

## Pistachio Soup

Makes 4 servings  
Preparation time: 25 minutes  
Cooking time: 1 hour



*Sup-e pesteh*

### VEGETARIAN VARIATION

Replace the chicken broth with vegetable stock and proceed with the recipe.

### NOTE

For the garnish, replace the barberries and pistachios with 1/3 cup fresh pomegranate arils when in season. Pomegranate and pistachio make a wonderful combination.

### GARNISH

1 tablespoon oil  
1/3 cup (50g) barberries, picked over and rinsed thoroughly with cold water  
1 teaspoon grape molasses or sugar  
2 tablespoons raw shelled pistachios, picked over and any shell bits removed

### SOUP

1 cup (170g) raw shelled pistachios  
2 tablespoons oil or butter  
1 shallot, peeled and thinly chopped  
1 leek (white and green parts), washed thoroughly and finely chopped

1 clove garlic, peeled and thinly sliced  
1/2-inch (1cm) fresh ginger, peeled, grated  
1 tablespoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
1/2 teaspoon cayenne  
1 tablespoon rice flour  
8 cups (1.9l) homemade chicken broth (recipe on page 74)  
1 teaspoon sea salt  
1/4 teaspoon pepper  
1 teaspoon grape molasses or sugar  
1/2 cup (120ml) bitter orange juice or mixture of 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice and 1/4 cup (60ml) orange juice

*The word “pistachio” comes from the Persian word pesteh. One ancient nickname for the Persian people was “pistachio-eaters.” According to a Greek chronicler, when King Astyages of the Medes gazed from his throne over his army, which had been defeated by Cyrus the Great, he exclaimed, “Woe, how brave are these pistachio-eating Persians!”*

1. To make the garnish: Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a medium-sized skillet over low heat. Add the barberries and grape molasses, and sauté for 1 minute (be careful, barberries burn easily). Add the pistachios and sauté for 20 seconds. Remove from heat and set aside.
2. To make the soup: Pick over the shelled pistachios to be sure there are no broken shells or other particles in them. Grind the pistachios in a food processor or grinder until very smooth. Set aside.
3. In a heavy, medium-sized pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the shallots, leeks, garlic, ginger, cumin, coriander, and cayenne. Sauté for 3 minutes. Add the rice flour and sauté for 1 minute. Add the broth, stirring constantly until it comes to a boil.
4. Reduce heat. Add pistachios, salt, pepper, and grape molasses. Stir well. Cover and simmer over low heat, stirring occasionally, for 55 minutes.
5. Add bitter orange juice. Adjust seasoning to taste.
6. Pour the soup into a tureen and garnish. Serve with hot flat bread. *Nush-e Jan!*

### VARIATION

Pistachios can be substituted with either almonds or hazelnuts.