

Carrot Halwa Recipe (Indian)

Ingredients:

1 kg carrots
2 liters whole milk
200 g granulated sugar
100 g ghee* or unsalted butter
1 teaspoon green cardamom powder
1 tablespoon melon seeds, toasted
1 tablespoon raisins, soaked in water for 10 minutes, then drained

To serve:

basundi (see below)
4 mint sprigs
2 tablespoons chopped pistachio nuts

Method:

Peel and grate the carrots, set aside. Pour the milk into a large sauté pan or other wide pan, bring to the boil and simmer, stirring often, until reduced to almost 1 liter; this will take about an hour. Add the grated carrots to the reduced milk and return to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring frequently, for about 1 hour until all the milk has evaporated. Add the sugar and simmer, stirring, to dissolve. Continue to cook, stirring, until the carrots are quite dry. Add the ghee or butter and sauté well for 20-25 minutes. Stir in the cardamom powder, toasted melon seeds and raisings, then remove from the heat.

To serve, spoon the halwa into lightly greased 6-7cm cutters on individual plates. Smooth the surface to shape neatly, then carefully lift off the cutters. Top each serving with a spoonful of basundi and a mint sprig. Scatter chopped pistachios around the halwa. Serve warm.

Basundi: Put 2 liters whole milk in a large sauté pan or other wide pan. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 1 1/2 hours, stirring frequently, until reduced to one-third of the original volume. Add 150 g sugar and simmer for 3-5 minutes until the sugar dissolves. Add 1/2 teaspoon green cardamom powder and 1/4 teaspoon saffron threads. Serve chilled.

***Ghee:** This clarified butter has long been the main cooking medium in north India, but with a growing awareness of healthy eating, oil is taking its place. I prefer to cook with vegetable oil and, if necessary, enrich the dish at the end with butter or perhaps ghee. If you want to use ghee, it is available in cans from supermarkets or Asian food shops.