

Classic Pistachio Baklava

Turkish · Dessert · Hard · 95 min total · Serves 24

Pistachio baklava stacks forty buttered phyllo sheets around a coarse pistachio filling, is scored before baking and soaked in cold lemon syrup as it leaves the oven. It is served at room temperature.

Ingredients

- 40 sheets phyllo dough (thawed; trim to fit a 9x13-inch pan and keep covered with a damp towel)
- 1.5 cup unsalted butter (melted and kept warm)
- 2 cup shelled unsalted pistachios (finely chopped to coarse crumbs)
- 0.25 cup sugar (for the filling)
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon (for the filling)
- 2 cup sugar (for the syrup)
- 1.5 cup water (for the syrup)
- 1 tbsp lemon juice (for the syrup)
- 1 tsp orange blossom water (optional, for the syrup)

Method

1. Make the syrup: combine 2 cups sugar, 1.5 cups water and the lemon juice in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, simmer for 10 minutes until slightly thickened, then remove from the heat, stir in the orange blossom water if using, and chill until cold.
2. Mix the chopped pistachios with 1/4 cup sugar and the cinnamon in a bowl.
3. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C) and brush a 9x13-inch (23x33 cm) pan with melted butter.
4. Lay 20 phyllo sheets in the pan, brushing each sheet thinly with warm butter. Spread the pistachio mixture evenly over the top.
5. Layer the remaining 20 sheets on top, brushing each one with butter and finishing with a generous brush of butter over the top sheet. Tuck any overhanging edges into the pan.
6. Using a sharp knife, cut through all the layers into 24 diamonds or squares (4 rows by 6 columns), cutting straight down to the bottom of the pan before baking.
7. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through if it browns unevenly, until the top is deep golden and very crisp.
8. As soon as the baklava leaves the oven, pour the cold syrup slowly over the hot pastry, letting it run along the cuts and soak in with a sizzle.
9. Let it cool uncovered at room temperature for at least 4 hours, or overnight, so the syrup soaks all the way through. Serve at room temperature.