a cool place without removing the lid.
- By now the pumpkin should have released its liquid. Remove the lid and stir the pumpkin to coat it in the liquid and agitate the spices. Return the lid and place over a medium heat. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 60–90 minutes, until the sugar has thickened and the liquid is syrupy. Check on the pan occasionally to ensure the sugar doesn't burn.
- At this stage, remove the cinnamon and cardamom and discard. Remove the pumpkin and all of the syrup from the pan, and place on a serving platter.

Sweet Apricot Tahdig



Tahdig is both one of the most revered dishes in the Persian culinary portfolio and one of my favorite dishes to enjoy as part of a family meal. Roughly translated, it means 'the bottom of the pan', reflecting the crisp, golden edges of the cooked rice. Although usually served as the centerpiece of a savory meal, I love this sweet version, layered with thick, creamy yogurt and aromatic rose water.

While sweet, fruity *tahdigs* aren't strictly traditional, I urge you to try making this apricot version to round off a family get-together or celebratory meal.

Serves 8

Prep: 20 minutes

Cook: 1 hour 15 minutes

¼ teaspoon fine sea salt

3 tablespoons brown sugar

2½ cups (1 lb 2 oz/500 g) basmati rice

1½ oz/40 g unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing

¾ cup (3 oz/80 g) golden sultanas

¼ cup (¾ oz/20 g) dried barberries (or pitted dried sour cherries)

1 teaspoon rose water

1½ cups (9 oz/250 g) natural yogurt

scant ½ cup (3½ fl oz/100 ml) neutral oil (vegetable)

3 egg yolks

¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) superfine (caster) sugar

2 tablespoons honey

1 lb 2oz/500 g apricots (about 14)

chopped pistachios, to serve

- Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C/gas mark 6. Grease an 8×12-inch (20×30-cm) rectangular baking dish with butter.
- Fill a large saucepan with water and add the salt and brown sugar. Place on the heat, and while you're waiting for the water to boil, wash the rice: place it in a sieve and rinse well under cold running water, swishing the rice with your hands until the water runs clear.
- When the water is at a rolling boil, tip the rice in and bring to the boil again. Parboil the rice for 4 minutes, then pour back into the sieve and rinse well with cold water, shaking the sieve gently to make sure the rice grains don't stick together.
- Melt the butter in a frying pan and add the sultanas and barberries. Fry over a gentle heat for 4 minutes, until the berries are plump and glossy. Remove from the heat and stir in the rose water.
- In a large mixing bowl, combine the yogurt, oil, egg yolks, sugar, and honey. Use a spatula to fold the rice through the yogurt mixture. Spread half the mixture on the base of the greased dish, and use the base of a glass or cup to gently press down on the rice to compact it. This will help when it comes to turning the *tahdig* out of the baking dish.
- Sprinkle half the sultanas and barberries over the rice, then halve the apricots and remove the pits. Arrange the apricots on top of the rice.
- Use a spatula to spread the remaining rice, on top of the apricots, then use a glass to press down on the rice again. Cover the baking dish tightly with foil and bake in the oven for 1 hour and 15 minutes on the middle shelf.
- Allow to cool for 10 minutes, then place a plate on top and flip the *tahdig* over. Decorate with the remaining sultanas, barberries and the chopped pistachios and cut into squares to serve.
- Serve with the Saffron & Apricot Sorbet on page 125.



Spiced Apricot Compote



The simplest method for preserving fruit for a time; I love making compotes when fruits are at the peak of their season, stewing them slowly with spices to enjoy with everything from breakfast yogurt to roasted meats and spreadable, tangy goat's and sheep's cheese.

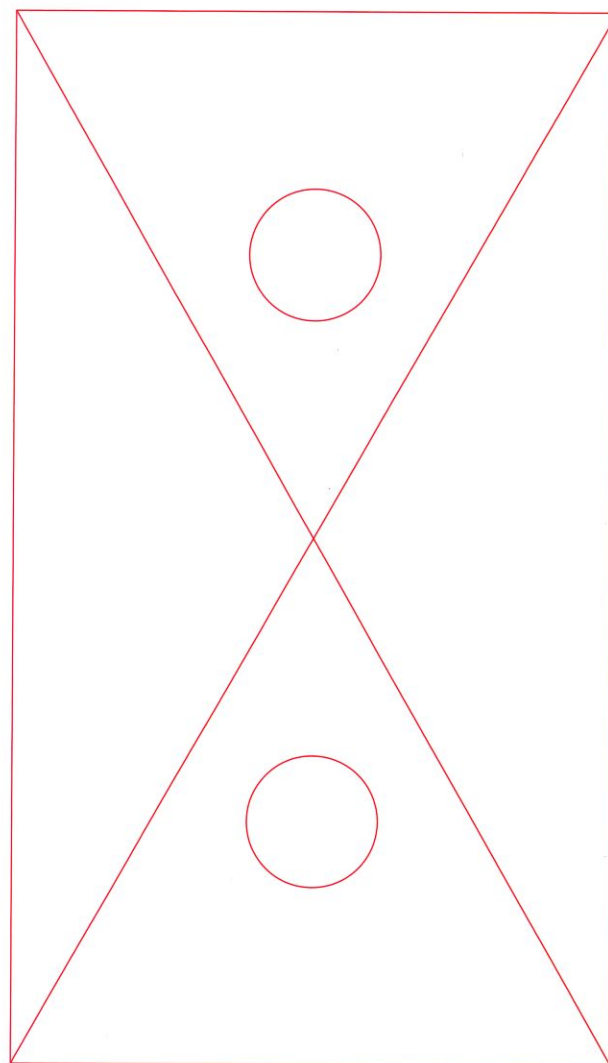
This compote also freezes well for up to 6 months in an airtight container.

Makes about 1½ cups (12 fl oz/350 ml)

Prep: 10 minutes
Cook: 35 minutes

14 oz/400 g apricots
grated zest of 1 orange and juice of 2 oranges
1 cinnamon stick
1 star anise
2 tablespoons honey

- Cut the apricots in half and remove the pits, then put all the ingredients into a saucepan and place over a gentle heat for 35 minutes.
- Leave to cool for 10 minutes, then remove the spices and put the compote into a sterilized jar with a tightly sealed lid.
- Once completely cool, store in the fridge for up to a week.



Rose Petal Jelly



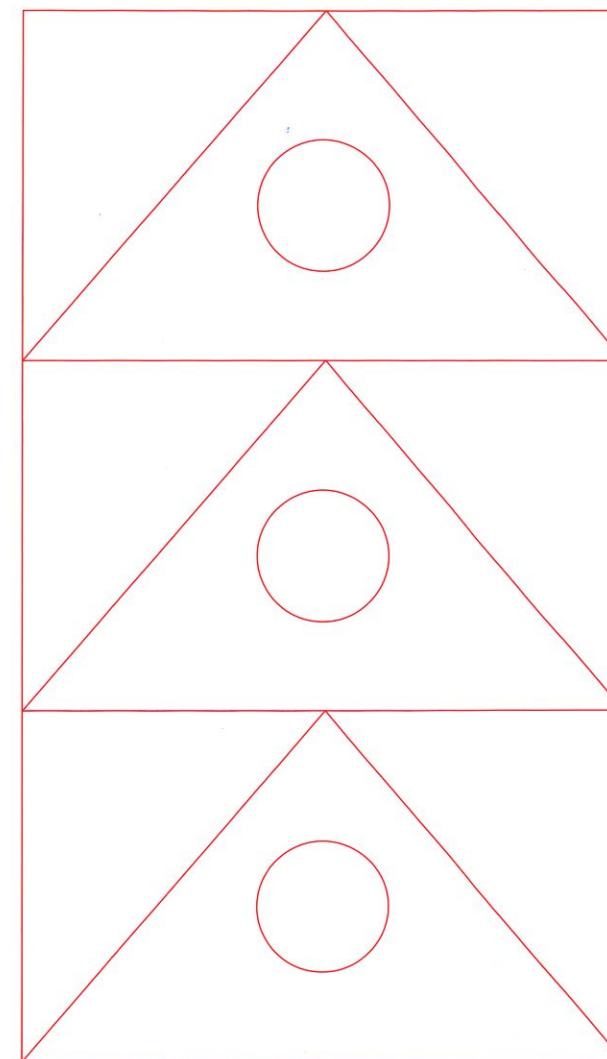
Dried rose petals are readily available in Middle Eastern stores and specialist delis. Do track down culinary grade rose petals if you can, as these have been produced with the least interference or processing.

The apple in this jelly contains pectin, which helps it to set, but also imparts a delicious tartness.

Makes scant 1 cup (7 fl oz/200 ml)
Prep: 10 minutes, plus 1 hour resting time
Cook: 20 minutes

1 oz/25 g dried rose petals
1 dessert apple, such as Braeburn
(about 5½ oz/150 g), cored and grated
juice of ½ a lemon
¾ cup (4½ oz/125 g) superfine (caster) sugar

- Bring 14 fl oz/400 ml of water to the boil in a saucepan. Stir in the rose petals and remove from the heat. Set aside and leave the petals to steep for 1 hour.
- Strain well through a cheesecloth or muslin into a clean saucepan.
- Squeeze the cheesecloth to get as much of the liquid as you can from the rose petals into the saucepan, then discard the rose petals. Add the apple, lemon juice and sugar to the pan and stir in.
- Bring to the boil and cook, stirring frequently, for 16–18 minutes, until most of the liquid has evaporated and the jelly is deep red. Transfer to sterilized jars and store in the fridge for up to 6 months.



Roasted Orange Marmalade



The scent of citrus fruits is a proven mood-lifter, and there's no better time to put their qualities to work than in the depths of winter, when the days are short and the citrus season is at its peak. All the hard work is done in the oven, softening the orange rinds and concentrating the sugars in the oranges, which intensifies their citric brightness.

Offer jars of this marmalade at breakfast, alongside creamy cheeses and honey, but give the marmalade a month in the jar to mature before opening.

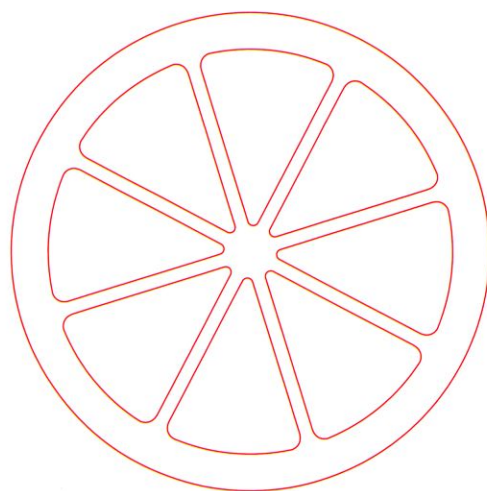
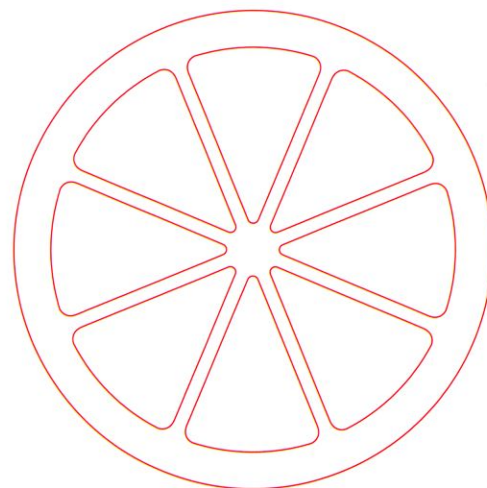
Makes 1 x 17½ fl oz/500 ml jar

Prep: 15 minutes

Cook: 1 hour

4 unwaxed oranges, plus the juice of 3
(I use Valencia or Navel oranges)
generous ¾ cup (6 oz/175 g) demerara sugar
4 bay leaves

- Preheat the oven to 325°F/160°C/gas mark 3.
- Slice the oranges thinly (about ¼ inch/0.5 cm per slice), removing the pips and discarding the ends as you go. Lay them in an 8 x 12-inch (20 x 30-cm) baking dish so they overlap slightly. Sprinkle the sugar over the oranges and pour the orange juice over the top. Nestle the bay leaves among the oranges. Cover the tray tightly with foil and place in the oven for 45 minutes, then remove the foil and return the tray to the oven for 15 minutes, until most of the liquid has cooked away.
- Transfer everything in the dish to a food processor and blitz to break down to a rough, light orange purée.
- Transfer to a sterilized jar and store in the pantry for a month before opening. Transfer to the fridge after opening.



1
Rose Petal Jelly
p. 169

2
Spiced Apricot
Compote
p. 168

3
Roasted
Orange
Marmalade
p. 170

4
Sour Cherry Jam
p. 160



Red Wine Poached Pears



This is such a simple and underrated dessert, needing little more than a scoop of ice cream or a spoonful of Greek yogurt to round it off. The red wine imparts an incredible cherry color to the pears, making it an impressive dessert to serve to guests after Sunday lunch or a weekend supper.

As the liquid cooks for a time, most of the alcohol evaporates, meaning that the dessert can be enjoyed by children and adults alike.

Serves 6

Prep: 10 minutes

Cook: 30 minutes

½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) golden superfine (caster) sugar
8 cloves

1 cinnamon stick

generous 2 cups (18 fl oz/500 ml) red wine

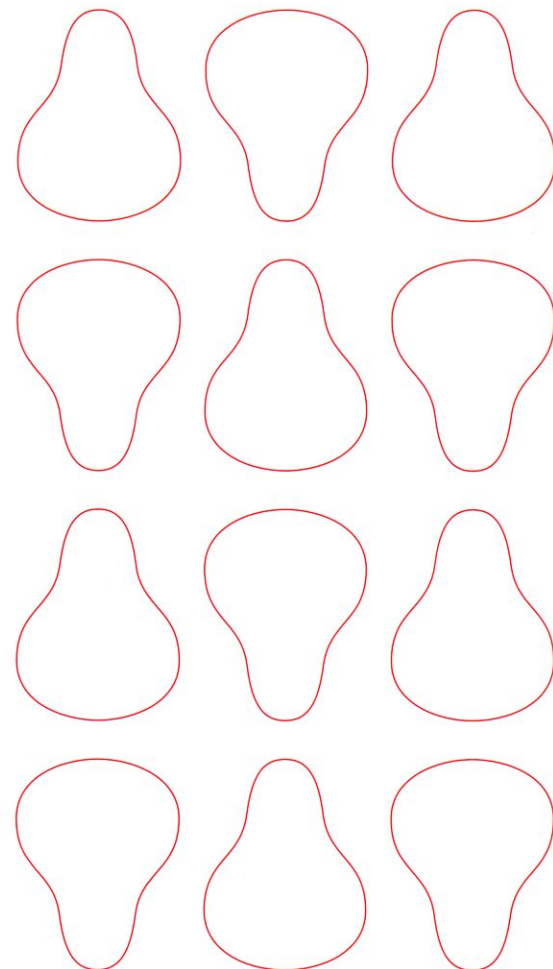
pared zest and juice of 1 orange

1 vanilla bean, sliced open

2 fresh bay leaves

6 firm pears, peeled and stalks kept intact

- Place all the ingredients except the pears in a saucepan that is about the right size to hold the pears snugly. Bring to a gentle simmer, then lower in the pears, keeping them upright, and top up with water so that the liquid is just below the level of the stalks.
- Poach gently over a low heat—so that the liquid is not boiling—for 20–25 minutes, until the fruit is tender to the point of a knife, then turn off the heat and allow the pears to cool down in the poaching liquid.
- Lift the pears on to a dish, leaving the poaching liquid in the saucepan.
- Turn the heat back on, then put the pan back on the heat, bring to the boil and reduce the liquid by one third, until it's thick and glossy. Serve the pears on individual plates, with a little of the syrup drizzled over and a spoon of crème fraîche or ice cream on the side.



Oven-Dried Fig Crisps



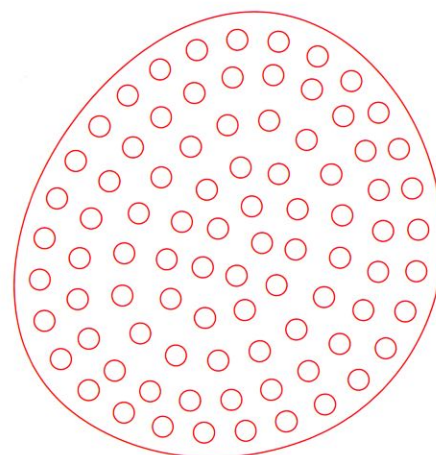
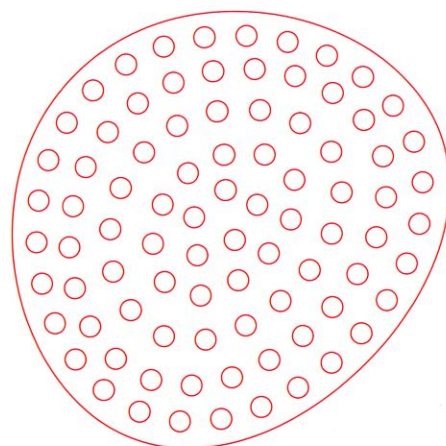
Over a long hot summer, we were left with a bumper crop of figs on the tree and it was a struggle to consume them before they became overripe and spoilt. A simple method of preservation, such as oven-drying, concentrates and intensifies their jammy sweetness and means that they can be enjoyed for months to come.

These crisps make a fantastic mid-afternoon snack when sugar pangs strike, and are impressive when used to decorate the top of a cheesecake or yogurt bowl.

Makes 36 crisps
Prep: 5 minutes
cook: 20 minutes

6 black figs, each sliced lengthwise into 6 pieces

- Preheat the oven to 300°F/150°C/gas mark 2. Line two large baking sheets with parchment (baking) paper and lay the fig slices out in one layer.
- Place in the oven for 10 minutes, opening the oven twice during this time to release the steam. Remove the trays from the oven, turn the fig slices over and return the trays to the oven for a final 10 minutes.
- Remove from the oven after this time, when the figs are crisp and dry at the edges. Allow to cool completely before transferring the slices to an airtight container. They will keep for up to a month.





Lebanese Fig Jam

I make this jam throughout the year, as it uses dried figs with grapes to intensify their sweetness. The jammy fruitiness is balanced out by the woodiness of mastic and cardamom, making this jam as delicious in my fig jam thumbprint cookies (see page 30) as it is with a cheeseboard. It also makes a perfect gift—make a double batch and give to friends and loved ones at Christmas.

Makes generous 2 cups (18 fl oz/500 ml)
Prep: 15 minutes
Cook: 40 minutes

a lid. The jam will keep for a couple of months in a lidded jar, and for much longer in the fridge.

1½ cups (9 oz/250 g) superfine (caster) sugar
juice of ½ a lemon
2 pieces of mastic gum, crushed in a pestle and mortar with a pinch of sugar
1½ cups (9 oz/250 g) soft dried figs, tough stems removed and roughly chopped
a handful of seedless red or green grapes, halved lengthwise
1 teaspoon rose water
seeds from 5 cardamom pods
¼ cup (1 oz/30 g) slivered (flaked) almonds

- Measure the sugar, lemon juice, and crushed mastic into a medium saucepan with plenty of room to spare. Pour in 1½ cups (14 fl oz/400 ml) of water and bring the mixture to the boil over a high heat. Boil uncovered for 8 minutes, until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture has thickened.
- Add the figs, grapes, rose water, and cardamom seeds to the pan. Bring the mixture to the boil again, then turn down to a gentle simmer. Allow to simmer uncovered for 30 minutes.
- Meanwhile, gently toast the slivered (flaked) almonds in a dry frying pan over a low heat for 3–4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until they turn a couple of shades darker (any darker than honey and they've gone too far). Tip into a bowl to cool and stop the cooking immediately.
- After the figs have been cooking for 30 minutes, stir in the toasted almonds and cook for 3 minutes.
- Remove the jam from the heat. When cool, spoon it into a sterilized 18-fl oz/500-ml jar and cover with

Fruit Leather



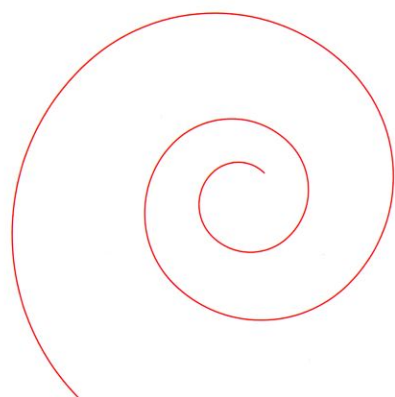
Traditionally, gluts of fruit would be bottled with enough sweetener to preserve them through the winter until the next harvest, or dried by the sun's scorching summer rays to extend their pantry life. This approach makes for quicker and easier preserving; fruit is blended before being dried out in the oven overnight. Hands-on time is minimal and, once the fruit is blended, the heat of the oven concentrates the sugars and intensifies the flavor of the fruit, which can be enjoyed for weeks.

Try any combination of fruit that's in season—a mixture of berries and starchier fruits like bananas, apples and pears works well. I sometimes add a splash of rose water or orange blossom water to the mixture for a floral hint, so do try adding a teaspoon if you like.

Makes 8
Prep: 15 minutes
Cook: 12+ hours

neutral oil, such as mild olive oil, or vegetable oil,
for greasing
1 lb 2 oz/500 g mixed fruit, washed
(see suggestions below)

- Preheat the oven to 160°F/70°C/lowest gas mark or as low as your oven will go. Lightly grease an 8×12-inch (20×30-cm) roasting tray and spread a lightly greased piece of parchment (baking) paper in the tray.
- Trim any larger pieces of fruit and remove leaves, pips, and stalks. Place the fruit in a saucepan and cover with a lid. Cook gently over a low heat for 10 minutes, until the fruit is soft but not yet broken down.
- Transfer the fruit to a food processor and blitz for 3 minutes, until very smooth. Pour the fruit into the lined tray and place in the oven overnight. 12–15 hours in the oven is usually enough for the fruit to be dry to the touch and leathery.
- Remove from the oven and use sharp scissors to cut 1¼-inch (3-cm) lengths from one side to the other. Roll each length of fruit into a snail shell shape and store in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks.



Carrot & Clementine Jam



Vegetable jams are found all over the Middle East, for serving with breakfasts, yogurts and as a component in a mezze spread. As well as pickling, most Middle Eastern home cooks will also make jams, as another way of preserving the precious flavors from a bumper crop. The natural sweetness of carrots lends itself to being used in desserts and other sweet recipes.

As well as serving this as a traditional jam, it also works brilliantly on a cheeseboard or in sandwiches.

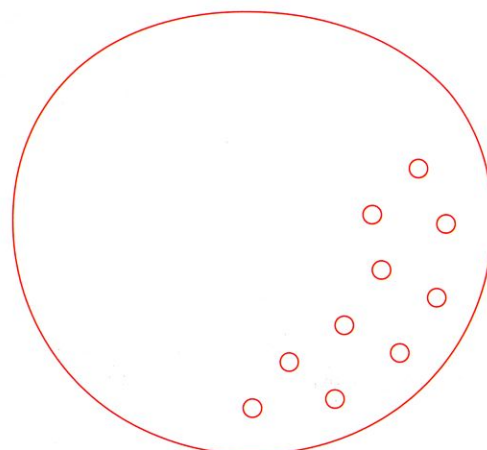
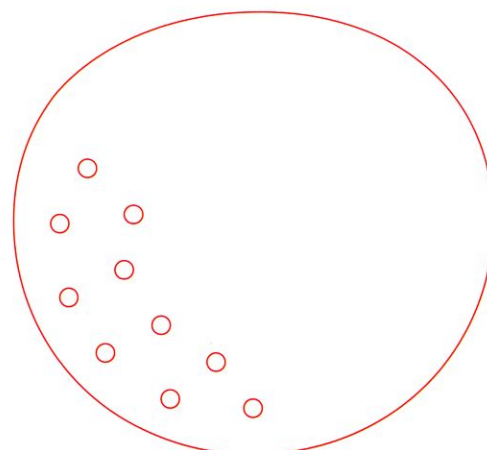
Makes 2 x 10½-fl oz/330-ml jars

Prep: 15 minutes

Cook: 20 minutes

1 lb 10 oz/750 g carrots, peeled and grated
(prepared weight)
grated zest and juice of 2 clementines
2½ cups (1 lb 2 oz/500 g) superfine (caster) sugar
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 cinnamon stick
3 cardamom pods, split open
1 teaspoon coriander seeds

- Toss all the ingredients together in a saucepan.
- Place over a medium heat to gently dissolve the sugar, then bring to the boil. Simmer until the mixture thickens and reaches its setting point. To test, have a couple of saucers in the freezer chilling. After 20 minutes, test by spooning a small amount of the jam mixture on to a chilled saucer.
- After 30 seconds, if it wrinkles slightly when you push it with your finger and the mixture doesn't spread, it's ready to go. If it's not ready, boil it for just a little bit longer and try again.
- Transfer to sterilized jars. In clean and sterilized jars, the jam will keep at room temperature for a year. Be sure to store any opened jars in the fridge, however, and consume within a month.





Baked Lemon & Bay Figs

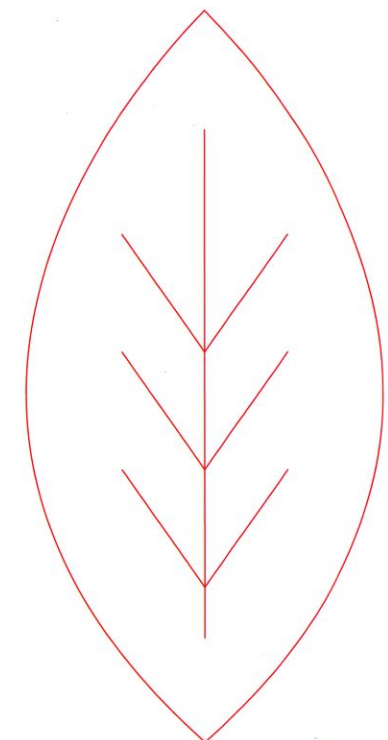
When they're ripe, figs need little intervention except perhaps a drizzle of grassy olive oil, or a crunch of flaky sea salt to reveal the full potential of their enchanting flavor. Either side of peak fig season, I often heat figs gently to concentrate the sugars in the fruit and soften them slightly. The warm, boozy juices from the pan don't harm either, and for a texture contrast, I usually serve the figs and juices drizzled over the Saffron Cookies on page 28.

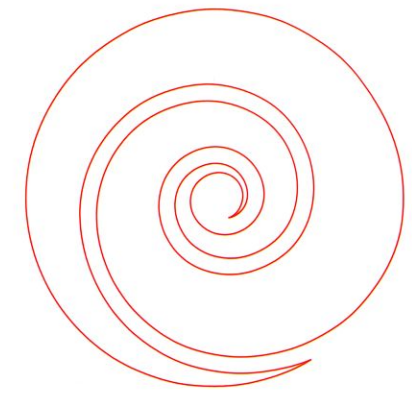
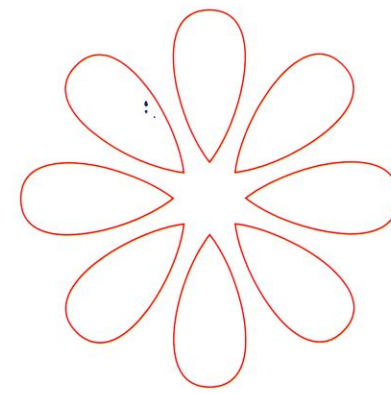
Any extra figs are a revelation served on top of yogurt the next day, and you can continue your morning safe in the knowledge that the heat from the oven cooks off any alcohol in the sweet wine.

Serves 4
Prep: 5 minutes
Cook: 20 minutes

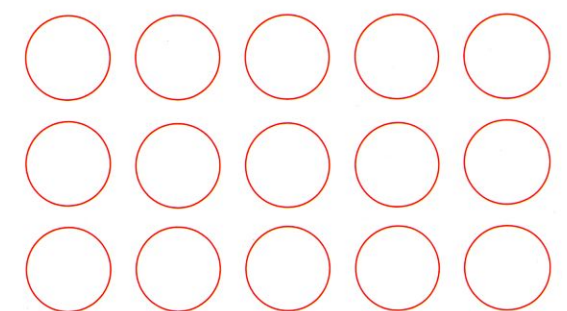
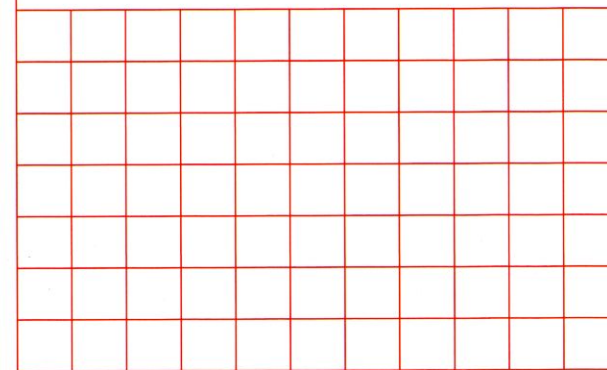
12 figs
4 bay leaves
½ a lemon, cut into thin slices
scant ½ cup (3½ fl oz/100 ml) port or Marsala

- Preheat the oven to 325°F/160°C/gas mark 3.
- Make a cross in the pointy top of each fig, and use a sharp knife to slice down about ½ inch (1 cm), but not so far that you slice through the fruit.
- Pinch the base of the fig to open the top like a flower. Transfer the figs to a small baking dish in which they fit snugly.
- Push the bay leaves and lemon slices into the figs and pour over the port.
- Bake in the oven for 20 minutes, until the figs are slumping slightly and the juices are slick and glossy.
- Serve warm or cool.





Sweet Breads & Dough



Sweet Tahini Swirls



This is my Lebanese version of a cinnamon bun, bolstered by nutty tahini, which I love in sweet baking as much as I do in savory dishes.

Tahini is both delicious and packed with protein—more, in fact, than most nuts, so it's filling as well as being a great source of calcium and other vitamins and minerals.

I love these sweet buns served with warm tea or coffee, pulled apart while the dough is still warm.

Makes 12

Prep: 20 minutes, plus 1 hour 45 minutes proving

Cook: 15 minutes

3½ oz/100 g unsalted butter
1 cup (8 fl oz/220 ml) whole milk
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
½ cup (1¼ oz/50 g) wholemeal flour
3 cups (1 lb/450 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
¼ oz/7 g fast-acting dried yeast
ground seeds from 10 cardamom pods
5 tablespoons superfine (caster) sugar
2 eggs, beaten
olive oil, for greasing

For the filling

½ cup (2¼ oz/80 g) tahini
1 oz/25 g unsalted butter, melted
½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) superfine (caster) sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla paste
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
1 egg, beaten

- Measure the butter and milk into a saucepan and add the salt. Heat over a low heat until the butter is melted and the mixture is warm but not steaming.
- Mix together the flours, yeast, cardamom, and sugar in a large mixing bowl.
- Make a well in the center and pour in the eggs and the warm milk mixture.
- Use a wooden spoon or fork to combine, then continue to mix with a spoon or your hands until a sticky dough forms (you could also use a dough whisk if you have one). Lightly oil a clean work counter, then transfer the dough to the oiled counter. Knead with your hands,

using a dough scraper if the dough is sticky. Avoid adding more flour, as this will make the swirls tough and dry. Continue to knead until the dough is sticky, smooth and elastic. Shape into a ball, then transfer to a lightly oiled bowl. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave in a warm place to rise for an hour, until airy and doubled in size.

- Mix the tahini in a bowl with the melted butter, sugar, vanilla, and cinnamon until completely combined.
- When the dough has risen, turn it out on to a lightly oiled work counter.
- Oil a rolling pin and roll the dough into a rough 10 × 14-inch (25 × 35-cm) rectangle. Spread the tahini mixture over the dough, leaving ½ inch (1 cm) clear around each edge.
- With a long edge closest to you, roll the dough into a Swiss roll shape. Slice it into 12 even pieces. Grease a 12-hole muffin pan with olive oil, then place a roll slice in each hole. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to prove again for 45 minutes, until risen.
- While the rolls are proving, preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Brush the tops of the rolls with beaten egg and bake in the hot oven for 12 minutes, until golden. Serve with a cup of Arabic coffee (see page 228).



Sweet Blessed Buns



Made with enriched dough, these light, milky buns are so simple to make and are laced with the delicate fragrance of cardamom, which is evocative of home in Lebanon for me.

Serve these warm from the oven, or sliced in half to be toasted and spread with unsalted butter.

Makes 12

Prep: 20 minutes, plus 2 hours proving

Cook: 25 minutes

½ cup (4 fl oz/125 ml) whole milk,
plus extra for glazing
3½ oz/100 g butter

3½ cups (1 lb 2 oz/500 g) strong white bread flour
¼ oz/7 g fast-acting dried yeast

½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) superfine (caster) sugar
pinch of fine sea salt

1 teaspoon ground cardamom

- Warm the milk in a small saucepan with ½ cup (4 fl oz/125 ml) water and butter over a low-medium heat until the butter melts. Sift the flour into a large bowl and stir in the yeast, sugar, salt, and cardamom. Make a well in the center and pour in the warm liquid. Mix together with a wooden spoon to form a dough – if it looks too sticky or too dry, add a little flour or water (each flour and atmosphere produces different conditions, so use your judgment).
- Use your hands to bring the dough together into a ball, then knead on a lightly floured work counter for at least 10 minutes, until the dough is smooth and ‘bounces back’ when you poke it.
- Dust a clean mixing bowl with flour and form the dough into a ball. Place the dough in the bowl, cover it with plastic wrap (cling film) and leave to rise in a warm place for at least an hour, until it’s doubled in size.
- Cover a large baking sheet with parchment (baking) paper. Uncover the dough, knock it back by punching it down a few times, and knead for another few minutes. Shape the dough into 12 small buns, put them on the baking sheet, cover with a clean dish towel and leave

them for another hour or so, until risen.

- Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C/gas mark 6. Brush each little bun with milk to glaze, then place in the center of the oven for 20 minutes, until the rolls are deep golden on top and hollow-sounding when you tap the bottom. Transfer to a wire rack to cool, and serve with butter.





Spiced Pistachio Brioche



This festive bread is a little technical to make, so make sure you have a dough hook—the dough is too soft to knead and mix by hand.

Brioche is one of the many edible legacies of the French colonial rule of Lebanon, along with other pâtisseries and gâteaux. The filling is gently spiced, which highlights the rich sweetness of the pistachios—in my opinion, the most regal nut available. This brioche usually lasts about 10 minutes in my house, but the sooner you eat it the better, as it will turn stale after a couple of days.

Serves 6

Prep: 45 minutes, plus 7 hours chilling

Rise: 3 hours

Cook: 25 minutes

2½ cups (12 oz/350 g) strong white bread flour

¼ oz/7 g fast-acting dried yeast

½ cup (2½ fl oz/70 ml) lukewarm whole milk

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

generous ⅓ cup (2¾ oz/75 g) superfine (caster) sugar

2 eggs, plus 1 egg yolk

6 oz/175 g unsalted butter, melted, plus extra

¼ cup (2¼ oz/60 g) apricot jam

1 oz/25 g raw pistachios, roughly chopped

For the pistachio paste

1½ cups (7 oz/200 g) raw pistachios

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

scant ⅓ cup (3¼ oz/95 g) superfine (caster) sugar

2 teaspoons vanilla paste

pinch of fine sea salt

- Sift the flour into a large stand mixer bowl and fit the dough hook attachment. Add the yeast, milk, salt, sugar, eggs and yolk, and mix on low for 2 minutes. While the mixer is running, pour in the melted butter in 4 batches, stopping the motor to scrape down the sides to make sure the butter is incorporated. When all the butter has been added, turn the speed up to medium and mix until the dough is glossy and elastic.
- Scrape the dough into a lightly greased bowl and cover with a dish towel. Leave to rise in a warm spot for 60–90 minutes.
- Using the spatula, lift the dough up and over itself to knock it back in its bowl, then cover the bowl with plastic wrap (cling film) and place in the fridge to chill for at least 7 hours, or overnight.

- Make the pistachio paste. Blitz the pistachios and cinnamon in a food processor until they resemble fine breadcrumbs, then add the sugar, vanilla, and salt and blitz again on a high speed, scraping down the sides a few times until the mixture becomes a paste. Cover and set aside.

- Divide the chilled dough into two evenly sized balls (it may be easiest to weigh the dough and then divide it until each ball forms half the original weight if you're unsure). Shape each ball into a rectangle, roughly 8×12 inches (20×30 cm). Use a spatula to spread all the pistachio paste evenly over one of the rectangles, leaving roughly ½ inch (1 cm) clear around the edge. Place the other rectangle of dough on top of the pistachio layer, then roll tightly from one shorter end to the other, forming a Swiss roll shape.

- If the dough has warmed up and become soft and pliable, place it on a baking sheet in the fridge to chill for 30 minutes before the next step. Otherwise, use a sharp knife to cut ¾-inch (2-cm) slices from the roll, then arrange them snugly, cut side up, in a greased 2-lb/900-g loaf pan. Cover with plastic wrap (cling film) and leave in a warm place to prove for 2 hours.

- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.

- When the dough has puffed up and doubled in size, bake for 25 minutes, until deep golden all over.

- Meanwhile, warm the jam in a small saucepan. As soon as the brioche comes out of the oven, brush it all over with the jam and sprinkle over the chopped pistachios. Allow the brioche to cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then loosen with a spatula. Cool on a wire rack, then slice and serve.

Spiced Olive Oil Crispbreads



A sort of wafer/cookie/crispbread hybrid, these sweet, light, and flaky delicacies are laced with olive oil and anise seeds, which are flecked with sweet flavor. If you can't find anise seeds, the same amount of fennel seeds is a decent enough replacement, but they will have a different, slightly higher-pitched anise flavor.

Use the best olive oil you can find for this recipe. Any older olive oils will have a bitterness that will taint the flavor of these crispbreads, so use a young grassy extra virgin olive oil with a rounded flavor.

Makes 26

Prep: 20 minutes, plus 1 hour rising time
Cook: 8–10 minutes

scant $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (3 $\frac{1}{4}$ fl oz/115 ml) olive oil, plus extra for greasing
grated zest of 1 orange
grated zest of 1 lemon
1 tablespoon anise seeds
2 tablespoons sesame seeds
scant 2 cups (10 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/290 g) all-purpose (plain) flour, sifted
2 tablespoons superfine (caster) sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/10 g fast-acting dried yeast
pinch of fine sea salt
1 egg white, beaten
2 tablespoons granulated sugar

- Measure the oil into a saucepan and heat gently with the citrus zests until the zest sizzles and darkens slightly. Turn off the heat and add the anise and sesame seeds. Allow the oil to cool and infuse for 10 minutes.
- Measure the flour and sugar into the bowl of a fixed mixer fitted with a dough hook attachment, then add the yeast, salt, the infused spices and oil, and generous $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (4 fl oz/130 ml) of warm water. Mix on a medium speed until the dough is smooth, glossy and elastic and bounces back when you poke it.
- Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl and cover it with a clean dish towel. Leave in a warm place for an hour, to double in size.
- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4 and line a large baking sheet with parchment (baking) paper. Remove the dough from the bowl to a clean work counter. Break off walnut-sized pieces of the dough

(about $\frac{3}{4}$ oz/20 g each) and roll them out into rough circles about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (2–3 mm) thick and 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (12 cm) diameter, placing them on the baking sheet. Brush the rounds with egg white, then sprinkle about $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of granulated sugar over each. Repeat with the remaining dough. Bake in the preheated oven for 8–10 minutes, until the crispbreads are deep golden, bubbling and the sugar begins to caramelize (you may need to bake them in batches). Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely, then transfer them to an airtight container and store for up to a week.



Ricotta Fritters with Rose Petal Cream



These milky, cheese-filled fritters are best described as a cross between a doughnut and a sweet bun. Left to rise for an hour, they're light on the inside and crisp on the outside. I serve these with my Rose Petal Jelly (see page 169) and a spoonful of something creamy, such as Greek yogurt or clotted cream.

Make sure you use a thermometer to check the oil temperature as you cook these—if it gets too hot the fritters can burn on the outside, but remain undercooked inside.

Serves 6–8 (makes about 30–40)
Prep: 45 minutes, plus 1 hour rising
Cook: 30 minutes

1½ oz/40 g unsalted butter
scant ½ cup (3½ fl oz/100 ml) whole milk
scant ½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) ricotta, crumbled
½ oz/10 g fast-acting dried yeast
1 teaspoon vanilla paste
1 teaspoon orange blossom water
2 cups (10½ oz/300 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
¼ cup (1½ oz/50 g) superfine (caster) sugar
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
vegetable oil, for deep frying
4 tablespoons granulated sugar

For the Rose Petal Cream
4 tablespoons Rose Petal Jelly (see page 169)
4 tablespoons Greek yogurt, *kaymak* (Lebanese or Turkish clotted cream) or whipped cream

- Melt the butter in a small saucepan and pour into a small mixing bowl. Add the milk, ricotta, yeast, vanilla, and orange blossom water and whisk to combine.
- Sift the flour into a large mixing bowl, then add the superfine (caster) sugar and salt and mix. Make a well in the center and pour in the wet ingredients. Whisk to combine and make a slightly wet dough. Cover the bowl with a damp dish towel and leave to prove for an hour in a warm place.
- Using a thermometer, heat the oil in a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan to 320°F/160°C. Roll grape-sized pieces of the dough (about ½ oz/15 g) between lightly floured hands to make little rounds. Drop the rolled dough into the hot oil carefully, three at a time. Deep fry for 2–3 minutes, until the dough is golden and

rises to the surface—they may need careful turning halfway if only cooking on one side. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the cooked fritters to a plate lined with kitchen paper, then repeat with the rest of the dough. Toss the fritters with the granulated sugar while they're still warm. Keep warm in a low oven with the door slightly ajar (the air flow will keep the fritters crisp).

- Quickly whip the Rose Petal Jelly with the yogurt or cream, then transfer to a small bowl. Serve the warm fritters on a platter, with the rose petal cream for dipping.





Easter Loaf



I call this 'Easter Loaf' because all the spices used in this cake remind me of the scent of my kitchen at Easter, baking lightly spiced hot cross buns and simnel cakes. The cake is so moist from the addition of soaked fruits, and is glazed with tahini, giving it a rich, nutty flavor. It will keep, covered, for up to a week. Just see if it lasts that long.

Serves 8–10

Prep: 15 minutes, plus 2 hours soaking time

Cook: 75–90 minutes

- 1½ cups (10 fl oz/300 ml) strong rooibos tea
- 2¼ cups (10½ oz/300 g) mixed dried fruit (such as sultanas, chopped apricots and raisins)
- 2 large eggs
- ¾ cup (5½ oz/150 g) golden superfine (caster) sugar
- 3 tablespoons tahini, plus extra to serve
- generous 1¾ cups (9¼ oz/275 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 large dessert apple (such as Braeburn), cored and grated

For the glaze

1 teaspoon tahini

2 teaspoons confectioners' (icing) sugar

- Pour the tea over the dried fruit and set aside for at least a couple of hours, or ideally overnight.
- Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.
- Beat the eggs, sugar, and tahini together with an electric whisk for 3 minutes, until completely smooth and much paler in color, adding a splash of water if the tahini thickens and seizes. Sift the flour, baking powder, and spices into a large, separate mixing bowl, then add the egg and tahini mixture, grated apple and dried fruits (set aside the liquid left over from soaking the fruits for later). Fold the mixture until no floury dry spots are visible.
- Line a 450-g/1-lb loaf pan with parchment (baking) paper and pour in the cake batter. Place in the hot

oven and bake for 75–90 minutes, until a skewer inserted comes out clean.

- Meanwhile, whisk the teaspoon of tahini with the confectioners' sugar and add the leftover soaking liquid, a drizzle at a time, until a thick glaze forms.
- Remove the cake from the oven and spoon over the glaze while it's still warm. Allow to cool for 10 minutes in the pan, then remove and cool completely on a wire rack.
- Serve in slices, with more tahini for spreading over.

Lebanese Drop Donuts (*Awwamat*)



These little drop donuts are such fun to make and are a brilliant way to feed a crowd. Try to use a large, deep pan to make them. As the oil is extremely hot, you'll want room to cook the donuts safely, as overcrowding can cause the oil to spit.

I drizzle these with Orange Blossom Syrup (see page 82), but they are delicious tossed in granulated sugar too.

Serves 10–12

Prep: 35 minutes, plus 1 hour resting

Cook: 30 minutes

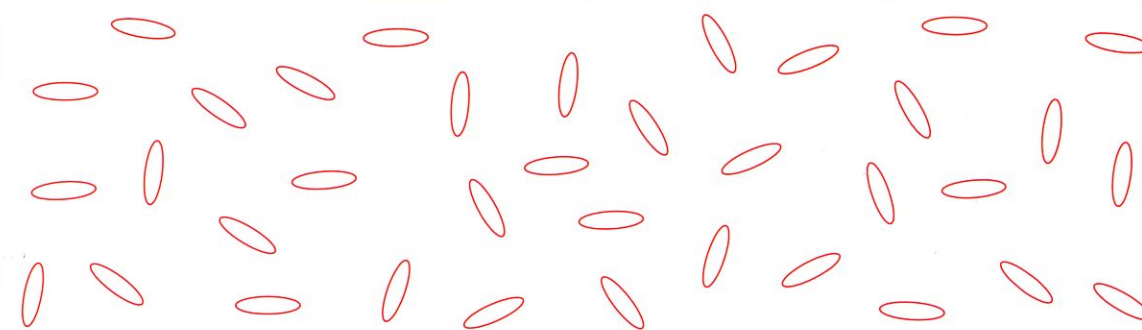
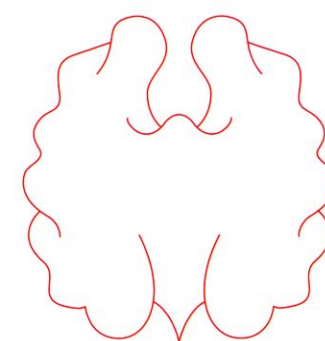
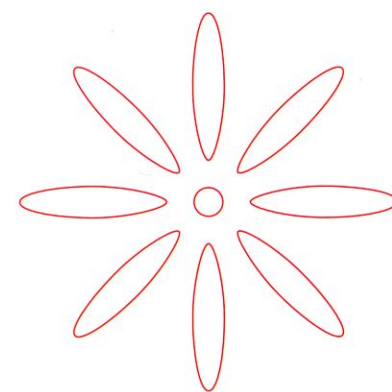
½ oz/10 g fast-acting dried yeast
4 cups (1 lb 5 oz/600 g) all-purpose (plain) flour
pinch of fine sea salt
2½ oz/70 g unsalted butter
½ cup (2½ oz/70 g) superfine (caster) sugar
generous 1¼ cups (16 fl oz/440 ml)
whole milk
3 eggs, plus 1 egg yolk
sunflower oil, for deep frying
Orange Blossom Syrup (see page 82), to serve

• Drizzle over the syrup and let the donuts absorb it for a couple of minutes before serving.

- Mix the yeast, flour, and salt together in a mixing bowl. Put the butter into a separate bowl.
- Put the sugar and milk into a saucepan and heat gently to dissolve the sugar. Do not boil. Once the sugar has dissolved, pour the hot milk over the butter. Leave it until lukewarm, then whisk in the eggs and yolk.
- Pour the liquid into the flour mixture and stir by hand until the batter is smooth. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave in a warm place until doubled in size—this will take about an hour.
- Heat 4 inches (10 cm) of oil in a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan to 320°F/160°C, or until a cube of bread goes crisp and brown in 20 seconds if you do not have a kitchen thermometer.
- Shape the dough into golf ball-sized rounds, using two spoons. Fry a few at a time in the hot oil for 30 seconds, then flip them and fry for another 30 seconds until golden brown on both sides. Remove them to a plate lined with kitchen paper.



Creams & Puddings



Cardamom & Rose Baked Rice Pudding



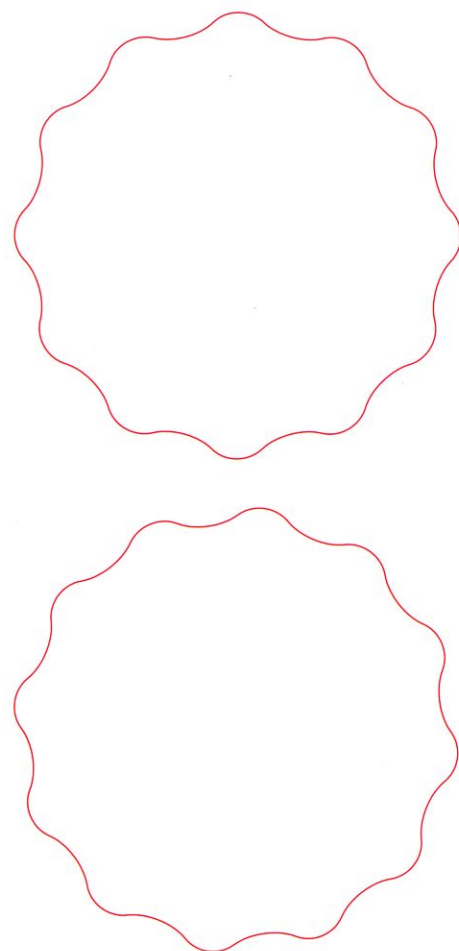
I can't think of a more perfect pairing than rose and cardamom—there's something so harmonious about the floral rose water drawing out the intriguing aromatics of cardamom. I sweeten this rice pudding with dates and date syrup, and it can be made with either dairy or almond milk, meaning that it can easily be made vegan.

Serves 8
Prep: 10 minutes
Cook: 2 hours

1 cup (6 oz/180 g) short-grain rice
3¼ cups (1½ pints/800 ml) almond milk
or whole milk
1 tablespoon rose water
4 cardamom pods, split open
1 teaspoon vanilla paste
8 Medjool dates, soaked in boiling water for at least
10 minutes, then pitted and finely chopped

To serve
4–6 tablespoons date syrup
dried rose petals

- Preheat the oven to 300°F/150°C/gas mark 2.
- Grease an 8×8-inch (20×20-cm) baking dish with some neutral oil or unsalted butter. Add all the ingredients, give them a stir, then cover the dish tightly with foil.
- Bake for 45 minutes, then carefully remove the dish from the oven, give everything a good stir and taste to check the sweetness. Re-cover the dish with the foil and return it to the oven for another hour.
- Once the hour is up, take the foil off to allow the top to brown for 15 minutes. Serve warm drizzled with date syrup and sprinkled with dried rose petals.



Tahini Rice Pudding



In Beirut, *moufataka*, a slow-cooked rice pudding flavored with turmeric and tahini, is enjoyed by Sunni communities in the city. Traditionally it takes days to cook, thickening all the ingredients to a thick, glossy mixture that sets well enough to be cut with a sharp knife.

As time is precious and we don't all have days to spend cooking rice pudding, I've adapted this version to be made in an afternoon, and it still has traditional touches, such as the toasted pine nuts to decorate the top.

It's served cool, but is delicious warm, so try it both ways and see which you prefer.

Serves 6–8
Prep: 1 hour 15 minutes
Cook: 20 minutes
Chill: 2 hours

1 cup (7 oz/200 g) short-grain rice
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
¾ cup (4½ oz/125 g) soft light brown sugar
½ cup (3½ oz/100 g) tahini
1¼ cups (14 fl oz/400 ml) whole milk
¼ cup (1 oz/30 g) toasted pine nuts

- Soak the rice for an hour in plenty of cold water. Discard the soaking water and rinse the rice.
- Put the rice into a pan with 3¼ cups (1½ pints/800 ml) of water and the turmeric. Bring to a gentle boil and stir regularly. After 5 minutes' boiling, add the sugar, stirring for another 5 minutes. The water should be nearly all absorbed by this point and the rice pretty much cooked.
- Turn the heat right down to the lowest setting, stir in the tahini, then add the milk. Keep stirring over a low heat for another 5 minutes—you want the rice to be cooked but not breaking down and the creamy sauce to still be quite loose, as it will stiffen up further as it chills.
- Remove from the heat and pour into a bowl or individual serving bowls.
- Allow to cool, then chill for a couple of hours. Top with the toasted pine nuts and serve.

Spiced Rice Pudding



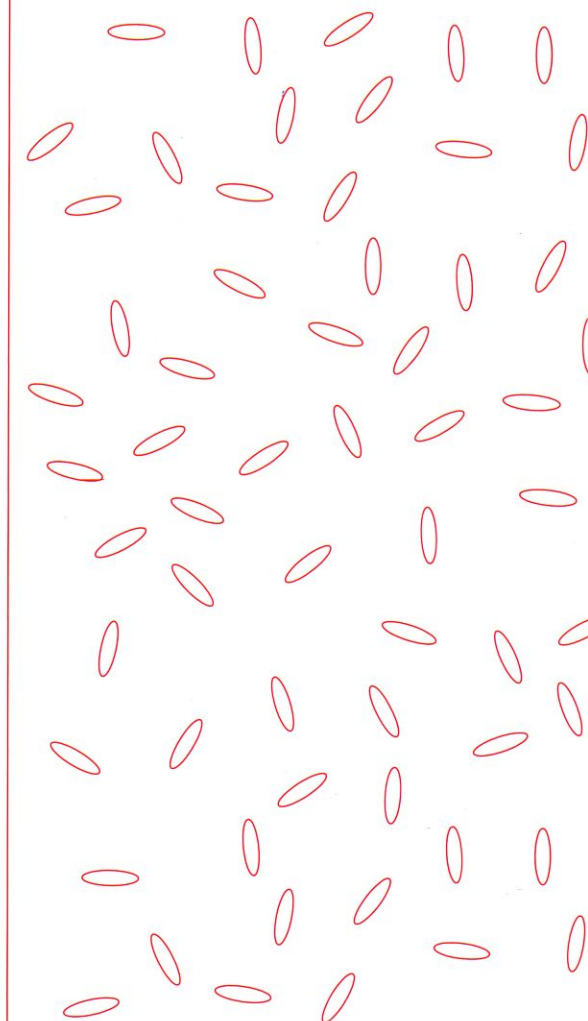
This recipe is a milder version of a traditional pudding prepared all over the Middle East and served to visitors after the birth of a child. It's usually intensely spiced with aniseed and caraway, which can be intense for Western palates.

I use a traditional sweetener, date syrup, which is rich and deep and naturally enhances the individual spices in this pudding, meaning that there is less sugar needed overall.

Serves 6–8
Prep: 5 minutes
Cook: 1 hour
Chill: 2 hours

scant 1 cup (5 oz/140 g) ground rice
scant ¼ cup (2 fl oz/50 ml) date syrup
scant ½ cup (2½ oz/80 g) superfine (caster) sugar
1 cinnamon stick
1 star anise
1 blade of mace
pinch of ground turmeric
1 teaspoon ground ginger
½ cup (2¼ oz/75 g) mixed nuts (walnuts, almonds, pistachios, pine nuts, or a combination of 2 or 3 of these), soaked in cold water for 2 hours

- Put the ground rice, date syrup, sugar, and spices into a large pan, then gradually add 5 cups (2 pints/1.2 liters) of water, stirring until no lumps are visible. Once well combined, place over a medium heat and bring to a gentle boil, stirring often. As soon as it starts to bubble, turn the heat down to the lowest setting and cook for 1 hour, stirring regularly. It will thicken quite quickly, but it shouldn't stick, as long as you remember to stir it.
- After an hour, remove from the heat and transfer to a serving bowl or individual bowls. Allow to cool, then chill for a couple of hours before serving. It will thicken and set a little more as it cools.
- Top with the soaked nuts to serve.



1
Pomegranate
Jellies
p. 211

2
Spiced Rice
Pudding
p. 207

3
Tahini Rice
Pudding
p. 206

4
Persian Saffron
Rice Pudding
(*Shole Zard*)
p. 210



Persian Saffron Rice Pudding (*Shole Zard*)

A celebratory rice pudding, decorated with delicate rose petals, almonds, and barberries. Cooking the rice with almond meal (ground almonds) imparts a rich creaminess that belies the fact that this pudding is free from dairy.

Traditionally served cool to cleanse the palate after a rich meal, this rice pudding is as delicious warm on chillier days.

Serves 6–8

Prep: 5 minutes

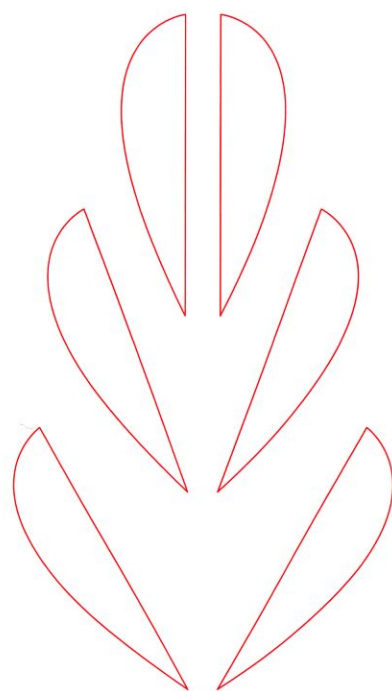
Cook: 1 hour, plus a couple of hours chilling

- 1½ cups (4¼ oz/120 g) short-grain rice
- large pinch of saffron
- ½ cup (1½ oz/50 g) almond meal (ground almonds)
- juice of ½ a lemon
- ¾ cup (4½ oz/130 g) superfine (caster) sugar
- generous ½ cup (2¼ oz/60 g) raw pistachios

For the topping

- ½ oz/10 g slivered (flaked) almonds, toasted
- ¼ cup (1 oz/30 g) dried barberries
- small handful of dried rose petals

- Rinse the rice and put it into a large pan with 4 cups (1¾ pints/1 liter) of water. Bring to the boil, then turn down the heat and simmer gently over a low heat for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, put the saffron into a bowl with a couple of tablespoons of boiling water and allow to infuse for 10 minutes. Add the saffron, and its infusing water, along with the almond meal (ground almonds), to the rice and continue to cook for 20 minutes, stirring two or three times.
- Put the lemon juice, sugar, and ¾ cup (5 fl oz/150 ml) of water into another pan and boil over a medium heat to make a syrup. Once the rice has softened and absorbed a lot of the water, add the syrup and cook for another 20 minutes over a low heat, stirring frequently, until most of the liquid has been absorbed. Remove from the heat and stir in the pistachios.
- Put into a bowl or individual bowls and allow to cool, then chill for a couple of hours. Top with the toasted almonds, barberries, and rose petals.



Pomegranate Jellies

A perfect bright, sharp pudding for the winter, when palates are jaded from lots of heavy food and the jewel-like pomegranates are in season. I decorate the tops of the jellies individually with pomegranate seeds (*arils* is the technical term), which look beautiful and add a texture contrast.

These can be made up to 2 days in advance, kept covered in the fridge, so are a perfect make-ahead dessert for when you're entertaining.

Serves 6

Prep: 5 minutes

Chill: 6 hours

- 5 sheets of gelatin
- scant ¼ cup (1½ oz/40 g) superfine (caster) sugar
- generous 2 cups (18 fl oz/500 ml) pomegranate juice
- juice of 1 lime
- seeds from ½ a pomegranate

- Place the gelatin in a mixing bowl with the sugar, then pour in 1 fl oz/30 ml of boiling water and stir to dissolve.
- Pour in the juices, and mix to combine.
- Pour the mixture into glasses, and sprinkle over some of the pomegranate seeds (reserving a few to decorate at the end). Chill in the fridge for a minimum of 6 hours.
- Once set, top with the rest of the seeds.

Lebanese Baked Custard



To my mind, there's no pudding as comforting as a wobbly, creamy baked custard. I use sahlab in this recipe, which gives this pudding its distinctive Lebanese flavor. It serves a dual purpose here: thickening and helping the custard to set, as well as imparting an exquisite floral flavor (sahlab is derived from orchid root powder). Find it online or in Middle Eastern stores, and if you have any left over, try using it in the Stretchy Ice Cream on page 114.

If you can't track down sahlab, use cornstarch (cornflour) instead and add a teaspoon of orange blossom water with the egg yolks. It won't taste the same as the sahlab, but will be still be delicious.

Serves 4–6
Prep: 20 minutes
Cook: 1 hour

generous 2 cups (18 fl oz/500 ml) whole milk
1 teaspoon vanilla paste
2 tablespoons sahlab powder or 1 tablespoon
cornstarch (cornflour)
4 egg yolks
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (4 oz/115 g) superfine (caster) sugar
2 tablespoons granulated sugar (optional)

- Preheat the oven to 300°F/150°C/gas mark 2.
- Heat the milk with the vanilla and sahlab in a saucepan over a medium low heat. Whisk all the time until the top of the liquid is thick and packed with air bubbles and the milk is beginning to steam, but is not yet boiling. Remove from the heat.
- Whisk the egg yolks with the superfine (caster) sugar until pale and voluminous. Pour the hot milk into the egg mixture and whisk to combine.
- Wrap an 8-inch (20-cm) round cake pan with kitchen foil, ensuring it is tight to the sides and the base. Place the wrapped cake pan flat in a deep roasting dish and fill and boil the kettle.
- Pour the custard mixture into the wrapped cake pan, then carefully pour the boiled water from the kettle around the sides of the cake pan until it comes halfway up the sides. Be careful not to pour too much water in, as you will need a steady hand to transfer the roasting dish to the oven without allowing the water to splash over the sides into the custard.
- Carefully place the roasting dish on the middle shelf in the oven and bake for 1 hour, until the custard has

thickened but still wobbles in the middle when you move it.

- Either allow to cool for 5 minutes, then spoon into bowls to eat with stewed fruit, or spoon into individual bowls, sprinkle over the granulated sugar and place under the broiler (grill) for 3–4 minutes, to caramelize and form a brittle shell.





Ground Rice Pudding (*Muhallabieh*)



Embodying everything that's special about Lebanese hospitality, this comforting milk pudding is both rich and nutty and is topped with jewels of Middle Eastern flavors: pistachios, barberries, and rose petals.

Plenty of modern recipes call for cornstarch (cornflour) instead of rice flour, but I implore you to try making this pudding with the more traditional ground rice for a rounded, toasty flavor.

Serves 4–6

Prep: 5 minutes

Cook: 45 minutes

generous 4 cups (1½ pints/1 liter) whole milk

¾ cup (3½ oz/100 g) ground rice

1 tablespoon rose water

1 teaspoon mahleb

2 mastic grains, ground with a pinch of sugar

scant ¼ cup (1½ oz/40 g) superfine (caster) sugar

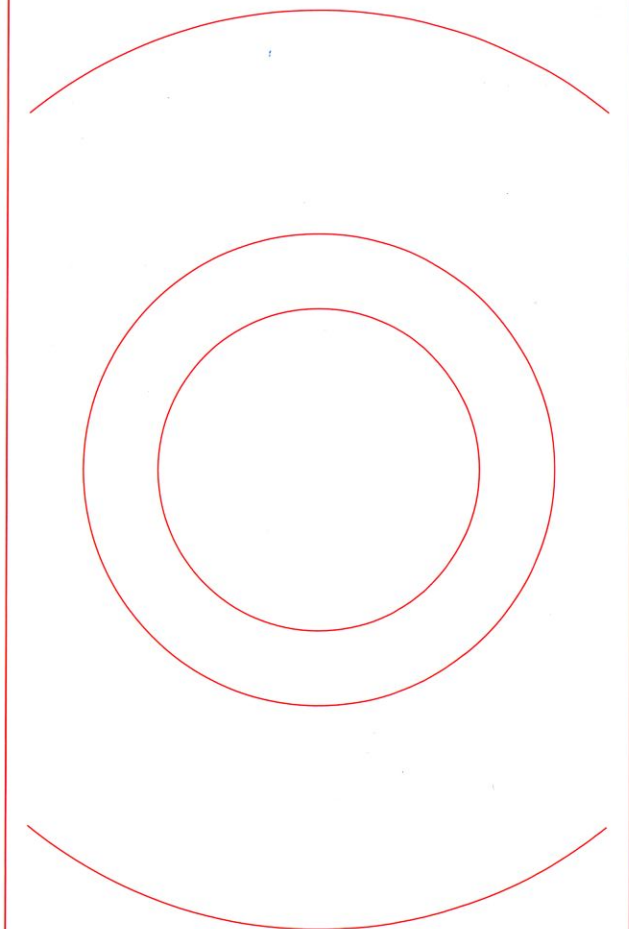
½ cup (1½ oz/50 g) raw pistachios, roughly chopped

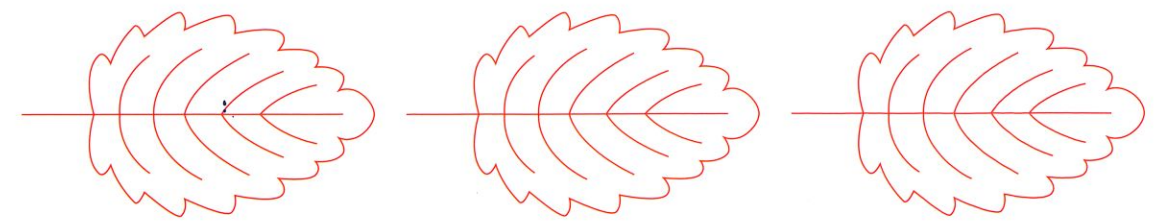
½ cup (1½ oz/40 g) dried barberries

½ oz/2 g dried rose petals

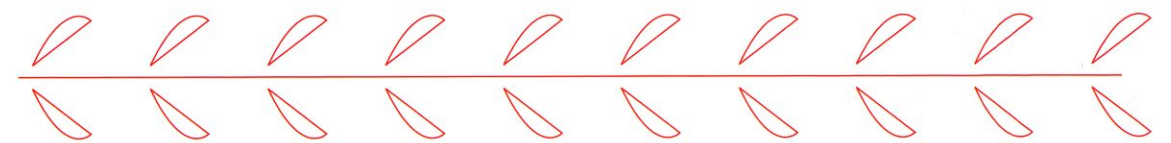
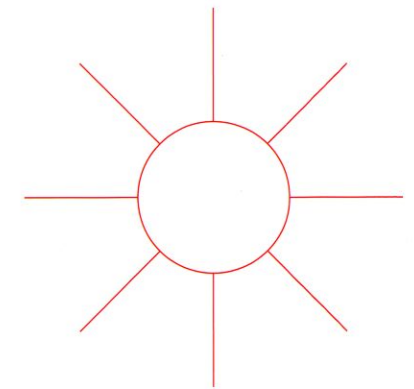
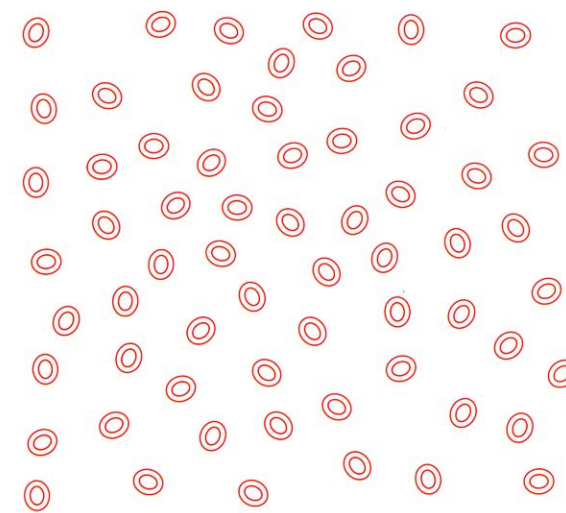
Orange Blossom Syrup (see page 82), to serve

- Pour the milk into a large saucepan and warm over a low heat. Gradually pour in the ground rice and cook, stirring all the time, until completely combined. Add the rose water, mahleb, mastic, and sugar and cook for 45 minutes, stirring regularly over a low heat, until the mixture is deeply aromatic and thickened.
- Remove the pan from the heat and ladle the *muhallabieh* into 4–6 bowls or serving glasses. Divide the pistachios, barberries, and rose petals between the portions and drizzle a teaspoon of syrup over each. Eat straight away.





Drinks



Spiced Hot Chocolate



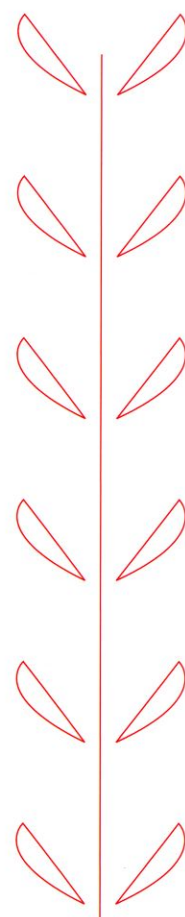
Following the French colonial rule of Lebanon, this richly spiced warming drink was enjoyed in the most aristocratic homes in the country, as chocolate and exotic spices such as cinnamon were expensive and hard to come by. Spiced hot chocolate is more commonplace these days in homes and restaurants, but the Lebanese haven't diverted much from the original way of making this drink, blending real chocolate (never cocoa powder) with milk and spices for a beverage that's more sauce than liquid.

For extra warmth, you could add a shot of rum or whisky to each glass.

Serves 4
Prep: 10 minutes

1 star anise
6 cardamom pods, bashed in a pestle and mortar
1 cinnamon stick
1¼ cups (14 fl oz/400 ml) whole milk, or plant-based milk for vegans
3½ oz/100 g good-quality chocolate (at least 70% cocoa solids), finely chopped

- Toast the spices in a pan over a gentle heat for a couple of minutes, then add scant ½ cup (3½ fl oz/100 ml) of the milk and allow to heat gently for 5 minutes so that the spices can fully infuse. Try not to let it boil.
- Remove from the heat and use a whisk to gently stir the chocolate into the spiced milk. Keep stirring until it has all melted. Return the pan to a low heat and slowly add the remaining milk. Cook for a few minutes, whisking gently the whole time, and trying not to let it boil.
- Strain and pour into 4 small coffee or tea cups. This can also be chilled and served cold over ice.



Pomegranate & Rose Margarita



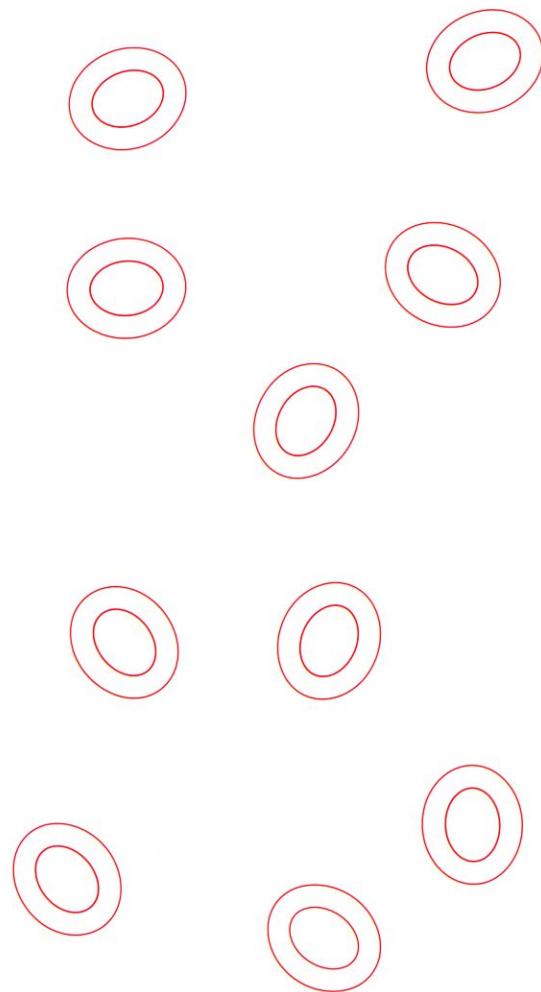
I know, I know, margaritas have no place in a book about Middle Eastern sweets, but humor me for a moment. Latin America and the Middle East share a number of ingredients inherent in their respective cuisines; hibiscus is used extensively in Mexican cuisine, as well as in North Africa and further south. I spotted a frosted pink hibiscus margarita on the menu in a Mexican restaurant near my home that prompted me to think of a suitable distinctly Middle Eastern tart alternative; of course it had to be pomegranate, with its similar level of tannins and delicious cranberry-like flavor.

Multiply the quantities to make enough for a crowd, or enjoy with a Date & Walnut Filo Cigar (see page 70).

Makes 1

juice of ½ a lime, plus ½ a lime to rim the glass
fine sea salt, to rim the glass
2 teaspoons Rose Water Syrup (see page 83)
scant ¼ cup (1½ fl oz/50 ml) pomegranate juice
1¼ fl oz/35 ml tequila
pomegranate seeds, to decorate

- Rub the edge of a tumbler or cocktail glass with the half lime and spread the salt on a plate. Place the glass upside down on the salt and turn so that the lime juice picks up all the salt and creates a salty, frosted rim.
- Fill a cocktail shaker with ice and add the Rose Water Syrup, pomegranate juice, tequila, and lime juice. Shake for 30 seconds, then tip into the glass. Add a couple of ice cubes and serve immediately, decorated with a few pomegranate seeds.



Pomegranate & Rose Cordial



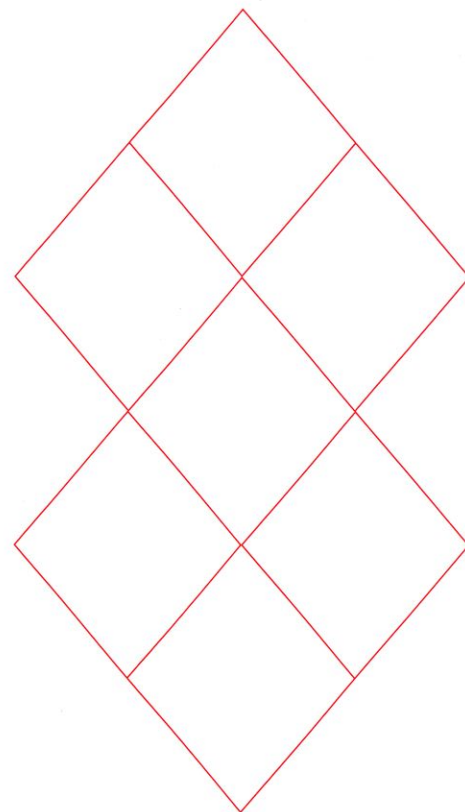
Jewel-like pomegranate and regal rose are the perfect match in this mulberry-hued cordial. I use the best pomegranate juice I can find—check the ingredients to make sure that it hasn't been loaded with sugar and that it's called pure juice, rather than juice drink.

Serve this cordial topped with sparkling water over lots of ice or—for a Middle Eastern take on Kir Royale—top with sparkling wine in times of celebration.

Makes 8½ cups (3½ pints/2 liters)

10 cups (4 lb 8 oz/2 kg) superfine (caster) sugar
6 cups (2½ pints/1.5 liters) pomegranate juice
½ oz/15 g dried rose petals
pared peel and juice of 2 lemons
juice of 2 limes

- Measure the sugar and pomegranate juice into a large saucepan. Heat over a low heat, stirring regularly, until the sugar dissolves but do not allow the mixture to come to the boil.
- As soon as no sugar crystals are visible, stir in the rose petals, lemon juice, lemon zest and lime juice. Cover the pan with a clean dish towel and set aside for 3 hours.
- Strain the cordial through a cheesecloth or muslin-lined colander into a large bowl, then use a funnel to pour it into sterilized bottles.



Limonada



This refreshing ice-cold drink is a staple across the Middle East and can be found in most restaurants and via street vendors. You'll find that limonada is more popular with adults than children, as it's much less sweet than traditional lemonade.

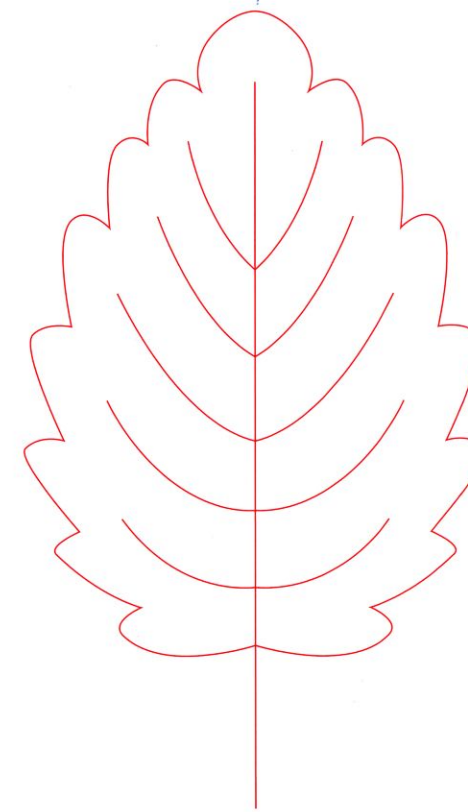
Orange Blossom Syrup (see page 82) is used to sweeten in place of sugar, and because there's less sugar overall, limonada is thirst-quenching and hydrating.

Serves 2

Prep: 5 minutes

juice of 2 lemons
scant ½ cup (3½ fl oz/100 ml) water
7 oz/200 g ice
2 teaspoons Orange Blossom Syrup (see page 82)
a few sprigs of mint

- Put the lemon juice, water, ice, and syrup into a blender and pulse a few times to break down the ice.
- Pour into two glasses and serve with a sprig of mint. You can also blend a small handful of mint leaves into the drink if you prefer.



1
Arabic Iced Coffee
p. 228

2
Hibiscus
& Orange Iced Tea
p. 227

3
Limonada
p. 223

4
Pomegranate
& Rose Cordial
p. 222





Home-made Almond Milk



There has been a movement in recent years towards enjoying plant-based alternatives to animal products, and even though I'm not vegetarian or vegan, it's a concept that I'm completely behind, as being creative with plants in the kitchen has the potential for us to leave a lighter impact on the planet.

This almond milk is thick, creamy and richer in flavor than anything available by the carton. Do give the bottle a shake before pouring the almond milk out, as it has a tendency to separate, but this is completely natural and doesn't mean the drink has spoiled.



Makes about 4 cups (1¾ pints/1 liter)
Prep: 5 minutes, plus 16 hours soaking



3½ cups (1lb 2 oz/500 g) whole almonds
3 tablespoons date syrup
1 tablespoon vanilla extract or paste
¼ teaspoon fine sea salt



- Place the almonds in a large mixing bowl and cover with roughly three times their volume of water. Set aside overnight, or for at least 16 hours.
- Drain the almonds in a colander, then place them in a blender with the date syrup, vanilla, and salt. Pour in generous 4 cups (1¾ pints/1 liter) of water and blend slowly, gradually increasing to the highest speed. Blend for 1 minute.
- Transfer the mixture to a colander lined with a clean cheesecloth or muslin and suspended over a bowl, and allow to drain for 30 minutes, until all the liquid has drained into the bowl. Give the cloth a good squeeze after 30 minutes, as there will still be some liquid in the center. Pour into a 1¾- pint (1-liter) sterilized bottle, using a funnel, and store in the fridge.
- Consume within 10 days.

Hibiscus & Orange Iced Tea



Dried hibiscus flowers make a tea with a tart, tannic flavor that I enjoy drinking hot or cold. Hibiscus tea is enjoyed in some guise all over the world, and little wonder, as it's been shown to lower blood pressure and is high in vitamin C.

This iced tea is great to make and store in the fridge (I often make a double batch to stretch over a few days), or to serve at a barbecue as a refreshing alternative to alcoholic beverages.



Makes about 2¾ cups (22 fl oz/650 ml)
Prep time: 30 minutes, plus cooling



2 tablespoons dried hibiscus flowers
pared zest of ½ an orange (use a peeler to peel strips of zest)
scant ¼ cup (2 fl oz/50 ml) orange juice
a few sprigs of mint, to decorate



- Bring 2½ cups (20 fl oz/600 ml) of water to the boil, then turn off the heat and add the hibiscus flowers and the strips of orange zest. Cover and leave to steep for 20 minutes.
- Strain the tea and add the orange juice. Allow to cool in the fridge.
- Serve with fresh mint leaves and plenty of ice.

Arabic Coffee



A warming cup of Arabic coffee is the perfect excuse to sit down with a sweet, flaky piece of aromatic baklava and a gossip with friends and family. My son Joe has a cup of my Arabic coffee before he leaves for work in the morning, and the best routines center around good food and drink, in my opinion.

These days you can get instant packets of Arabic coffee in Middle Eastern stores, but there's nothing like making your own. If you make more than you need, try pouring it over ice cream for a Lebanese twist on affogato, or make my Arabic coffee truffles on page 86.

Makes 4 small cups

Time: 10 minutes

6 tablespoons freshly ground coffee

4 cardamom pods

- Pour generous 2 cups (18 fl oz/500 ml) of water into a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat and stir in the coffee grounds. Crush the cardamom pods with the side of knife to crack them open and stir them in too.

- Return the pan to the heat and bring to just under the boil. Remove from the heat and stir. Repeat once more before removing from the heat.



Arabic Iced Coffee



Serves 2

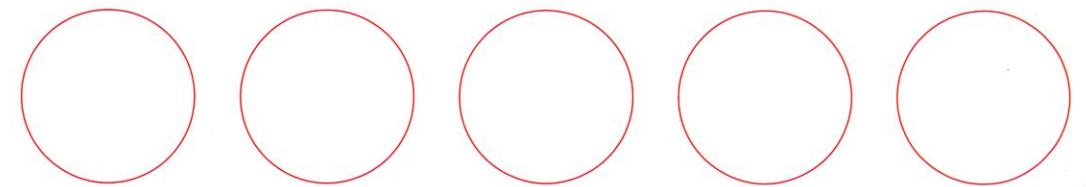
1 × quantity of Arabic Coffee (see above)
ice, to serve

Spiced Sugar Syrup, to serve (see page 83)
milk, to serve (optional)

- When you have made the coffee, allow it to cool completely. Fill a couple of 9 fl oz/250 ml glasses with ice and divide the coffee between the glasses. Stir ½ teaspoon of the Spiced Sugar Syrup into the coffee in each glass and taste to check the sweetness. Add more sugar syrup to your taste, and top up with milk if you like.
- Stir to combine before drinking.



Glossary



ALLSPICE

Known as Jamaican pepper or pimenta, this spice is indispensable in the Middle East and is used to add a warmth and gentle spiciness to cakes, biscuits, and sweet doughs.

ANISE SEEDS

Similar in appearance to caraway, anise seeds lend a subtle liquorice flavor to baked goods and drinks. The seeds have been cultivated across the Middle East for centuries.

AQUAFABA

Commonly known as 'chickpea water', this ingredient is essential in vegan cooking and baking. It behaves in a similar way to egg whites, thickening as it's whipped and binding ingredients in batters when baked. It's easiest to come by in cans of chickpeas, but soaking and cooking chickpeas at home gives a similar result.

BARBERRIES

Generally sold dried in Middle Eastern shops and online, barberries are a bright red, sour berry that are used to add tartness to sweet and savory dishes. Their sharpness means that they were widely used instead of lemons at times of the year when citrus fruits were unavailable. Iranian barberries are perhaps most widely available, but they are cultivated in North Africa, across Europe, and in North America.

CACAO NIBS

Fermented, dried, and roasted pieces of crushed cacao bean, cacao nibs are from the same plant that chocolate is made from, without the addition of sugar. Their texture and flavor is distinct from chocolate too; they're crunchy, with a complex, fruity bitter cocoa flavor. They're used in desserts, pastries, and even in some savory dishes.

CHICKPEA (GRAM) FLOUR

Made from dried, ground chickpeas, gram flour is a staple in countries ranging from India, to Lebanon and Italy. It contains higher levels of protein than other flours and doesn't contain gluten. Its robust texture makes it suitable for baking cookies and shortbreads and, when mixed with water, it can be used to bind batters together instead of egg.

DATE SYRUP

A natural, liquid sweetener that is a staple across the Middle East. It contains high levels of potassium and calcium and some fiber when consumed raw. It's a rich, fruity syrup with a glossy purple appearance that can be used in place of refined sugar in baking.

FILO PASTRY

Paper-thin dough made from wheat flour and water, filo pastry is unleavened dough, in sheets and used to make flaky baklava, pies and Turkish *katmer*, or filo parcels filled with nuts and sugar.

FLOWER WATERS (ROSE & ORANGE BLOSSOM)

A distinctive and essential ingredient in Middle Eastern desserts, rose and orange blossom waters are a perfumed by-product of the distillation of orange blossom flowers and rose petals for their essential oil. Added to syrups, drinks, and baked goods, flower waters add a sweet, floral aroma and only need to be added in small quantities to impart their unique flavor.

GROUND RICE

With a different texture to rice flour, ground rice is a toothsome, coarse-textured ingredient used in puddings which are baked in the oven or made on the stovetop.

HALVA

Sweet and dense confectionery made from creating a sugar or honey syrup and heating it with tahini (sesame paste) or semolina. Halva is served alongside strong coffee, or can be used as an ingredient in ice cream and baked goods. It has a chalky, dry texture and is intensely sweet, which is why it is usually served in small quantities.

HIBISCUS FLOWERS

Culinary dried petals of the hibiscus flower are ruby red in color, with a flavor and sharpness similar to cranberry. They can be brewed with hot water to make a fruity, tart tea that's high in vitamin C.

KATAIFI PASTRY

A thin, shredded dough, similar in appearance to vermicelli noodles and used to produce Middle Eastern desserts that are drenched in baked and drenched in butter and syrup.

KAYMAK/ASHTA

A creamy dairy product similar to clotted cream, made from the milk of water buffalos or milk. *Kaymak* is sometimes called *ashta* and is available to buy from Middle Eastern shops. It's eaten on Arabic bread with jam for breakfast, and used in Middle Eastern desserts.

LABNEH

Sometimes written 'labna', or 'labne', this strained yogurt cheese is ubiquitous in sweet and savory dishes around the Middle East. It's made by suspending yogurt in a clean cloth to drain away the watery whey, thickening the yogurt which can be flavored, or used as a base for fruits and nuts.

MAHLEB

An aromatic spice made from the seeds of the Mahaleb or St. Lucie cherry. The flavor is similar to marzipan or sweet almond. It has been used in baked goods in the Middle East to lend a gentle flavor that's highly prized for its delicate aroma.

MARSALA

A sweet, fortified wine produced in Italy. Many regions in the Middle East forego alcohol, but in areas that do consume it, Marsala is used to gently poach fruit, or as a rich addition to cakes and some frozen desserts.

MASTIC GUM

A plant resin derived from the mastic tree, which grows in most countries in the Middle East (it's a tree that thrives in a hot, dry climate). As a culinary ingredient, it's ground with sugar or salt to a fine powder and imparts a unique, piney flavor to ice creams, baked goods and pastries and is used as a stabilizer in meringues.

MEDJOL DATES

A fresh fruit that grows on date palm trees in warm regions. It has a rich, caramel-like flavor and soft, fudgy texture. Medjool dates are a natural sweetener, that can be finely chopped or blended to be added to desserts, tagines, and stews instead of refined sugar.

ORANGE BITTERS

More commonly used as a flavoring in cocktails, orange bitters is a concentrated liquid made from bitter (Seville) orange peel, and aromatic spices in an alcohol base. It can be used in cooking to give a concentrated bitter, citrus zest flavor.

QUINCE PASTE (MEMBRILLO)

Delicately perfumed and coral in color, quince paste is made from quince fruit cooked and blended with equal amounts of sugar. Often enjoyed as part of a cheese board, it's also delicious spread on cakes, consumed as a sweet confection, and used to stuff pastries.

SAHLAB

Sometimes written 'salep' or 'sahlep', this is a flour made from the tubers of an orchid native to the Levant region. It's a key ingredient in Lebanese stretchy ice cream *booza*, and was consumed as a warm milky drink, flavored with orange blossom or rose water in England before the rise of tea and coffee houses.

SEMOLINA

Sold in fine or coarse form, semolina is a milled wheat product made from a hard type of wheat, durum wheat, used to make pastas and cous cous. A staple in Middle Eastern cuisine, semolina is used in place of flour in cakes, puddings, and porridge.

SOUR CHERRIES

Generally available in their dried form, sour cherries are prized in the Middle East for their tart, sometimes slightly saline, fruity flavor. They are often added to cakes, or made into preserves with sugar.

TAHINI

A paste made from toasted and ground sesame seeds, it's a staple in Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisine. It's used to make halva, a sweet confection, and to lend a distinct nutty flavor to cakes. Middle Eastern stores often stock a runnier version.

VANILLA PASTE

Vanilla paste can be used in the same quantities as vanilla extract when listed in a recipe. It contains a blend of the seeds from the center of the vanilla bean and vanilla extract.

Note:
Page references in *italics* indicate photographs.

A

allspice, about, 232
almond meal
apricot & semolina cake, 152, 153
bitter orange amaretti, 32, 33
cardamom & saffron cake, 150, 151
Lebanese tea loaf, 140, 141
ma'karon cookies, 26, 27
Moroccan snack cake (*m'hanncha*), 60, 61
Persian marzipan sweets (*toot*), 88, 89
Persian saffron rice pudding (*shole zard*), 209, 210

almonds *see also* almond meal
apricot & cardamom tarte tatin, 76, 77
cherry pancakes with almond butter & cherry jam, 46, 47
Egyptian bread pudding (*om ali*), 68, 69
home-made almond milk, 226, 227
Lebanese fig jam, 178, 179
Moroccan sesame shortbread (*ghoriba*), 20, 21
Persian saffron rice pudding (*shole zard*), 209, 210
rose water & quince pistachio friands, 132, 133
semolina & almond drizzle cake (*basbousa*), 136, 139
sour cherry & almond wafers, 16, 17
spiced rice pudding, 207, 209
vegan baklava, 58, 59

amaretti, bitter orange, 32, 33
anise seeds
about, 232
spiced olive oil crispbreads, 194, 195

apples
date cake, 146, 147
rose petal jelly, 169, 172

apricots
apricot & cardamom tarte tatin, 76, 77
apricot & semolina cake, 152, 153
pistachio & apricot baklava, 56, 57
pistachio pancakes with caramelized apricots, 42, 43
saffron & apricot sorbet, 122, 125
spiced apricot compote, 168, 173
sweet apricot *tahdig*, 166, 167

aquafaba
about, 232
date cake, 146, 147
rose & raspberry meringues, 80, 81
Arabic coffee, 228
Arabic coffee chocolate truffles, 86, 87
Arabic iced coffee, 224, 228
awamat (Lebanese drop donuts), 200, 201

B

baghir (Moroccan 1,000-hole pancakes), 44, 45
baked lemon & bay figs, 184, 185

baklava
pistachio & apricot baklava, 56, 57
vegan baklava, 58, 59
banana cake, favorite, 144, 145
barazek (Syrian sesame & pistachio biscuits), 14, 15

barberries
about, 232
ground rice pudding (*muhallabieh*), 214, 215
Persian saffron rice pudding (*shole zard*), 209, 210
basbousa (semolina & almond drizzle cake), 136, 139
bastani (Persian saffron & rose water ice cream), 122, 124

berries

barberries, about, 232
ground rice pudding (*muhallabieh*), 214, 215
Persian saffron rice pudding (*shole zard*), 209, 210
rose & raspberry meringues, 80, 81
rose water & quince pistachio friands, 132, 133
vegan *kunafa*, 64, 65
bitter orange amaretti, 32, 33
booza (stretchy ice cream), 114, 115

breads
Easter loaf, 198, 199
spiced olive oil crispbreads, 194, 195
spiced pistachio brioche, 192, 193
sweet blessed buns, 190, 191
sweet tahini swirls, 188, 189
brioche, spiced pistachio, 192, 193
brownies, tahini & chocolate date, 148, 149
buns
sweet blessed buns, 190, 191
sweet tahini swirls, 188, 189

C

cacao nibs
about, 232
cacao hazelnut halva, 101, 102

cakes
apricot & semolina cake, 152, 153
cardamom & saffron cake, 150, 151
coconut & orange blossom cakes, 156, 157
date cake, 146, 147
Easter loaf, 198, 199
favorite banana cake, 144, 145
labneh baked cheesecake, 142, 143
Lebanese tea loaf, 140, 141
orange blossom *canelés*, 128, 129
pistachio & orange blossom madeleines, 137, 138
pistachio & tahini chocolate fridge cake, 154, 155
pistachio & yogurt cake, 134, 135
rose water & quince pistachio friands, 132, 133
semolina & almond drizzle cake (*basbousa*), 136, 139
tahini cheesecake, 130, 131
tahini & chocolate date brownies, 148, 149

canelés, orange blossom, 128, 129
caramel sauce, salted, 110

cardamom
apricot & cardamom tarte tatin, 76, 77
Arabic coffee, 228
Arabic iced coffee, 224, 228
cardamom ice cream, 121, 122
cardamom & rose baked rice pudding, 204, 205
cardamom & saffron cake, 150, 151
sweet blessed buns, 190, 191

carrots
carrot & clementine jam, 182, 183
pistachio & yogurt cake, 134, 135

cheese
coconut & orange blossom cakes, 156, 157
green grape filo pie, 66, 67
kunafa, 62, 63
labneh baked cheesecake, 142, 143
ricotta fritters with rose petal cream, 196, 197
ricotta & halva turnovers, 50, 51
semolina & cheese pancakes (*halawet el jibn*), 39, 41
stuffed Arabic pancakes (*qatayef*), 38, 40
tahini cheesecake, 130, 131
vegan *kunafa*, 64, 65

cheesecakes
labneh baked cheesecake, 142, 143
tahini cheesecake, 130, 131

cherries

cardamom & saffron cake, 150, 151
cherry pancakes with almond butter & cherry jam, 46, 47
sour cherries, about, 233
sour cherry & almond wafers, 16, 17
sour cherry jam, 160, 173
sour cherry & vanilla ice cream, 120, 123
sultan's sundae, 110, 111

chickpea (gram) flour
about, 232
Persian chickpea shortbread, 22, 25
chickpea water *see* aquafaba

chocolate
Arabic coffee chocolate truffles, 86, 87
dark chocolate & tahini ice cream, 118, 119
pistachio & tahini chocolate fridge cake, 154, 155
salted tahini & chocolate cookies, 18, 19
sesame crunch shards, 104, 105
spiced hot chocolate, 218, 219
tahini & chocolate date brownies, 148, 149
tahini & chocolate date truffles, 90, 91
clementine & carrot jam, 182, 183

coconut
coconut & orange blossom cakes, 156, 157
sesame power balls, 100, 103

coffee
Arabic coffee, 228
Arabic coffee chocolate truffles, 86, 87
Arabic iced coffee, 224, 228
compote, spiced apricot, 168, 173

cookies
bitter orange amaretti, 32, 33
fig jam thumbprint cookies, 30, 31
Lebanese stuffed cookies (*ma'moul*), 23, 24
ma'karon cookies, 26, 27
Moroccan sesame shortbread (*ghoriba*), 20, 21
Persian chickpea shortbread, 22, 25
saffron cookies, 28, 29
salted tahini & chocolate cookies, 18, 19
sour cherry & almond wafers, 16, 17
Syrian sesame & pistachio biscuits (*barazek*), 14, 15

cordial, pomegranate & rose, 222, 225

cream cheese
coconut & orange blossom cakes, 156, 157
labneh baked cheesecake, 142, 143
tahini cheesecake, 130, 131
crispbreads, spiced olive oil, 194, 195
custard, Lebanese baked, 212, 213

D

dairy-free recipes
Arabic coffee, 228
Arabic iced coffee, 224, 228
baked lemon & bay figs, 184, 185
bitter orange amaretti, 32, 33
cacao hazelnut halva, 101, 102
carrot & clementine jam, 182, 183
date cake, 146, 147
Easter loaf, 198, 199
fruit leather, 180, 181
Greek hazelnut & orange semolina halva, 94, 95
hibiscus & orange iced tea, 224, 227
home-made almond milk, 226, 227
Lebanese fig jam, 178, 179
Lebanese tea loaf, 140, 141
limonada, 223, 225
ma'karon cookies, 26, 27
melon & blood orange granita, 116, 117
orange blossom syrup, 82, 85
orange & pistachio Turkish delight, 92, 93

oven-dried fig crisps, 176, 177
Persian marzipan sweets (*toot*), 88, 89
Persian saffron rice pudding (*shole zard*), 209, 210
pistachio & tahini chocolate fridge cake, 154, 155
pomegranate jellies, 208, 211
pomegranate & mint sorbet, 112, 113
pomegranate & rose cordial, 222, 225
pomegranate & rose margarita, 220, 221
red wine poached pears, 174, 175
roasted orange marmalade, 170, 173
rose petal jelly, 169, 172
rose & raspberry meringues, 80, 81
rose water syrup, 83, 85
saffron & apricot sorbet, 122, 125
sesame crunch shards, 104, 105
sesame power balls, 100, 103
sesame tahini, 98, 99
simple lemon syrup, 82, 85
sour cherry jam, 160, 173
spiced apricot compote, 168, 173
spiced hot chocolate, 218, 219
spiced olive oil crispbreads, 194, 195
spiced rice pudding, 207, 209
spiced sugar syrup, 83, 84
tahini & pistachio halva, 96, 97
vanilla poached quince, 162, 163
vegan baklava, 58, 59
vegan *kunafa*, 64, 65
watermelon & mint wedges with rose water syrup, 160, 161

dark chocolate & tahini ice cream, 118, 119

dates
cardamom & rose baked rice pudding, 204, 205
date cake, 146, 147
date & walnut filo cigars, 70, 73
Lebanese stuffed cookies (*ma'moul*), 23, 24
Lebanese tea loaf, 140, 141
Medjool, about, 233
sesame power balls, 100, 103
tahini & chocolate date brownies, 148, 149
tahini & chocolate date truffles, 90, 91
date syrup, about, 232
donuts, Lebanese drop (*awamat*), 200, 201
drinks
Arabic coffee, 228
Arabic iced coffee, 224, 228
hibiscus & orange iced tea, 224, 227
home-made almond milk, 226, 227
limonada, 223, 225
pomegranate & rose cordial, 222, 225
pomegranate & rose margarita, 220, 221
spiced hot chocolate, 218, 219

E

Easter loaf, 198, 199
Egyptian bread pudding (*om ali*), 68, 69

F

favorite banana cake, 144, 145
figs
baked lemon & bay figs, 184, 185
fig jam thumbprint cookies, 30, 31
Lebanese fig jam, 178, 179
oven-dried fig crisps, 176, 177

filo pastry
about, 232
date & walnut filo cigars, 70, 73
green grape filo pie, 66, 67
lemon custard filo cups, 72, 72
Moroccan snack cake (*m'hanncha*), 60, 61
orange blossom & saffron filo cups, 73, 74
pistachio & apricot baklava, 56, 57

pistachio *katmer*, 54, 55
ricotta & halva turnovers, 50, 51
St Clement's filo cups, 72, 75
vegan baklava, 58, 59
friands, rose water & quince pistachio, 132, 133
fritters, ricotta, with rose petal cream, 196, 197
fruit *see also* berries; *specific fruits*
Easter loaf, 198, 199
fruit leather, 180, 181

G

ghoriba (Moroccan sesame shortbread), 20, 21
ginger
Lebanese tea loaf, 140, 141

gluten-free recipes
apricot & semolina cake, 152, 153
Arabic coffee, 228
Arabic coffee chocolate truffles, 86, 87
Arabic iced coffee, 224, 228
baked lemon & bay figs, 184, 185
bitter orange amaretti, 32, 33
cacao hazelnut halva, 101, 102
cardamom ice cream, 121, 122
cardamom & rose baked rice pudding, 204, 205
carrot & clementine jam, 182, 183
dark chocolate & tahini ice cream, 118, 119
fruit leather, 180, 181
Greek hazelnut & orange semolina halva, 94, 95
ground rice pudding (*muhallabieh*), 214, 215
hibiscus & orange iced tea, 224, 227
home-made almond milk, 226, 227
Lebanese baked custard, 212, 213
Lebanese fig jam, 178, 179
limonada, 223, 225
melon & blood orange granita, 116, 117
orange blossom syrup, 82, 85
orange & pistachio Turkish delight, 92, 93
oven-dried fig crisps, 176, 177
Persian chickpea shortbread, 22, 25
Persian marzipan sweets (*toot*), 88, 89
Persian saffron rice pudding (*shole zard*), 209, 210
Persian saffron & rose water ice cream (*bastani*), 122, 124
pomegranate jellies, 208, 211
pomegranate & mint sorbet, 112, 113
pomegranate & rose cordial, 222, 225
pomegranate & rose margarita, 220, 221
red wine poached pears, 174, 175
roasted orange marmalade, 170, 173
rose petal jelly, 169, 172
rose & raspberry meringues, 80, 81
rose water syrup, 83, 85
saffron & apricot sorbet, 122, 125
semolina & almond drizzle cake (*basbousa*), 136, 139
semolina & cheese pancakes (*halawet el jibn*), 39, 41
sesame crunch shards, 104, 105
sesame tahini, 98, 99
simple lemon syrup, 82, 85
sour cherry jam, 160, 173
sour cherry & vanilla ice cream, 120, 123
spiced apricot compote, 168, 173
spiced hot chocolate, 218, 219
spiced rice pudding, 207, 209
spiced sugar syrup, 83, 84
stretchy ice cream (*booza*), 114, 115
sweet apricot *tahdig*, 166, 167
tahini & chocolate date truffles, 90, 91
tahini & pistachio halva, 96, 97
tahini rice pudding, 206, 209
Turkish candied pumpkin, 164, 165

vanilla poached quince, 162, 163
watermelon & mint wedges with rose water syrup, 160, 161
yogurt & honey ice pops, 108, 109
golden sultanas
Lebanese tea loaf, 140, 141
sour cherry & almond wafers, 16, 17
sweet apricot *tahdig*, 166, 167
graham crackers
labneh baked cheesecake, 142, 143
tahini cheesecake, 130, 131
granita, melon & blood orange, 116, 117
grapes, green, filo pie, 66, 67
Greek hazelnut & orange semolina halva, 94, 95
green grape filo pie, 66, 67
ground rice pudding (*muhallabieh*), 214, 215

H

halawet el jibn (semolina & cheese pancakes), 39, 41
halva
about, 232
cacao hazelnut halva, 101, 102
Greek hazelnut & orange semolina halva, 94, 95
ricotta & halva turnovers, 50, 51
sultan's sundae, 110, 111
tahini & pistachio halva, 96, 97

hazelnuts
cacao hazelnut halva, 101, 102
Greek hazelnut & orange semolina halva, 94, 95

hibiscus flowers
about, 232
hibiscus & orange iced tea, 224, 227

honey
pistachio & apricot baklava, 56, 57
pomegranate & mint sorbet, 112, 113
tahini & pistachio halva, 96, 97
yogurt & honey ice pops, 108, 109
hot chocolate, spiced, 218, 219

I

ice cream
cardamom ice cream, 121, 122
dark chocolate & tahini ice cream, 118, 119
Persian saffron & rose water ice cream (*bastani*), 122, 124
sour cherry & vanilla ice cream, 120, 123
stretchy ice cream (*booza*), 114, 115
sultan's sundae, 110, 111
ice pops, yogurt & honey, 108, 109

J

jam
carrot & clementine jam, 182, 183
Lebanese fig jam, 178, 179
sour cherry jam, 160, 173
jellies, pomegranate, 208, 211
jelly, rose petal, 169, 172

K

kataifi pastry
about, 232
kunafa, 62, 63
sultan's sundae, 110, 111
vegan *kunafa*, 64, 65
katmer, pistachio, 54, 55
kaymak/ashta, about, 232
kunafa, 62, 63
kunafa, vegan, 64, 65

L

labneh
about, 232
labneh baked cheesecake, 142, 143

latkes, sweet potato, with pecan brittle, 36, 37
leather, fruit, 180, 181
Lebanese baked custard, 212, 213
Lebanese drop donuts (*awamat*), 200, 201
Lebanese fig jam, 178, 179
Lebanese stuffed cookies (*ma'moul*), 23, 24
Lebanese tea loaf, 140, 141

lemons

baked lemon & bay figs, 184, 185
lemon custard filo cups, 72, 72
limonada, 223, 225
ma'karon cookies, 26, 27
simple lemon syrup, 82, 85
St Clement's filo cups, 72, 75
limonada, 223, 225

M

madeleines, pistachio & orange blossom, 137, 138
mahleb, about, 232
ma'karon cookies, 26, 27
ma'moul (Lebanese stuffed cookies), 23, 24
margarita, pomegranate & rose, 220, 221
marmalade, roasted orange, 170, 173
marsala wine, about, 233
marzipan sweets, Persian (*toot*), 88, 89
mastic gum, about, 233
melon & blood orange granita, 116, 117
meringues, rose & raspberry, 80, 81
m'hanncha (Moroccan snack cake), 60, 61
milk, home-made almond, 226, 227

mint

pomegranate & mint sorbet, 112, 113
watermelon & mint wedges with rose water
syrup, 160, 161

Moroccan 1,000-hole pancakes (*baghir*), 44, 45
Moroccan sesame shortbread (*ghoriba*), 20, 21
Moroccan snack cake (*m'hanncha*), 60, 61
muhallabieh (ground rice pudding), 214, 215

N

nut-free recipes

Arabic coffee, 228
Arabic coffee chocolate truffles, 86, 87
Arabic iced coffee, 224, 228
baked lemon & bay figs, 184, 185
cardamom ice cream, 121, 122
cardamom & rose baked rice pudding, 204, 205
carrot & clementine jam, 182, 183
dark chocolate & tahini ice cream, 118, 119
Easter loaf, 198, 199
fruit leather, 180, 181
green grape filo pie, 66, 67
hibiscus & orange iced tea, 224, 227
Lebanese baked custard, 212, 213
Lebanese drop donuts (*awamat*), 200, 201
lemon custard filo cups, 72, 72
limonada, 223, 225
melon & blood orange granita, 116, 117
Moroccan 1,000-hole pancakes (*baghir*), 44, 45
orange blossom *canelés*, 128, 129
orange blossom & saffron filo cups, 73, 74
orange blossom syrup, 82, 85
oven-dried fig crisps, 176, 177
Persian chickpea shortbread, 22, 25
pomegranate jellies, 208, 211
pomegranate & mint sorbet, 112, 113
pomegranate & rose cordial, 222, 225
pomegranate & rose margarita, 220, 221
quince tarte tatin, 52, 53
red wine poached pears, 174, 175
ricotta fritters with rose petal cream, 196, 197
roasted orange marmalade, 170, 173
rose petal jelly, 169, 172
rose water syrup, 83, 85

saffron & apricot sorbet, 122, 125
salted tahini & chocolate cookies, 18, 19
sesame crunch shards, 104, 105
sesame tahini, 98, 99
simple lemon syrup, 82, 85
sour cherry jam, 160, 173
sour cherry & vanilla ice cream, 120, 123
spiced apricot compote, 168, 173
spiced hot chocolate, 218, 219
spiced olive oil crispbreads, 194, 195
spiced sugar syrup, 83, 84
St Clement's filo cups, 72, 75
sultan's sundae, 110, 111
sweet blessed buns, 190, 191
sweet tahini swirls, 188, 189
tahini & chocolate date truffles, 90, 91
vanilla poached quince, 162, 163
watermelon & mint wedges with rose water
syrup, 160, 161

nuts See also *specific nuts*

spiced rice pudding, 207, 209

O

oats

sesame power balls, 100, 103
olive oil crispbreads, spiced, 194, 195
om ali (Egyptian bread pudding), 68, 69
orange bitters, about, 233

orange blossom water

about, 232
coconut & orange blossom cakes, 156, 157
orange blossom *canelés*, 128, 129
orange blossom & saffron filo cups, 73, 74
orange blossom syrup, 82, 85
orange & pistachio Turkish delight, 92, 93
orange & pistachio Turkish delight, 92, 93
pistachio & orange blossom madeleines, 137, 138

oranges

bitter orange amaretti, 32, 33
Greek hazelnut & orange semolina halva, 94, 95
hibiscus & orange iced tea, 224, 227
melon & blood orange granita, 116, 117
orange blossom syrup, 82, 85
orange & pistachio Turkish delight, 92, 93
roasted orange marmalade, 170, 173
St Clement's filo cups, 72, 75
oven-dried fig crisps, 176, 177

P

pancakes

cherry pancakes with almond butter & cherry
jam, 46, 47
Moroccan 1,000-hole pancakes (*baghir*), 44, 45
pistachio pancakes with caramelized
apricots, 42, 43
semolina & cheese pancakes (*halawet el
jibn*), 39, 41
stuffed Arabic pancakes (*qatayef*), 38, 40
sweet potato latkes with pecan brittle, 36, 37
pastry, filo see filo pastry
pastry, *kataifi* see *kataifi* pastry
pastry, puff see puff pastry
pears, red wine poached, 174, 175
pecan brittle, sweet potato latkes with, 36, 37
Persian chickpea shortbread, 22, 25
Persian marzipan sweets (*toot*), 88, 89
Persian saffron rice pudding (*shole zard*), 209, 210
Persian saffron & rose water ice cream
(*bastani*), 122, 124
pie, green grape filo, 66, 67

pine nuts

Egyptian bread pudding (*om ali*), 68, 69
Greek hazelnut & orange semolina halva, 94, 95
labneh baked cheesecake, 142, 143
spiced rice pudding, 207, 209
tahini rice pudding, 206, 209

pistachios

Egyptian bread pudding (*om ali*), 68, 69
ground rice pudding (*muhallabieh*), 214, 215
kunafa, 62, 63
Lebanese stuffed cookies (*ma'moul*), 23, 24
ma'karon cookies, 26, 27
Moroccan snack cake (*m'hanncha*), 60, 61
orange & pistachio Turkish delight, 92, 93
Persian saffron rice pudding (*shole zard*), 209, 210
Persian saffron & rose water ice cream
(*bastani*), 122, 124
pistachio & apricot baklava, 56, 57
pistachio *katmer*, 54, 55
pistachio & orange blossom madeleines, 137, 138
pistachio pancakes with caramelized
apricots, 42, 43
pistachio & tahini chocolate fridge cake, 154, 155
pistachio & yogurt cake, 134, 135
rose water & quince pistachio friands, 132, 133
semolina & cheese pancakes (*halawet el
jibn*), 39, 41
spiced pistachio brioche, 192, 193
spiced rice pudding, 207, 209
stretchy ice cream (*booza*), 114, 115
stuffed Arabic pancakes (*qatayef*), 38, 40
Syrian sesame & pistachio biscuits (*barazek*), 14, 15
tahini cheesecake, 130, 131
tahini & chocolate date brownies, 148, 149
tahini & pistachio halva, 96, 97
vegan baklava, 58, 59
yogurt & honey ice pops, 108, 109

pomegranate juice

pomegranate jellies, 208, 211
pomegranate & mint sorbet, 112, 113
pomegranate & rose cordial, 222, 225
pomegranate & rose margarita, 220, 221

pomegranate seeds

pistachio & yogurt cake, 134, 135
pomegranate jellies, 208, 211
pops, yogurt & honey ice, 108, 109
power balls, sesame, 100, 103

pudding

cardamom & rose baked rice pudding, 204, 205
Egyptian bread pudding (*om ali*), 68, 69
ground rice pudding (*muhallabieh*), 214, 215
Persian saffron rice pudding (*shole zard*), 209, 210
spiced rice pudding, 207, 209
tahini rice pudding, 206, 209

puff pastry

apricot & cardamom tarte tatin, 76, 77
Egyptian bread pudding (*om ali*), 68, 69
quince tarte tatin, 52, 53
pumpkin, Turkish candied, 164, 165

Q

qatayef (stuffed Arabic pancakes), 38, 40

quince

quince paste (membrillo), about, 233
quince tarte tatin, 52, 53
rose water & quince pistachio friands, 132, 133
vanilla poached quince, 162, 163

R

raisins

Egyptian bread pudding (*om ali*), 68, 69
pistachio & tahini chocolate fridge cake, 154, 155
sweet potato latkes with pecan brittle, 36, 37
raspberry & rose meringues, 80, 81
red wine poached pears, 174, 175

rice

cardamom & rose baked rice pudding, 204, 205
ground, about, 232
ground rice pudding (*muhallabieh*), 214, 215
Persian saffron rice pudding (*shole zard*), 209, 210
spiced rice pudding, 207, 209
sweet apricot *tahdig*, 166, 167
tahini rice pudding, 206, 209

ricotta

green grape filo pie, 66, 67
kunafa, 62, 63
ricotta fritters with rose petal cream, 196, 197
ricotta & halva turnovers, 50, 51
stuffed Arabic pancakes (*qatayef*), 38, 40
roasted orange marmalade, 170, 173

rose petals

pomegranate & rose cordial, 222, 225
ricotta fritters with rose petal cream, 196, 197
rose petal jelly, 169, 172

rose water

about, 232
cardamom & rose baked rice pudding, 204, 205
Lebanese tea loaf, 140, 141
Persian marzipan sweets (*toot*), 88, 89
Persian saffron & rose water ice cream
(*bastani*), 122, 124
pomegranate & rose margarita, 220, 221
rose & raspberry meringues, 80, 81
rose water & quince pistachio friands, 132, 133
rose water syrup, 83, 85
semolina & almond drizzle cake (*basbousa*), 136, 139

S

saffron

cardamom & saffron cake, 150, 151
orange blossom & saffron filo cups, 73, 74
Persian saffron rice pudding (*shole zard*), 209, 210
Persian saffron & rose water ice cream
(*bastani*), 122, 124
saffron & apricot sorbet, 122, 125
saffron cookies, 28, 29

sahlab powder

about, 233
Lebanese baked custard, 212, 213
stretchy ice cream (*booza*), 114, 115

salted caramel sauce, 110

salted tahini & chocolate cookies, 18, 19
sauce, salted caramel, 110

semolina

about, 233
apricot & semolina cake, 152, 153
Greek hazelnut & orange semolina halva, 94, 95
Lebanese stuffed cookies (*ma'moul*), 23, 24
Moroccan 1,000-hole pancakes (*baghir*), 44, 45
semolina & almond drizzle cake (*basbousa*), 136, 139
semolina & cheese pancakes (*halawet el
jibn*), 39, 41

sesame seeds

Moroccan sesame shortbread (*ghoriba*), 20, 21
pistachio & tahini chocolate fridge cake, 154, 155
sesame crunch shards, 104, 105
sesame power balls, 100, 103

T

sesame tahini, 98, 99

spiced olive oil crispbreads, 194, 195
Syrian sesame & pistachio biscuits (*barazek*), 14, 15

shole zard (Persian saffron rice pudding), 209, 210

shortbread

Moroccan sesame shortbread (*ghoriba*), 20, 21
Persian chickpea shortbread, 22, 25

simple lemon syrup, 82, 85

sorbet

pomegranate & mint sorbet, 112, 113
saffron & apricot sorbet, 122, 125

sour cherries

about, 233
sour cherry & almond wafers, 16, 17
sour cherry jam, 160, 173
sour cherry & vanilla ice cream, 120, 123
spiced apricot compote, 168, 173
spiced hot chocolate, 218, 219
spiced olive oil crispbreads, 194, 195
spiced pistachio brioche, 192, 193
spiced rice pudding, 207, 209
spiced sugar syrup, 83, 84
St Clement's filo cups, 72, 75

strawberries

vegan *kunafa*, 64, 65
stretchy ice cream (*booza*), 114, 115
stuffed Arabic pancakes (*qatayef*), 38, 40
sultan's sundae, 110, 111
sweet apricot *tahdig*, 166, 167
sweet blessed buns, 190, 191
sweet potato latkes with pecan brittle, 36, 37
sweet tahini swirls, 188, 189
Syrian sesame & pistachio biscuits (*barazek*), 14, 15

syrups

orange blossom syrup, 82, 85
rose water syrup, 83, 85
simple lemon syrup, 82, 85
spiced sugar syrup, 83, 84

T

tahdig, sweet apricot, 166, 167

tahini

about, 233
cacao hazelnut halva, 101, 102
dark chocolate & tahini ice cream, 118, 119
Easter loaf, 198, 199
pistachio & tahini chocolate fridge cake, 154, 155
salted tahini & chocolate cookies, 18, 19
sesame power balls, 100, 103
sesame tahini, 98, 99
sweet tahini swirls, 188, 189
tahini cheesecake, 130, 131
tahini & chocolate date brownies, 148, 149
tahini & chocolate date truffles, 90, 91
tahini & pistachio halva, 96, 97
tahini rice pudding, 206, 209

tarte tatin

apricot & cardamom tarte tatin, 76, 77
quince tarte tatin, 52, 53

tea, hibiscus & orange iced, 224, 227

tequila

pomegranate & rose margarita, 220, 221
thumbprint cookies, fig jam, 30, 31
toot (Persian marzipan sweets), 88, 89

truffles

Arabic coffee chocolate truffles, 86, 87
tahini & chocolate date truffles, 90, 91
Turkish candied pumpkin, 164, 165
Turkish delight, orange & pistachio, 92, 93
turnovers, ricotta & halva, 50, 51

V

vanilla

sour cherry & vanilla ice cream, 120, 123
vanilla paste, about, 233
vanilla poached quince, 162, 163
vegan baklava, 58, 59
vegan *kunafa*, 64, 65

vegan recipes

Arabic coffee, 228
cacao hazelnut halva, 101, 102
carrot & clementine jam, 182, 183
date cake, 146, 147
saffron & apricot sorbet, 122, 125
fruit leather, 180, 181
Greek hazelnut & orange semolina halva, 94, 95
hibiscus & orange iced tea, 224, 227
home-made almond milk, 226, 227
Lebanese fig jam, 178, 179
limonada, 223, 225
melon & blood orange granita, 116, 117
orange blossom syrup, 82, 85
orange & pistachio Turkish delight, 92, 93
oven-dried fig crisps, 176, 177
Persian marzipan sweets (*toot*), 88, 89
Persian saffron rice pudding (*shole zard*), 209, 210
pistachio & tahini chocolate fridge cake, 154, 155

pomegranate & rose cordial, 222, 225

red wine poached pears, 174, 175

roasted orange marmalade, 170, 173

rose petal jelly, 169, 172

rose & raspberry meringues, 80, 81

rose water syrup, 83, 85

saffron & apricot sorbet, 122, 125

sesame crunch shards, 104, 105

sesame power balls, 100, 103

sesame tahini, 98, 99

simple lemon syrup, 82, 85

sour cherry jam, 160, 173

spiced olive oil crispbreads, 194, 195

spiced rice pudding, 207, 209

spiced sugar syrup, 83, 84

vanilla poached quince, 162, 163

vegan baklava, 58, 59

vegan *kunafa*, 64, 65

watermelon & mint wedges with rose water
syrup, 160, 161

W

walnuts

date & walnut filo cigars, 70, 73
favorite banana cake, 144, 145
Lebanese stuffed cookies (*ma'moul*), 23, 24
spiced rice pudding, 207, 209
stuffed Arabic pancakes (*qatayef*), 38, 40
Turkish candied pumpkin, 164, 165
watermelon & mint wedges with rose water
syrup, 160, 161

wine

marisala wine, about, 233
red wine poached pears, 174, 175

Y

yogurt

labneh baked cheesecake, 142, 143
pistachio & yogurt cake, 134, 135
ricotta fritters with rose petal cream, 196, 197
strained (labneh), about, 232
sweet apricot *tahdig*, 166, 167
yogurt & honey ice pops, 108, 109

Acknowledgement
I would like to thank my son Joe. Without him,
none of this would have been possible.

Phaidon Press Limited
2 Cooperage Yard
London
E15 2QR

Phaidon Press Inc.
65 Bleecker Street
New York, NY 10012

phaidon.com

First published 2021
© 2021 Phaidon Press Limited

ISBN 978 1 8386 6338 4

A CIP catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library and the
Library of Congress.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval
system or transmitted, in any form or by any

means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying,
recording or otherwise, without the written
permission of Phaidon Press Limited.

Commissioning Editor: Emilia Terragni
Project Editor: Ellie Smith
Production Controller: Lily Rodgers
Design: Marwan Kaabour

Photography: Liz and Max Haarala Hamilton
Illustrations: Marwan Kaabour

The Publisher would like to thank
Polly Atterbury, Annie Lee, João Mota,
Penelope Parker, Elizabeth Parson,
Felicity Price-Thomas, Baptiste Roque-Genest,
Anna Shepherd, Tracey Smith, Sally Somers,
and Lucie Ware for their contributions
to the book.

Printed in China

Recipe Notes

All butter is salted, unless otherwise specified.

All milk is whole (full-fat) milk, unless
otherwise specified.

All eggs are organic and US extra-large
(UK large), unless otherwise specified.

All sugar is superfine (caster) sugar,
unless otherwise specified.

Individual fruits, such as apples, are assumed
to be medium, unless otherwise specified.

Exercise a high level of caution when
following recipes involving any potentially
hazardous activity, including the use of high
temperatures, open flames and when deep-
frying. In particular, when deep-frying add
food carefully to avoid splashing, wear long
sleeves and never leave the pan unattended.

Cooking times are for guidance only.
If using a convection (fan) oven, follow
the manufacturer's instructions concerning
the oven temperatures.

Some recipes include lightly cooked eggs.
These should be avoided by the elderly,
infants, pregnant women, convalescents and
anyone with an impaired immune system.

Exercise caution when making fermented
products, ensuring all equipment is spotlessly
clean, and seek expert advice if in any doubt.

All herbs, shoots, flowers, berries, seeds and
vegetables should be picked fresh from a
clean source. Exercise caution when foraging
for ingredients. Any foraged ingredients
should only be eaten if an expert has
deemed them safe to eat.

When no quantity is specified, for example of
oils, salts and herbs used for finishing dishes,
quantities are discretionary and flexible.
All spoon and cup measurements are level,
unless otherwise stated. 1 teaspoon = 5 ml;
1 tablespoon = 15 ml. Australian standard
tablespoons are 20 ml, so Australian readers
are advised to use 3 teaspoons in place of
1 tablespoon when measuring small quantities.