

Rice Pudding with Mango and Pistachio

Rich, creamy and laced with warming spices, this dessert is like a mini vacation from the strains of your day. We like it hot, but it's also great served straight from the fridge. Have this anytime: There's no reason to push this treat to the back of your repertoire as your coat gets pushed deeper and deeper into the closet. It hits the spot no matter what the weather's like.

See Cook's Notes about making ahead, buying spices and substituting frozen mango.

Ingredients

rice pudding

3/4 cup basmati rice

8 cups whole milk

2 cinnamon sticks, preferably flat (see Cook's Note)

3/4 teaspoon ground cardamom

1/4 teaspoon saffron, crumbled (optional)

1 generous pinch salt

1/2 cup sugar

1/4 cup pistachios, roughly chopped

1/4 cup green Persian raisins, or substitute golden

mango topping

4 small or 2 large mangoes, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch dice, about 2 cups (see Cook's Note about substituting frozen mango)

1 tablespoon sugar, or to taste

1 generous pinch ground cardamom

2 tablespoons pistachios, finely chopped, for garnish

special equipment

mesh sieve

food processor or blender (if using frozen mango)

Directions

for the rice pudding

Put the rice into a sieve, then rinse and swish it under cold running water until the water runs clear, about a minute. (Don't skip this step!) Allow the rice to drain.

Add the milk, cinnamon sticks, cardamom, saffron (if using) and salt to a large soup pot or Dutch oven over medium heat and bring to a slow boil. Stir in the

sugar, pistachios, raisins and rice and bring back to a slow boil. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally from the bottom and scraping down sides, about 1 hour and 15 minutes. It's done when the rice is very soft and the milk has reduced to the consistency of a thick cream soup. Remove and discard cinnamon sticks.

for the mango topping

Toss diced mango, sugar and cardamom in a bowl until coated. Taste and add more sugar if desired. Let sit at least 15 minutes before using.

to serve

Spoon some pudding into a bowl and add some mango on top. Garnish with a sprinkle of chopped pistachios.

Cook's Notes

Rice pudding can be made two days ahead and stored in the refrigerator. If it thickens too much, stir in a little milk.

Golden raisins and cinnamon sticks are easy to find, but the flat cinnamon and green Persian raisins found online or at Indian grocery stores really make this dish sing. If you seek them out, pick up some whole green cardamom pods while you're there. Gently crush them, discard the skins, and grind your own powder from the black seeds left behind. This is taking the long way, but the flavors will be deeper, more interesting and more satisfying.

If you can't find fresh mangoes, look for 16-ounce bag of mango pieces in the frozen foods section of the market. Put the thawed mango in a food processor or blender with the sugar and cardamom and process until smooth. Taste and add more sugar if you like.

total time: 1 hour 30 minutes

active prep: 25 minutes

serves: 6

difficulty: easy