

PISTACHIO AND RICOTTA CAKE (Diana Henry)

330g pistachio kernels

75g white breadcrumbs

350g caster sugar

4 tsp baking powder

Finely grated zest of 2 unwaxed lemons

400ml olive oil

8 medium eggs

For the filling:

250g ricotta, fresh if possible

110g mascarpone

2½ tbsp icing sugar

Finely grated zest of 1 lemon

1 tbsp lemon juice

70g candied peel

20g chopped pistachios

15g chopped plain chocolate

½ tbsp orange flower water (optional)

To decorate:

Icing sugar for dusting

25g chopped pistachios

Rose petals (off-white or yellow ones are spring-like), unsprayed

Heat the oven to 170C fan.

Put the pistachios for the cake in a spice grinder and grind to a powder. (You can use a food processor, but it won't do it as finely.)

Mix with the crumbs, caster sugar, baking powder and lemon zest.

In a separate bowl, mix together the oil and eggs then stir them into the dry ingredients. Scrape into two oiled and base-lined 20cm cake tins and bake for 45 minutes. The cakes should be coming away from the sides of the tins.

Leave the cakes to cool for about 10 minutes, then turn them out, peeling off the paper. Put one on to a serving plate and the other on to a piece of greaseproof paper laid on a wire rack (the paper makes it easier to lift – this is quite a fragile cake).

For the filling, beat together the ricotta and mascarpone with the icing sugar. Stir in the rest of the ingredients. Spread this over the cake on the plate and place the other cake on top. Dust with icing sugar and scatter with pistachios and rose petals. Get fresh ricotta if you can - it tastes so much better than the UHT stuff, and you can use other flowers too as long as they haven't been sprayed (and are okay to eat as well!)

Edited · 22 h