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MIDDLE EASTERN 'ICE CREAM SANDWICH' **WITH POACHED PEACHES**



Dessert Medium 8 people

Introduction

Sweet, ripe peaches are a quintessential summer fruit and absolutely sing of the season, so I wanted to create a dish to truly celebrate them. Ice cream is also a perfect image of summer, so as an ice cream lover I wanted to incorporate that. In an early season of Masterchef Australia (of which I am an avid fan!), a contestant made 'Frozen Baklava' in a Middle Eastern invention test – fragrant pistachio ice cream sandwiched

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with layers of filo. I loved the concept so wanted to try designing my own version. Peaches and pistachios go so wonderfully together. The fragrant Middle Eastern spices really accentuate the natural perfume of the peaches and bring them to life, the ice cream is smooth and delicate, and the crunchy pistachio filo along with the rose petal crumb add texture to complete the dish. Do not be intimidated by the long list of ingredients and steps – the steps themselves are very easy to follow, and the result will truly impress.

Ingredients

Roasted pistachios

250g pistachio kernels

Ice cream

2 cinnamon sticks, broken in half

8 cardamom pods, bruised

½ tsp fennel seeds

1 tsp cumin seeds

½ tsp coriander seeds

300ml double cream

200ml almond milk (dairy milk can be used if you prefer)

2 ½ tsp rosewater

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1 tsp orange blossom water

1 vanilla pod, split lengthways, seeds removed

zest of 1 orange

2 tbsp orange blossom honey

½ tsp fine sea salt or table salt

7 large egg yolks

125g golden caster sugar

300ml natural Greek Yogurt (I used Total 0%)

100g reserved roasted pistachio kernels, roughly chopped

Pistachio filo pastry

100g reserved roasted pistachio kernels

4 tbsp runny orange blossom honey (if you cannot find orange blossom then regular runny honey will also work)

zest of 2 oranges

100g butter, melted

4 sheets filo pastry

Poached peaches

4 peaches, just ripe

2 cinnamon sticks, broken in half

6 cardamom pods, bruised

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½ tsp coriander seeds, lightly crushed

500ml water

juice of 6-7 oranges (to create 500ml of juice)

250g golden caster sugar

1 vanilla pod, split lengthways

1 tbsp rosewater

1 tsp orange blossom water

1 ½ tbsp lemon juice

Rose petal crumb

(NB This makes more crumb than needed, but half the mix can be reserved for making cookies.)

200g plain flour

100g ground almonds

¼ tsp fine sea salt

200g chopped and softened unsalted butter

100g caster sugar

1 medium egg

1 tsp vanilla paste or extract

1 tbsp rosewater

1 tbsp dried rose petals

45g reserved roasted pistachio kernels, roughly chopped

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Dried rose petals and chopped pistachio kernels, to serve

Method

1. *For the roasted pistachios:* preheat oven to 180C. Spread out the pistachio kernels on a baking tray big and roast in the preheated oven for 5-7 minutes or until just golden. Remove and set aside to cool.
2. *For the ice cream:* place the cinnamon sticks, cardamom pods, fennel seeds, cumin seeds and coriander seeds into a medium saucepan and dry toast over a medium-high heat until just popping and releasing their aromas (taking care not to burn).
 - 2 cinnamon sticks, broken in half
 - 8 cardamom pods, bruised
 - ½ tsp fennel seeds
 - 1 tsp cumin seeds
 - ½ tsp coriander seeds
3. Reduce heat to medium. Add the double cream and almond milk, rose and orange blossom waters, vanilla pod, orange zest, honey and salt, then heat until almost boiling. Remove from the heat and allow to infuse for a further 5 minutes.
 - 300ml double cream
 - 200ml almond milk (dairy milk can be used if you prefer)
 - 2 ½ tsp rosewater
 - 1 tsp orange blossom water
 - 1 vanilla pod, split lengthways, seeds removed
 - zest of 1 orange
 - 2 tbsp orange blossom honey
 - ½ tsp fine sea salt or table salt

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4. Whisk together the egg yolks and sugar in a medium-sized bowl until thick and creamy. Strain the warm milk mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into the egg yolk mix, whisking as you go until thoroughly combined.
 - 7 large egg yolks
 - 125g golden caster sugar
5. Pour mixture into a clean medium saucepan and put back the strained spices from the fine-mesh sieve. Cook gently and slowly over a low-medium heat, stirring constantly until thick enough to coat the back of a wooden spoon. Remove from the heat and pour mixture (including the spices) into a bowl, then cover with cling film and leave in the fridge to cool completely.
6. Once completely cold, strain the mixture over a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl, then stir in the yogurt until thoroughly combined and no lumps appear. (NB The yogurt can only be added once the mixture is completely cold or else it will split.)
 - 300ml natural Greek Yogurt (I used Total 0%)
7. Churn the mixture in an ice cream machine according to manufacturer's instructions until almost completely set, then fold through the roasted chopped pistachios.
 - 100g reserved roasted pistachio kernels, chopped
8. While the ice cream is churning, line a 20cm-square loose-bottomed baking tin with a double layer of cling film. After incorporating the pistachios into the ice cream mixture, add the mix to the lined tray, smooth over the surface and freeze until solid.
9. For the pistachio filo pastry: preheat the oven to 180C. In a blender, blend together the reserved 100g roasted pistachios with the honey and orange zest to form a paste, then blend in the melted butter until thoroughly combined.
 - 100g reserved roasted pistachio kernels

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- 4 tbsp runny orange blossom honey (if you cannot find orange blossom then regular runny honey will also work)
 - zest of 2 oranges
 - 100g butter, melted
10. Lay out 1 sheet of filo on a large chopping board and spread over 2 tbsp of the soft pistachio butter (if necessary melt down again for a few seconds in the microwave). Repeat twice more, each time pressing down on each new layer of filo so that it adheres to the previous one, then finish with an uncovered last sheet of filo, so that you end up with a layer made up of 4 filo sheets, with 3 layers of spreaded pistachio butter.
- 4 sheets filo pastry
11. With a large, sharp knife, cut out rectangles of filo layer measuring 3cm x 12cm. Place the filo rectangles onto a baking tray lined with baking paper and bake for about 7 minutes or until nicely golden, taking care not to burn. Remove from the oven and reserve for assembling later.
12. For the syrup: place the cinnamon sticks, cardamom pods and coriander seeds in a small-medium saucepan over a medium heat then dry-toast until starting to release their aromas, taking care not to burn. Add all the remaining ingredients except the lemon juice and increase the heat to high, bring to the boil, then reduce heat to medium and reduce until thickened. Add the lemon juice.
- 4 peaches, just ripe
 - 2 cinnamon sticks, broken in half
 - 6 cardamom pods, bruised
 - ½ tsp coriander seeds, lightly crushed
 - 500ml water
 - juice of 6-7 oranges (to create 500ml of juice)
 - 250g golden caster sugar

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- 1 vanilla pod, split lengthways
 - 1 tbsp rosewater
 - 1 tsp orange blossom water
 - 1 ½ tbsp lemon juice
13. Cut around the stone of each peach and twist the 2 halves away from each other to separate. Use a small spoon to gently lift out the stone, taking care not to break up the peaches.
- 4 peaches, just ripe
14. Place the peach halves into the hot syrup, cover with a snugly-fitting circle of baking paper, then cook over a low heat until tender, testing at intervals by gently piercing the peach halves with a small sharp knife. The peaches are done when the knife slides in easily, but the peach halves are still holding their shapes. This will take between 5 and 15 minutes, depending on the ripeness of the peaches.
15. Allow the peaches to cool in the syrup, remove and discard the skins, then set aside for plating later.
16. For the rose petal crumb: combine the flour, salt and ground almonds in a bowl. Set aside.
- 200g plain flour
 - 100g ground almonds
 - ¼ tsp fine sea salt
17. In the bowl of a standing mixer, beat together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg and beat until combined, scraping down the bowl if necessary. Add the vanilla and rosewater and beat until just combined. Add the flour mixture and beat until just combined. Finally add the rose petals and pistachios, beating briefly until just combined and evenly distributed. If too wet then add a tiny bit more flour. NB The dough will feel quite sticky but do not add too much flour or it will spoil the texture.

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- 200g chopped and softened unsalted butter
 - 100g caster sugar
 - 1 medium egg
 - 1 tsp vanilla paste or extract
 - 1 tbsp rosewater
 - 1 tbsp dried rose petals
 - 45g reserved roasted pistachio kernels, roughly chopped
18. Wrap the mixture in cling film and chill in the fridge until firm. (At this point half of the mixture can be shaped into a cylinder and wrapped in cling film, to be made into cookies another time.)
 19. Preheat oven to 180C. Line a large baking tray with baking paper. Remove the crumb mix from the fridge and roughly crumble over the lined tray.
 20. Place crumb in the oven and bake for 10-15 minutes, or until nicely golden. Remove and allow to cool.
 21. To begin assembling, remove the firm ice cream block from the freezer then remove from the tray, remove the cling film and place on a large chopping board. Cut the ice cream into rectangular blocks the same size and dimensions as the filo rectangles (3cm x 12cm).
 22. Take 1 filo rectangle, top with an ice cream block, then finish with another filo rectangle to create a 'sandwich'. Place into the middle of a plate of your choice.
 23. Sit a peach half alongside the 'sandwich'. Drizzle some of the reserved syrup around the edge of the plate and spoon a tiny amount over the surface of the peach. Sprinkle a little rose petal crumb next to the peach. Finally, scatter about 1 tbsp dried rose petals and some crushed pistachio kernels on top of the filo sandwich to garnish. Repeat for other portions and serve.

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