

Good halvah (“sweet” in Arabic) should be soft, silky, and melt in your mouth. These qualities are long gone in halvah that has been sitting on the shelf for days. The best places to get fresh halvah are where it is freshly made— bakeries in places such as the Abu Gosh village near Jerusalem or in Nazareth in the Galil. Even better, you can just make it yourself. Our recipe will guide you through the process. Don’t let the candy making part (boiling sugar with water) intimidate you— it’s easier than you could imagine, and the result is extremely rewarding.

Halvah

Servings 8-10

Ingredients

1 cup (240 gr) tahini

1 cup (200 gr) cane sugar (do not substitute with honey – as it would never crystalize and harden enough to form the halvah)

1/4 cup water

1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

One of the following (optional): pistachio, almonds, any nuts or seeds, or cacao nibs.

Preparation

- Line a pan with parchment paper.
- Lightly toast the nuts or seeds in a skillet and place a flat layer on the bottom of the lined pan. OR – set the toasted nuts or seeds aside and add it to the tahini (see next step). It is important to make sure to have your pan ready first because once sugar is at the correct temperature, you will want to move very quickly.
- In a large bowl measure tahini.
- In a saucepan combine sugar and vanilla with 1/4 cup water, stirring occasionally on medium heat until the sugar dissolves. Bring to boil and let the mixture simmer into a syrup until your thermometer reads 245°F . If you do not use a thermometer – drop a small amount of the syrup into a small bowl filled with water. If it forms a ball – syrup is ready.
- Once the syrup hits the right temperature, pour it into the bowl with the tahini and QUICKLY mix well. It is important that you work fast as mixture is harden very quickly.
- QUICKLY transfer the mixture into the pan with parchment paper and press down to get rid of any air bubbles.

- Cool to room temperature for about an hour before ready to serve. If you put some nuts on the bottom of the pan – flip and transfer to a serving plate.
- store covered at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

Notes

To remove the hard syrup from the saucepan, simply fill it with water and place on medium heat, place the spoon and the thermometer inside, and “cook” it until all syrup leftovers melt, then wash with soap and water.