THE STIRRING LIFE

Chai Hail Double Blueberry Cake

With habbat al-baraka, the seed of blessing

Fresh and dried blueberries, spelt flour, and strongly brewed cardamom tea
Finished with a pistachio and orange blossom glaze

INGREDIENTS

The Dry

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup whole grain spelt flour
- Slightly less than ½ cup sugar
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp ground cardamom
- ½ tsp each ground nutmeg and sea salt

The Wet

- 1 large egg
- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 5 Tbsp cardamom tea, brewed strong and cooled
- 1 tsp orange blossom water
- Zest of 1 orange

Berries and Seeds

- 1½ cups fresh blueberries
- ¾ cup dried blueberries
- 1 tsp nigella seeds (habbat al-baraka)

Pistachio Glaze

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 Tbsp pistachios, finely ground
- 1–2 Tbsp fresh orange juice
- ¼ tsp orange blossom water
- 2 Tbsp crushed pistachios, to finish

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat the oven. To 350°F. Grease a 9 × 5-inch loaf pan and line it with parchment, leaving an overhang to lift the cake out by.
2. Brew the tea strong. Steep the cardamom tea until it is properly fragrant, then strain and cool it completely. Measure out 5 tablespoons.
3. Whisk the dry. Both flours, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cardamom, nutmeg and salt, together in a large bowl.
4. Whisk the wet. Egg, yogurt, olive oil, the cooled tea, orange blossom water and orange zest, in a second bowl, until smooth.
5. Fold them together. Wet into dry, gently, only until it comes together. Overmixing is what makes a tea cake tough.
6. Berries and seeds last. Fresh blueberries, dried blueberries and the nigella, folded through until evenly spread.
7. Bake. 60 to 70 minutes, until the center reads 200°F. Tent it loosely with foil if the top is browning too fast.
8. Cool it properly. 30 minutes before you lift it out by the parchment, and longer again before glazing. Glaze on a warm loaf slides straight off.
9. Make the glaze. Powdered sugar whisked with the ground pistachios, then the orange blossom water, then the orange juice a little at a time, starting with one tablespoon.
10. Glaze and finish. Drizzle it over, scatter the crushed pistachios, and let it set before slicing.

The two kinds of blueberry are the point: the fresh ones burst and go jammy in the crumb, the dried ones stay chewy and concentrated. For the glaze, aim for a ribbon that falls slowly off the spoon — thin enough to pour, thick enough to cling instead of running straight off a fully cooled loaf.