

Knafeh is one of the desserts that people in Israel are willing to stand in long lines or drive far to bakeries in Arabic villages for. I've read that in Lebanon, people line up for it at 4 in the morning after coming home from the nightclub. It is amazing how much this dessert, with origins tracing back hundreds of years to the Palestinian city of Nablus, is still that popular in the Levant. Knafeh consists of layers of shredded filo pastry (called kataif) and cheese (usually goat cheese), all soaked in sweet syrup and topped with roasted chopped pistachio (stay away from knafeh with dark-orange topping—it's food coloring). The contrast between the crispy pastry to the soft cheese is what makes this pan-dessert so rich and tasty.

We fell back in love with knafeh when we started to host our outdoor dining events and realized it would be the perfect dessert to cook on the fire. Our version of knafeh is made with only one layer of pastry, ricotta or farmer's cheese, an additional layer of seasonal fruit, and a sweet syrup made with honey. It's best served warm, so you can either cook it straight on the grill in front of your guests, or indoor - on your cooktop.

Knafeh with Seasonal Fruit Serves 4-6 (use 8" skillet)

Ingredients

180 gr kataif (shredded phyllo dough, store bought) thawed in the fridge. (Or about 10 sheets filo pastry, finely shredded – use your hands for that)

150 gr unsalted butter, melted.

450 gr Ricotta cheese (unsalted), OR farmers cheese.

1-1.5 cups seasonal fruit, sliced. We like to use grapes, cherries, plum, peaches or berries.

¼ cups toasted pistachios, thinly chopped - for garnish.

Syrup:

170 gr (1/2 cup) honey

60 ml (1/4 cup) water

1 teaspoon rose water syrup OR lemon juice from ½ lemon.

Preparation

- Make the syrup: Mix the honey and water in a small saucepan over low heat, add in the rose water or lemon juice and set aside.
- In a bowl, toss the kataif and melted butter until all strands are coated with butter and separated.
- Transfer the kataif strands into a hot skillet and press it down.
- Spread a uniform layer of cheese on top of the kataif.
- Arrange a layer of fruit on top of the cheese.
- Place skillet on the grill and cook until bottom is golden brown.
- Flip transfer to a serving plate and drizzle the honey syrup.
- Scatter pistachios and serve immediately.