

Apricot Sweet Paste

Kayisi pasado

This tart, amber-hued, apricot confection that sets as a paste, is served in beautiful diamond-shaped wedges topped with pine nuts or walnuts. *Kayisi* makes a lovely sweet treat on standby for the unexpected guest as it keeps well *. I like to make it for the New Year and Passover as a sweet bite offered with herbal tisanes or strong Turkish coffee.

For the rice:

500g (1lb 2oz) dried apricots

2 tsp rose water

2¾ cups sugar

For the topping:

½ cup pine nuts or walnuts

You will need:

a 15.5x10.5cm (6x4in) heatproof dish, lightly oiled

Place the apricots in a bowl, cover with boiling water and leave to soak for 5 hours. Pour the apricots and the soaking liquid into a heavy-based stainless steel pan and boil over a high heat until they are softened.

Whiz them in a food processor in batches while still hot until a smooth purée forms.

Transfer the purée back into the pan and add the rose water and sugar. Stir vigorously with a wooden spoon over a medium heat, for about 30-35 minutes, until the mixture thickens to a paste and leaves the sides of the pan.

Spread the paste into the prepared dish, smoothing the top with the back of a spoon and let set overnight to a firm paste that can be easily cut.

Cut into 3cm (1¼in) wide diamond shapes with a sharp knife. Serve either in the dish or remove each wedge and turn them over so the glossy side is up. Top with pine nuts or walnuts, pressed onto the centre of each wedge.

Stella's Hints:

* In the U.S. use Californian dried apricots as they give a lovely intense flavour.

* To store: Interleave the paste between layers of baking paper and store in an airtight container for up to a month in a cool dry place.