

Irmik Helvasi (Semolina Halva)

Turkish · Dessert · Easy · 25 min total · Serves 6

Irmik helvasi is a warm, buttery Turkish semolina halva: semolina toasted in butter, softened with sweet milk and water, and finished with pine nuts. It comes together quickly and is served in small bowls with tea.

Ingredients

- 0.5 cup unsalted butter
- 0.25 cup pine nuts (half toasted in the butter, half kept for topping)
- 1 cup fine semolina (irmik)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon (optional, for dusting)
- 1 pinch fine salt

Method

1. Melt the butter in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add all the pine nuts and stir for 2 to 3 minutes until golden, then lift half of them out onto a small plate for topping and leave the rest in the butter.
2. Stir in the semolina, reduce the heat to medium-low and toast, stirring constantly, for 8 to 10 minutes until the semolina turns light golden and smells nutty.
3. Meanwhile, combine the sugar, water and milk in a second saucepan and bring to a simmer, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Keep it warm over low heat.
4. Pour the hot liquid into the semolina all at once; it will sputter and foam. Stir vigorously for 1 to 2 minutes, until the mixture thickens and pulls away from the sides of the pan.
5. Cover tightly, reduce the heat to the lowest setting and steam for 10 minutes, until the liquid is absorbed and the top looks set but still moist.
6. Uncover, add a pinch of salt and fluff gently with a fork.
7. Spoon the halva into a serving dish or small bowls, press the surface level, then scatter the reserved pine nuts and the cinnamon over the top.
8. Serve warm. The halva firms up as it cools, so serve it soon after making.