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Pistachio Millionaire's Shortbread with Coriander Butterscotch

FROM MAX FALKOWITZ

*COKE cookie swap
12/6/18 good mix recipe!*

This sultry take on millionaire's shortbread was developed by Max Falkowitz, then food editor at *Serious Eats*, as part of a love letter to coriander, a spice that isn't used as often in baking as it should be. "It brightens and deepens buttery flavors," Falkowitz says, landing "halfway between lemon zest and cinnamon."

Here, coriander gives the butterscotch an unexpected buzzing warmth. The shortbread bottom is rounded with pistachio and lemon zest and baked softer than you'd think, for optimal melding. And the chocolate up top is good and dark.

MAKES ABOUT 3 DOZEN (1-INCH/2.5CM) SQUARES

SHORTBREAD

1 cup (225g) unsalted butter, softened

¾ cup (150g) sugar

1 packed tablespoon finely grated lemon zest

¼ 1½ teaspoons kosher salt

1¼ cups (150g) shelled pistachios

1½ cups (190g) all-purpose flour (see page 5)

BUTTERSCOTCH

2 tablespoons coriander seeds

½ cup (110g) unsalted butter

1½ cups (300g) turbinado sugar

½ cup (120g) heavy cream, plus more if needed

½ cup (115g) Irish whiskey

< 2 teaspoons kosher salt

CHOCOLATE TOP

8 ounces (225g) bittersweet chocolate (about 70% cacao), finely chopped

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 To make the shortbread, heat the oven to 350°F (175°C), with a rack in the center. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter, sugar, lemon zest, and salt on high speed until fluffy, about 3 minutes.

2 In a food processor, pulse the pistachios to a fine meal (some small chunks are okay). Add the ground pistachios to the butter mixture and blend on low speed until incorporated. With the mixer running on low speed, add the flour, about ½ cup (60g) at a time. When no streaks of flour remain, increase the speed to high and mix just until the mixture holds together in a thick dough, about 1 minute.

3 Scrape the dough onto the baking sheet and press with your hands into a 12 by 9-inch (30 by 23cm) rectangle that's ½ inch (1.3cm) thick. Bake until the edges brown and the top is dry but still slightly sticky, about 15 minutes. The center should look underbaked. Let the shortbread cool completely in the baking sheet on a rack.

4 To make the butterscotch, toast the coriander seeds in a medium skillet over medium heat, shaking occasionally, until they smell fragrant and have darkened slightly, then pour off into a wide bowl to cool. Once cool, grind finely in a spice grinder or a mortar and pestle. You should have 2 tablespoons, plus a bit extra to sprinkle over at the end.

note a lot longer
5 Melt the butter in a heavy 3-quart (2.8L) saucepan over medium heat. Increase the heat to high, add the sugar, and stir to toast the sugar for about 30 seconds. Carefully pour in the cream and whiskey, then add 2 tablespoons of the coriander and the salt, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly until the butterscotch is thick enough that a rubber spatula leaves a dry trail that quickly closes across the bottom of the pan, 5 to 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool until warm and spreadable. If the butterscotch hardens, reheat it over low heat, stirring in an extra tablespoon or two of cream. It may look broken, but just whisk it back together.

6 To make the chocolate top, melt the chocolate and butter in a small saucepan over low heat, stirring often to keep the chocolate from scorching. When the chocolate is mostly melted, remove it from the heat and stir until smooth.

7 To assemble the bars, pour the butterscotch over the shortbread and spread into an even layer with an offset spatula. Refrigerate until the butterscotch is firm, about 10 minutes, then spread the chocolate on top of the butterscotch in a thin layer. Sprinkle with ground coriander and refrigerate until the chocolate is firm, about 20 minutes.

8 Cut into 1-inch (2.5cm) squares with a sharp knife and serve chilled or at room temperature. (Alternatively, cover the cookies well in plastic wrap and freeze for up to 1 month.)