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Democracy Dies in Darkness

Coconut turmeric cake looks like a sunset and tastes like tropical paradise

Active time:

25 mins

Total time:

50 mins, plus cooling time

By **Becky Krystal**

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Sometimes you know what a dish will taste like before you even start cooking it.

For me, this Coconut Turmeric Sweet Bread was not one of those dishes.

When I came across the recipe in “[Tahini and Turmeric: 101 Middle Eastern Classics — Made Irresistibly Vegan](#),” by Vicky Cohen and Ruth Fox, I didn’t know what to expect, but I knew I wanted to make it.

Of course, I’m familiar with the flavors. I just wasn’t sure how the whole thing would come together. The fact that it’s vegan — it relies on nondairy milk and coconut oil for fat and moisture — threw another wrinkle in my expectations because that’s not the kind of baking I do very often.

To say I was pleasantly surprised by the result would not be totally fair, because my expectations weren’t necessarily low. Still, I was floored by how spectacular the result was. The tropical coconut flavor melded so well with the earthy turmeric, and the combination proved enticing and unusual enough to have me — and everyone else at WaPo Food/Voraciously HQ — reaching for seconds, and even thirds. (Use virgin coconut oil instead of refined if you want an especially pronounced coconut flavor.)

Coating the baking pan with tahini was a new idea, too. It worked very well in terms of flavor, giving the cake a kind of halvah crust on the outside, and release. I was able to turn the entire slab out of the pan with no sticking whatsoever. The cake is also supremely moist, not to mention visually stunning. The burnished orange crumb flecked with red specks that result when turmeric interacts with baking powder, all topped by a grid of pistachios, give this dessert major plate appeal. Leave the pistachios off if you must, but the cake won’t be as pretty without them.

Take advantage of its looks by serving the cake on a brunch spread, or be greedy (we won’t blame you!) and save it all for yourself to enjoy with a nice cup of tea. You’ll be tempted to, I guarantee.

Make Ahead: The quick bread can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week. For long-term cold storage, wrap the uncut bread tightly in plastic wrap and freeze, for up to several months.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon tahini (well stirred), for the pan
- 1 ½ cups flour
- 2 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¾ cup unsweetened shredded coconut

- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup unsweetened nondairy milk such as soy, almond or coconut, slightly warmed
- 1/2 cup coconut oil, liquefied/melted
- 16 shelled, unsalted pistachios, for garnish (optional)

Step 1

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Coat the bottom and sides of an 8-inch-square pan with a thin layer of the tahini.

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Step 2

Combine the flour, baking powder, shredded coconut, sugar, turmeric and salt in a mixing bowl.

Step 3

Whisk together your choice of nondairy milk and the liquefied coconut oil in a large liquid measuring cup. Pour that mixture into the bowl, stirring just long enough to form a thick, evenly moistened batter.

Step 4

Transfer to the prepared pan, spreading it evenly into the corners. Arrange the pistachios, if using, in a 4-by-4 grid; you are placing a nut at the center of what will be each baked piece. Bake (middle rack) for 20 to 25 minutes, rotating the pan from front to back halfway through, until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. A few cracks on the top are okay.

Step 5

Transfer the pan to a wire rack to cool for 10 minutes, then use a round-edged knife to loosen around the edges of the quick bread. Carefully invert to dislodge, then turn it right side up on a cutting board. Let it cool for a few more minutes, then cut into 16 equal portions.

Tested by Becky Krystal; email questions to voraciously@washpost.com.

Scale and get a printer-friendly version of the recipe [here](#).

Did you make this recipe? Take a photo and [tag us on Instagram](#) with #eatvoraciously.

Nutrition

Servings Per Container: 16; Calories: 160; Total Fat: 10 g; Saturated Fat: 8 g; Sodium: 100 mg; Carbohydrates: 17 g;

Dietary Fiber: 1 g; Sugars: 7 g; Protein: 2 g.
