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*Spice of the Month Kits are free, but supplies
are limited. Please, only one kit per household.*

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Spice
of the
MONTH



cardamom

Spice up your life!

The library will have take-and-make
kits to pick up at the beginning
of every month.

Each kit includes:

- Packet of the featured spice
- Information and fun facts
- Recipes to try at home

cardamom

Cardamom is one of the world's oldest spices, with a history stretching back at least 4,000 years. In ancient Egypt, it was valued for its medicinal properties, used in rituals and embalming, and chewed to freshen breath and clean teeth.

The Greeks and Romans prized cardamom for its strong, aromatic scent, making it a key ingredient in perfumes and scented oils. Vikings later encountered the spice during their travels and introduced it to Scandinavia.

Cardamom originated in the wild forests of the Western Ghats in southern India, where it grew so abundantly that the region became known as the Cardamom Hills. In the 19th century, British colonists established plantations there, supplying much of the green and black cardamom still used today.

Today, Guatemala is the world's largest commercial producer of cardamom. In some regions, it is considered an even more valuable crop than coffee.

Holi

Holi is a major Hindu festival usually in late February or early March. It is widely known as the Festival of Colors. It celebrates the eternal and divine love of the deities Radha and Krishna, and signifies the triumph of good over evil. The festival also marks the arrival of spring in India, the end of winter, and the blossoming of love and new beginnings.

Cardamom is a signature spice in Holi, flavoring traditional drinks like thandai, sweets like gujiya, kheer, and peda, and aromatic snacks. Known for its warm, aromatic, and sweet profile.

Information from *The Nut Market* and *Wikipedia*

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 350°F with rack in the upper-middle position. Mist a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt; set aside.
3. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Once melted, continue to cook, swirling the pan often, until the butter is fragrant and deep brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and immediately whisk in the cardamom. Carefully add the bananas (the butter will sizzle and bubble up) and whisk until combined.
4. Add the brown sugar, eggs, and vanilla, then whisk until smooth. Add the banana mixture to the flour mixture and, using a rubber silicone spatula, fold until just combined and no dry flour remains.
5. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan and sprinkle evenly with the white sugar. Bake until the loaf is well-browned, the top is cracked, and a toothpick inserted in at the center comes out clean, about 50 minutes, rotating the loaf halfway through.
6. Cool the bread in the pan on a wire rack for 15 minutes, then turn out the loaf and cool completely before serving. Cooled bread can be wrapped tightly and stored at room temperature for up to 4 days or refrigerated for up to 1 week.



Cardamom Banana Bread

🕒 Total Time: 1 hr 15 mins 🍷 Makes: One 9-inch loaf



Ingredients

- 2 cups (10 ounces) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 8 Tablespoons (1 stick) salted butter
- **1-1/4 teaspoons ground cardamom**
- 2 cups mashed bananas (about 4 large very ripe bananas)*
- 3/4 cup packed (5-1/4 ounces) dark brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 Tablespoon white sugar (optional) **

**Don't measure the bananas by number, as differences in sizes can throw off the balance of ingredients. Mash and measure using a dry measuring cup.*

***I know it says optional for sprinkling on the sugar, but be sure and do it. It makes the top crunchy, shiny, and so good!*

Recipe from: Milk Street Kitchen

<https://theculinarycellar.com/christopher-kimballs-cardamom-banana-bread/>



Phirni (Sweet Rice Pudding)

🕒 Total Time: 30 mins 🍷 Servings: 4



Ingredients

- 1/4 cup basmati rice
- 1 litre whole milk or organic milk
- 1/2 cup sugar or as required
- 10 to 12 almonds – blanched and peeled, reserve a few for garnishing
- 10 to 12 pistachios – blanched and peeled, reserve a few for garnishing
- **1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom**
- 12 to 15 saffron strands (optional, substitute with additional cardamom or rose water)
- 2 teaspoon rose water or pandanus water (kewra water)

Recipe from: Dassana's Veg Recipes

<https://www.vegrecipesofindia.com/phirni-recipe-punjabi-phirni-recipe/>



Instructions

Grinding rice

1. Rinse the rice a couple of times in water. Drain the water and let them dry on their own by spreading them on a tray or plate. Or wipe the grains dry with a kitchen towel.
2. Take the dried rice grains in a dry grinder or coffee grinder. Grind the rice till the consistency resembles sooji (rava or fine semolina) or corn meal or couscous.
3. Alternatively, soak the rice in water for 30 minutes and then drain the water. Dry the rice grains naturally and later grind to a semi fine powder.
4. Set the ground rice aside.

Blanching almonds and pistachios

1. Take hot boiling water in a small bowl. Add the nuts and cover the bowl.
2. Blanch for 30 minutes. Drain the water.
3. When the almonds and pistachios become warm, then peel and later slice or chop them.
4. Reserve a few almond and pistachio slices for garnish.

Making phirni

1. Heat milk in a thick bottomed broad pan or sauce pan or kadai.
2. When the milk becomes warm, take 1 tablespoon from it in a small bowl.
3. Stir the saffron strands in this warm milk and keep aside.
4. Let the milk reach to a boil. Then lower the heat and add the ground rice. Stir and add sugar also.
5. On a low to medium heat cook the ground rice in the milk. Do not cover the pan.
6. Keep on stirring at intervals so that the lumps are not formed.



Instructions continued

Making phirni

7. When the rice is almost cooked, add the almonds, pistachios, cardamom powder and saffron infused milk.
8. Stir and cook for a further 5 to 6 minutes or more or till the firni thickens and the rice granules are softened and cooked completely.
9. Lastly add rose water, once the firni is done.
10. Pour the phirni in serving bowls. Garnish it with the remaining chopped almond and pistachio slices.
11. Cover the bowls tightly with lid or secure firmly with aluminium foil. Once cooled at room temperature, refrigerate phirni for about 4 hours or more.
12. Serve phirni once cooled.
13. Store it in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 days and in the freezer, for about 1 week.

