

Halvah

Recipe from Michael Solomonov and Steven Cook

Adapted by Melissa Clark

YIELD 24 servings

TIME 20 minutes, plus cooling

Wheels of halvah — a soft, fudgelike candy made out of sesame paste — is an iconic sight in Middle Eastern markets. But it's also extremely easy to make at home, as long as you have access to a good brand of tahini (the only ingredient should be sesame seeds) and a candy thermometer. This recipe is adapted from the cookbook “Zahav: A World of Israeli Cooking,” by the chef Michael Solomonov. Eat it on its own cut into little pieces with a cup of tea, or dip cubes of it in chocolate and top with sesame seeds to serve as an elegant confection at the end of a fancy dinner party. - Melissa Clark

INGREDIENTS

2 cups granulated sugar

½ vanilla bean, scraped

Zest of 1 lemon

1½ cups tahini

Pinch kosher salt

PREPARATION

Step 1

Line an 8- x 8-inch baking pan with parchment paper.

Step 2

Combine sugar, vanilla seeds and lemon zest with ½ cup water in a saucepan over medium heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Allow mixture to simmer into a syrup, without stirring, until temperature registers 245 degrees on candy thermometer.

Step 3

While syrup is cooking, place tahini and salt in bowl of a stand mixer fitted with paddle. Beat on medium speed. Carefully stream syrup into tahini with mixer running. Mix until syrup is incorporated and mixture begins to pull away from sides of bowl, about 30 seconds to 1 minute. Be careful not to overmix. The halvah texture should be fudgelike, not sandy.

Step 4

Working quickly with a heatproof spatula, transfer mixture to the prepared pan. Place another piece of parchment on top and use your hands on top of the parchment to smooth out halvah. Cool completely to room temperature and cut into squares. Store at room

temperature, well wrapped in plastic, for a week.

PRIVATE NOTES

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