

Delicious Cardamom Pistachio Cake

A delicious cardamom pistachio cake is a fragrant, nutty dessert layered with honey cream cheese frosting. This recipe combines the richness of roasted pistachios, the warmth of cardamom, and the creaminess of coconut yogurt for a cake that feels indulgent yet balanced. Perfect for celebrations, gatherings, or simply elevating an afternoon tea, it delivers elegance with minimal effort. In this article, you'll learn the background of the flavors, the step-by-step method, and helpful tips to ensure your cake turns out perfectly every time.

The Flavor Story Behind Cardamom and Pistachio

Why Pistachios Shine in Desserts

Pistachios are prized for their natural sweetness, buttery richness, and beautiful green hue. When finely ground, they integrate seamlessly into cake batters, enhancing flavor without weighing the sponge down. During baking, their aroma deepens, making the cake taste both sophisticated and comforting.

Unlike more common nuts, pistachios offer both flavor and visual appeal. Their natural green flecks add elegance, and their subtle crunch complements creamy frostings. As the backbone of this recipe, they bring balance to the sweetness and richness of the cake.

The Magic of Cardamom

Cardamom is a unique spice with a citrusy, floral, and slightly herbal profile. A small amount infuses baked goods with an unmistakable fragrance. In this recipe, cardamom highlights the nutty pistachios, creating a sponge that feels vibrant and aromatic.

Together, pistachio and cardamom make the cake distinct yet approachable. Much like a [moist flavorful citrus olive oil cake](#), it demonstrates how simple ingredients can transform into something memorable with the right pairings.

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- Author: [Aaron recipes](#)
- Total Time: [1 hour 5 minutes](#)
- Yield: [9 servings 1x](#)
- Diet: [Vegetarian](#)

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Description

A fragrant and nutty cardamom pistachio cake topped with a luscious honey cream cheese frosting. Perfect for gatherings, celebrations, or a cozy weekend dessert.

Ingredients

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- ☐ 1 3/4 cups (405 g) cashew milk
- ☐ 1 1/2 tbsp (16 g) lemon juice
- ☐ 2 1/4 cups (290 g) spelt flour
- ☐ 2 1/4 cups (253 g) coconut sugar
- ☐ 1 cup + 2 tbsp (160 g) roasted unsalted pistachios
- ☐ 2 1/4 tsp baking powder
- ☐ 1 1/2 tsp baking soda
- ☐ 1 1/2 tsp ground cardamom
- ☐ 3/4 tsp kosher salt
- ☐ 1 cup (250 g) coconut yogurt
- ☐ 3/4 cup (155 g) extra virgin olive oil
- ☐ 1 tbsp vanilla paste or vanilla extract
- ☐ 3/4 tsp almond extract
- ☐ — Honey Cream Cheese Frosting —
- ☐ 3/4 cup (156 g) unsalted butter or vegan butter, softened
- ☐ 2 cups (460 g) cream cheese or vegan cream cheese
- ☐ 1/3 cup (135 g) honey (or 4 tbsp maple syrup for vegan option)

- ☐ 2 tsp vanilla paste or vanilla extract
 - ☐ 1/8 tsp kosher salt
 - ☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark
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Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and grease and line a 9×9-inch square pan with parchment paper.
2. Prepare buttermilk by mixing cashew milk and lemon juice. Set aside to curdle.
3. Grind roasted pistachios finely in a spice grinder or blender.
4. In a large bowl, whisk pistachios, spelt flour, coconut sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cardamom, and salt.
5. In another bowl, whisk buttermilk, coconut yogurt, olive oil, vanilla, and almond extract until smooth.
6. Combine wet and dry ingredients, mixing until just combined without overmixing.
7. Pour batter into pan, tap to release bubbles, and bake for 42–45 minutes or until a toothpick comes out with a few crumbs.
8. Cool in the pan for 1 hour, then transfer to a rack and cool fully.
9. Cream butter and cream cheese with a mixer for 3 minutes. Add honey, vanilla, and salt, then whip 5 more minutes until fluffy.
10. Spread frosting over cooled cake. Garnish with chopped pistachios and serve.

Notes

For vegan frosting, use maple syrup instead of honey, and plant-based butter and cream cheese.

Cooling the cake overnight enhances flavor and texture.

Store leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for 4–5 days.

- Prep Time: 20 minutes
- Cook Time: 45 minutes
- Category: Dessert
- Method: Baking
- Cuisine: Middle Eastern Inspired

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 slice
- **Calories:** 390
- **Sugar:** 26g
- **Sodium:** 210mg
- **Fat:** 22g
- **Saturated Fat:** 10g
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 9g
- **Trans Fat:** 0g
- **Carbohydrates:** 42g
- **Fiber:** 3g
- **Protein:** 7g
- **Cholesterol:** 60mg

Did you make this recipe?

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Key Ingredients and Their Roles

Building the Sponge

This cake starts with spelt flour, which adds mild nuttiness and a light texture. Coconut sugar is chosen for its caramel undertones, which pair well with pistachio and cardamom. Baking powder and baking soda ensure the cake rises evenly, creating a tender crumb.

Cashew milk curdled with lemon juice creates buttermilk, which reacts with leaveners for extra lift. Coconut yogurt adds tang and keeps the crumb moist, while olive oil supplies richness without heaviness. Vanilla and almond extracts round out the flavor profile, ensuring every bite tastes layered and complete.

The Frosting Foundation

The honey cream cheese frosting balances tang and sweetness. Butter and cream cheese are whipped until fluffy, then sweetened with honey for floral depth. Vanilla enhances the flavor while a pinch of salt brings balance.

For vegan variations, maple syrup, plant-based butter, and cream cheese provide excellent substitutes. This frosting is smooth, creamy, and indulgent without overpowering the spiced pistachio sponge.

Preparing the Batter

Step One: Make the Buttermilk

Mix cashew milk and lemon juice to create buttermilk. Let it sit for several minutes to curdle. This step not only adds tang but also ensures the sponge stays tender and rises well during baking.

Meanwhile, grind roasted pistachios in a spice grinder or blender until very fine. These ground nuts form the base of the sponge, blending with flour and sugar to create structure and flavor.

Step Two: Combine Wet and Dry

Whisk ground pistachios with spelt flour, coconut sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cardamom, and salt until no lumps remain. In another bowl, combine the buttermilk with coconut yogurt, olive oil, vanilla, and almond extract.

Pour the wet mixture into the dry and whisk just until combined. Overmixing can make the sponge dense, so stop as soon as streaks of flour disappear. The batter should be smooth and thick, ready to bake.

Baking and Cooling the Cake

Getting the Bake Right

Pour the batter into a greased and parchment-lined 9×9-inch pan. Tap lightly on the counter to release air bubbles. Bake at 350°F for 42–45 minutes, rotating halfway for even cooking.

Check doneness with a toothpick. If it comes out clean or with just a few crumbs, the cake is ready. The top should be golden brown with slightly crisp edges, contrasting the moist interior.

Cooling for Best Results

Let the cake cool in its pan for one hour before transferring to a rack. Cooling helps the structure set and prevents crumbling. Afterward, allow it to cool fully to room temperature.

For the best flavor, refrigerate the cake overnight. This resting period allows the cardamom and pistachio notes to deepen, while also making the sponge easier to frost and slice cleanly.

Making the Frosting

Whipping the Base

Start by creaming butter and cream cheese for three minutes until smooth and fluffy. Add honey, vanilla, and salt, then continue whipping for five minutes until light and airy. The frosting should be spreadable but stable, perfect for a sheet cake.

The honey introduces floral sweetness that pairs beautifully with pistachio and cardamom. For a vegan version, swap honey with maple syrup, adjusting for sweetness as needed.

Tailoring the Flavor

Taste the frosting and adjust to preference. Add more honey for sweetness, more cream cheese for tang, or extra vanilla for depth. The flexibility ensures the frosting complements the sponge without overwhelming it.

This frosting spreads easily, creating natural swoops and swirls. Its rustic look matches the character of the cake, requiring no advanced decorating skills.

Assembling and Decorating

Frosting the Cake

Once cooled, spread the frosting generously over the cake. Use all of it for a thick, creamy layer that balances the spiced sponge. Rustic sheet cakes thrive on imperfections, so let the swirls and loops form naturally.

This frosting not only adds flavor but also locks in moisture, ensuring the cake tastes fresh for several days. Its creamy texture pairs perfectly with the tender crumb beneath.

Adding the Finishing Touches

Sprinkle chopped pistachios across the frosting for crunch and color. Their vibrant green hue brightens the presentation. Optional garnishes include edible flowers, a dusting of cardamom, or a drizzle of honey.

For serving, cut into squares for casual occasions or neat slices for a more formal presentation. Either way, the cake feels elegant while staying true to its rustic roots.

Tips and Variations

Scaling the Recipe

For a smaller version, bake in an 8×8-inch pan, reducing the batter slightly to avoid overflow. To serve more guests, double the recipe and bake in two pans.

Cupcakes are another great option. Divide the batter into muffin tins, bake for 20–22 minutes, and frost individually. This makes the recipe portable and perfect for parties.

Exploring Flavor Options

Add orange zest for a citrus boost, or fold in dried fruits like apricots for texture. Infuse rose water or saffron into the batter for a Middle Eastern-inspired twist.

For a lighter topping, substitute whipped coconut cream sweetened with maple syrup. This option pairs beautifully with the pistachio-cardamom sponge, keeping the dessert fresh and airy.

Serving and Storage

How to Serve

The cake is best enjoyed at room temperature. Pair with coffee, tea, or spiced milk for a cozy experience. For celebrations, it also pairs well with sparkling drinks or citrus-based cocktails.

Each slice delivers a balance of nutty, spiced, and creamy flavors. Its universal appeal makes it ideal for both casual gatherings and special occasions.

How to Store

Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to five days. Let slices sit at room temperature before serving for the best flavor.

If preparing ahead, bake the sponge and make the frosting a day early, then assemble before serving. The sponge can also be frozen for up to two months when tightly wrapped, ensuring you always have dessert on hand.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use all-purpose flour instead of spelt?

Yes, but the flavor will be slightly less nutty. The texture will remain soft and tender.

What can I substitute for cashew milk?

Almond milk, oat milk, or dairy milk all work. The lemon juice will curdle them to create buttermilk.

Can I make this vegan?

Yes, by using vegan butter and cream cheese plus maple syrup instead of honey. The sponge is already plant-based with coconut yogurt.

Why is my cake dense?

Overmixing is usually the cause. Mix just until combined, and check that baking soda and baking powder are fresh.

Can I frost the cake while warm?

No, always wait until the cake is fully cooled. For best results, refrigerate overnight before frosting.

Conclusion

A delicious cardamom pistachio cake offers a blend of nutty richness, warm spice, and creamy sweetness. Pistachios create a buttery base, cardamom adds fragrance, and honey cream cheese frosting ties it all together. With its flexible recipe and rustic elegance, this cake works for both casual afternoons and celebratory occasions. Try it once, and its unique flavor combination will make it a regular in your baking rotation.