

حلوة هندية *Helou Hindi*

CANDIED COCONUT WITH PISTACHIOS

The name for this sweet, *hindi*, derives from the Arabic word for India, which was the source for the coconuts that were available in Aleppo. *Helou hindi* was and still is the traditional sweet of choice for Passover. It emerged as a replacement for chocolate, which could not be eaten because the ingredient lecithin is not kosher for Passover. *Helou hindi* highlights the enormous gap in flavor between store-bought grated coconut and freshly grated coconut meat. It is a little more work to crack open a fresh coconut, but it is well worth it. (To crack one open, pierce the eyes with an ice pick and drain out the water. Break open the coconut with a hammer and pry the meat from the coconut shell with a dinner knife. Then peel off the thin, brown skin with a sharp knife.) The snowy white meat sprinkled with bright green pistachios is lovely, and the fragrance of the floral water is nearly intoxicating.

2 pounds fresh coconut meat,
shredded (about 2 to 3 coconuts),
or store-bought unsweetened coarsely
shredded coconut (see Note)

3 cups sugar
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed
lemon juice

1 teaspoon orange blossom water
1 cup pistachios, shelled, blanched,
and peeled (see page 310)

In a medium saucepan, combine the coconut meat, sugar, lemon juice, 1 cup water, and the orange blossom water and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes, stirring the mixture occasionally with a wooden spoon. While the coconut mixture is still hot, stir in the pistachios. Mix well, and cool before serving.

👉 *Note* 👈

If you use store-bought unsweetened shredded coconut, place it in a mixing bowl and add cold water. Gently fluff the coconut with your hands and let stand for 1 hour to plump and moisten the flakes. Drain before using.

Yield: 40 servings (2 quarts)

