



Cardamom Scented Rice Pudding

This indulgent twist on rice pudding highlights the heady combination of coconut milk and cardamom, accented with the jasmine undertones of basmati rice.

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients:

1 ½ cup coconut milk
½ cup water
¼ teaspoon coarse salt
1 cup basmati or kasmati rice
2 ½ cups milk
1 ½ cups heavy cream
1 cinnamon stick
1 vanilla bean, split
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
generous ½ cup sugar (or to taste)
Toasted unsalted pistachios, coarsely chopped
Candied orange zest

Method:

Bring coconut milk and water to boil in a large, heavy-bottomed pot, whisking occasionally. Add salt and stir in rice. Cover and simmer over low heat stirring occasionally until liquid is absorbed, about 10 minutes.

Add milk, heavy cream, cinnamon stick, vanilla bean and cardamom. Increase heat to medium-high until just simmering. Reduce heat and maintain simmer. Cook uncovered, stirring frequently until mixture starts to thicken, about 30 minutes. Remove from heat and add sugar to taste. Allow to cool to room temperature. Garnish with chopped pistachios and candied orange zest. Serve.

Variations:

For a crème brûlée topping:

Preheat broiler to high and place oven rack about 6 inches below the broiler. Sprinkle each ramekin of pudding with a tablespoon of brown sugar. Use your fingers to ensure an even coat. Place the ramekins under the broiler until the sugar caramelizes, about 8 minutes.

Optional Garnish:

Coarsely chopped unsalted, peeled pistachios
Coarsely chop dried apricots
Sprinkle a small amount over the finished crème brûlée toppings and serve immediately.

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[Chef's Note: Pudding can be chilled. To serve, place serving amount in a small bowl and add cold milk to thin the pudding to desired consistency. If you prefer fruit in your pudding, I recommend soaking ¼ cup coarsely chopped dried apricots in 2 tablespoons of Malibu or other coconut flavored rum while preparing pudding. Drain apricots and add to pudding. Taste the pudding before adding the fruit. If you are like me, I think you will find the combination of the coconut, cream, cardamom, cinnamon and vanilla so compelling, the fruit is not necessary.]

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