

Cherry and pistachio upside-down cakes with mesquite

Makes 12 muffin-sized cakes

60 g (2 oz/scant ½ cup) pistachio nuts, preferably activated dried (see page 25)
80 g (2¾ oz/scant ⅔ cup) coconut sugar, plus 1 tbsp for the bottom of the moulds
1½ tsp mesquite powder, plus 1 tsp for the bottom of the moulds
36 sweet cherries, about 360 g (12¾ oz/2½ cups)
100 g (3½ oz/1 cup less 2 tbsp) ground almonds (almond meal)
50 g (1¾ oz/⅓ cup) buckwheat flour
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp Himalyan pink salt
100 g (3½ oz/scant ½ cup) coconut butter or non-hydrogenated dairy-free butter, plus extra for greasing
2 eggs

To serve

Sweet cherries
Chopped pistachio nuts

Mesquite is a naturally sweet superfood powder, made from the large bean-like pods of the mesquite tree. It is low-GI, rich in calcium, lysine and magnesium, and has a unique flavour – slightly spicy, sweet and malty with caramel notes. It pairs beautifully with the sweet and juicy cherries submerged in a soft pistachio sponge.

Preheat the oven to 170°C/325°F/Gas Mark 3. Grease a 12-hole muffin tin. Line a baking tray with baking parchment.

On the lined baking tray, lightly toast the pistachio nuts for 5–7 minutes until they are just beginning to colour. Leave to cool, then finely chop.

Mix together 1 tbsp coconut sugar with 1 tsp mesquite powder and sprinkle about ¼ tsp of the mix into the bottom of each mould. Stone the cherries, breaking them in half with your fingers as you do so. Fill each muffin mould with three cherries (six halves), arranged in a circle, slightly overlapping. Pour in any extra cherry juices and sprinkle over any leftover sugar and spice mix. Set aside.

Mix together the rest of the sugar and mesquite powder, ground almonds (almond meal), flour, baking powder and salt. Add the chopped pistachio nuts. Melt the butter and add to the dry ingredients, followed by the eggs, and mix well. Divide the mix between the 12 moulds, spooning it on top of the cherries, and bake for 10 minutes, then rotate the tin and bake for a further 2–4 minutes, until the cakes are just firm to touch, slightly golden round the edges and some juices might be bubbling up.

Leave to cool in the tin then remove and top with fresh cherries and chopped pistachio nuts. These cakes are also delightful served with a chunk of homemade chocolate (see page 156), chocolate ice cream or whipped coconut cream (see page 27).

VARIATIONS

Rhubarb and pistachio cakes

Follow the above recipe, but replace the cherries with 200 g (7 oz) rhubarb, chopped into ½ cm (¼ inch) pieces, dividing the rhubarb equally between the bottom of the muffin tins. Serve with extra rhubarb compote using the method on page 53 to make the compote.

Blueberry and pistachio cakes

Follow the above recipe, but replace the cherries with 180 g (6¼ oz/scant 1¼ cups) of blueberries, divided equally between the muffin tins.