

Besan Barfi (chickpea dessert)

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This unfortunately-named dish is a standard Indian dessert which can often be found pre-made at specialty grocers. But it's very easy to make and so delicious when fresh. In terms of texture, think of it as chickpea fudge.

5 tbs palm or brown sugar
3 tbs water
4 tbs ghee
1 c chickpea flour (besan)
3 tbs roasted, unsalted pistachios, ground coarsly
1/2 tsp cardamom seeds, ground finely
(optional) silver leaf and shredded sweetened coconut

Make a sugar syrup by dissolving the sugar in the water over low heat. Bring to a simmer, then cover and take off the heat. In a sautee pan over low heat, add the ghee, then when it's warm, stir in the besan.

Sautee for 5 minutes or so until the besan loses its raw aroma. Then add the pistachios. Continue sauteeing and stirring until the mixture starts to darken, about 10-15 minutes.

Add the cardamom and mix well. Still over heat, add the sugar syrup, stirring continuously. Keep heating and stirring for a few more minutes until the mixture becomes homogeneous and forms a stiff paste, then transfer to a greased dish.

Spread it out quickly, before it cools- asbestos hands are the best, but a spatula will do. Let it cool and firm up a little, then chill for 30 minutes or so. Cut into diamond shapes and garnish each piece with a sprinkle of the silver leaf and coconut.

Wine match: None. This is ridiculously good served with a strong, black tea.

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