

KNAFEH COOK-ALONG CLASS

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Also spelled as: Knafe, Kunafeh, Knafah, Konafah, Konafeh

Traditional Ingredients

1 cup milk

1 cup heavy cream

1 Tbsp sugar

1 Tbsp cornstarch

1 Tsp orange flower water*

(can sub w/a few drops of orange flavor and or zest of 1 orange)

1 Tsp vanilla

1 lb. ricotta (drain any extra water) or farmers cheese (my preference)

1 lb kadaifi noodles

1 cup unsalted butter

½ cup syrup (recipe below)

1/3 cup crushed or chopped unsalted pistachio nuts (can sub with roasted almonds)

Canola or vegetable oil to grease pie pan

Syrup ingredients** (can double amount for extra syrup for the table, if desired)

1 ½ cups sugar

½ tsp lemon juice

½ tsp orange blossom water *(can sub w/ orange flavoring)

½ cup water

Prepare syrup ahead of time:

Combine all ingredients in saucepan and **stir constantly** until it boils (5-8 min). Simmer over low heat for 15 min, continuing to stir constantly until syrup thickens enough to coat spoon. Let this cool. You can make this a day ahead and keep in sealed container at room temperature.

Instructions

- 1- Preheat oven 350 degrees (can be convection)
- 2- Melt butter in small saucepan
- 3- Take $\frac{3}{4}$ of the noodles, break into parts that will fit in your food processor. Shred all these noodles in batches using the pulse option until the noodles are reduced to the size of rice grains. (Some people like the pieces larger but this is how I do it). You can freeze remaining kadaifi noodles. (baked kadaifi in greased muffin pan filled with savory fillings is great first course or amuse-bouche)
- 4- Take the melted butter and remove any solids or foam from the top. Pour the butter over the noodles. Using your hand mix this well, being sure to incorporate the butter into all the noodles.
- 5- Combine milk, cream, sugar and cornstarch in medium saucepan. Stir over medium heat until it dissolves. When it begins to boil add the orange blossom water and vanilla. ***
- 6- Simmer milk mixture while stirring until it is thick, coating a spoon. (5+ min) Remove from heat and let cool. (Best to take out of hot pot and put in medium size bowl to cool)
- 7- While milk simmers, oil bottom and sides of a 9-inch pie pan. I like a glass Pyrex pan.
- 8- Spread $\sim\frac{2}{3}$ of the buttered noodle mixture (keep $\frac{1}{3}$ to cover top) over the bottom and sides of the pan. I use heel and palm of hand to press the noodles into the bottom and up the sides, then use knuckles to press sharply into the edge where the noodles go up the side. (Optional: place a layer of crushed pistachios or sliced almonds over noodles in the pan.)
- 9- Mix the cheese into the semi-cooled milk mixture. Slowly pour/spread the cheese-milk filling into the pan over the noodles. (Do NOT overfill! Stop when filling reached just under top of noodles at top edges.)

- 10- Cover the top with remaining noodles. Lightly pat to secure top layer to cheese filling. DO NOT push on this and squeeze cheese filling out sides!
- 11- Bake 1 hour and 15 or until golden brown.
- 12- Remove Knafeh from oven and let cool.
- 13- Loosen from sides with sharp knife and flip knafeh onto platter with lip edge (you will be pouring the syrup on and need the edge so it doesn't spill over.)
- 14- Pour the syrup on top of knafeh and sprinkle with crushed pistachio.
- 15- Decorate with dried rose petals, orange slices, orange peel - your choice.****

Notes

*Orange blossom water is traditional, but not everyone is a fan of this taste. You can substitute orange flavoring with a ¼ tsp of orange flavor. You can add some orange zest to the cheese filling or leave with only vanilla flavoring. This is how your knafeh becomes yours.

**Double the syrup recipe if you like to have extra syrup to serve. This is a nice touch to put a small pitcher of syrup on the table to allow people to additionally sweeten as they prefer.

*** Kanafeh is often made with orange or red food coloring. I do not add either.

**** Here is where you can get creative and every family has their own touch to this. Some folks place sliced roasted almonds on bottom before filling with cheese and put crushed almonds on top. Same thing can be done with the pistachios.