

Spiced Sweet Potato Blancmange with Candied Pecans

Ingredients:

5 cardamom pods
1 star anise seed (just one of the points of the star, not all five)
1 small cinnamon stick
¼ t. black peppercorns
the zest of an orange
4 c. almond milk
1/3 c. cornstarch
1/3 c. + 2T. light brown sugar
¾ c. cooked sweet potato
6T. maple syrup
¾ c. pecans
½ t. flaky sea salt

Infuse almond milk:

Crush cardamom pods, cinnamon stick, star anise and black peppercorns in a mortar & pestle or beneath a heavy saucepan. Zest orange. Place spices in a saucepan along with 3 c. of the almond milk. Bring the milk to a boil and immediately remove from the stove. Cover and let the milk sit with the spices for 10 minutes. (The milk will separate-- don't worry it will all come back together in the next step.)

Cook Blancmange:

Whisk together brown sugar and cornstarch. Add the remaining cup of almond milk and whisk to combine. Strain the spices out of the hot almond milk and return to your saucepan. Add the corn starch/sugar/almond milk mixture. Place saucepan over high heat. Whisk constantly as the mixture heats. Bring to a boil, whisking vigorously, and cook at a boil for one minute. Pour the mixture into a bowl, and place it in an ice bath to cool. Stir it every once in a while so that it doesn't form a skin on top. (Alternately, you can place a sheet of plastic wrap on the surface of the blancmange and refrigerate until it is cool).

Blend:

Pour the cooled blancmange into a blender and add the sweet potato. Blend on high for one minute, scraping down the sides of the blender if necessary. Carefully pour the mixture into four wine glasses. Chill glasses for at least an hour before serving. After the blancmange has set in the glasses, drizzle a tablespoon of maple syrup on top of each serving. Carefully tilt the glass so that the maple syrup coats the entire surface of the blancmange. This will keep it from getting a skin.

Candy Pecans:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Toss pecans with 2 T. maple syrup. Spread pecans onto a parchment-lined baking sheet and sprinkle with sea salt. Bake for 5 minutes, remove the pan and stir the pecans so that

Kitchen Table Scraps

the bubbling maple syrup evenly coats the pecans. Return the pecans to the oven for 5 more minutes.

Serve:

Serve chilled, topped with candied pecans. Whipped cream makes a lovely accompaniment. You can make the blancmange up to two days in advance. After you coat the surface with maple syrup, wrap the glass in plastic and refrigerate. Or you can prepare the cooked part of the blancmange, and puree it with the sweet potato just before serving.