



ELEANOR FORD

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The lightest pistachio biscuits

These are by Gloria Ford, my husband's cousin, talented chef and maker of the most ethereal biscuits imaginable (her secret is the rice flour). When she made a batch for a family gathering, I know I wasn't the only one who asked for the recipe. They are that good!

If you want to experiment with spicing, this is the perfect biscuit to do it with, so I have listed a myriad of spice switch ideas.

Makes 24 biscuits

60g (2¼oz) shelled pistachios
125g (½ cup) unsalted butter, softened
55g (¼ cup) caster sugar, plus more for dusting
4 green cardamom pods, seeds ground
55g (½ cup) rice flour
115g (4oz) plain flour
Pinch of fine sea salt

SPICE SWITCH

In place of the cardamom, you could try any of the following:
1 teaspoon toasted cumin seeds
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon mixed spice
1 teaspoon speculaas
¾ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
Seeds scraped from 1 vanilla pod
2 teaspoons ground jasmine tea
2 teaspoons ground rose tea
Pinch of ground saffron, infused in 1 tablespoon warm milk
1 tablespoon fresh lavender flowers, finely chopped

Use a food processor or bag and rolling pin to bash the pistachios, aiming for mainly ground with some larger bits for texture.

In a stand mixer, or with a wooden spoon and a strong arm, cream together the butter, sugar and cardamom until light and pale. Gently work in both flours and salt just until it comes together. Then mix in the pistachios.

Tip the dough onto a piece of baking parchment and shape it into a triangular prism (think Toblerone box). Wrap in the parchment and chill in the fridge.

Heat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan (350°F). Line a baking sheet with baking parchment.

Slice the chilled dough into 6mm (¼ inch) thick triangles and spread out on the baking sheet. Cook for 15 minutes.

Dust with a sprinkling of sugar whilst hot from the oven. After a couple of minutes, transfer to a rack to finish cooling.





Why love it

Perhaps the most complex of spices, cardamom has brightening qualities of citrus, flora and eucalyptus that can cut through richness. Use in whispers and it will add intrigue.

Match with

Bean: white chocolate, chocolate, coffee

Nut: pistachio, almond, coconut

Sweet fruit: apple, pear, apricot, banana, mango, plum, persimmon, fig

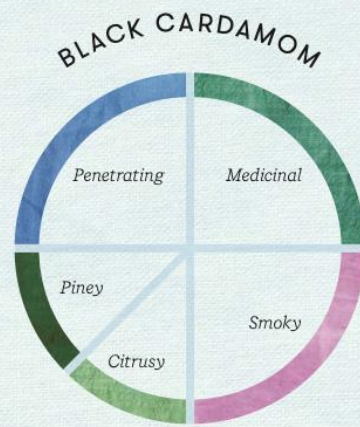
Tart fruit: orange, quince

Spice & herb: saffron, rose, allspice, ginger, cinnamon, coriander seed, pepper

Sweet: maple syrup, honey, caramel, date syrup

Extract the flavour

The whole pod can be ground, or for more intensity use only the seeds and grind with a little sugar. Combine with fat to bring out the fullest flavour.



Why love it

The larger pods of black cardamom share a medicinal note with green cardamom, but the flavours are bolder and aggressively smoky. Wonderful with chocolate.

Match with

Bean: chocolate

Nut: pecan, hazelnut

Sweet fruit: blueberry, pear

Spice & herb: pepper, ginger, vanilla, black sesame

Extract the flavour

The husk holds the smokiness, so lightly crush and infuse the whole pod to capitalise on this quality.

