



Rice Pudding with Dates

Shavuot, the Festival of Weeks, commemorates the day the people of Israel were given the Torah at Mount Sinai after being expelled from Egypt. **Sephardic Jews** traditionally eat dishes with white rice on Shavuot as the color white symbolizes the purity of the Torah.

To Sephardim, the Festival of Weeks is also known as the Feast of the Roses. The faithful sprinkle rose blossoms on the Torah scrolls. According to Jewish legend, the king saved a garden overgrown with weeds because of a rose, and it is therefore believed that God will save the whole world for the sake of the Torah. This pudding contains not only rose water, but also milk and honey – an allusion to the “land where milk and honey flows.”

Sephardic Jews, referring to Jews originating from Spain and Portugal and their descendants, who after their expulsion in 1492 and 1531 settled in the Ottoman Empire and North West Africa, as well as in the Netherlands and the Americas.

For 4 servings:

- 5 cups (1.2 l) whole milk
- 3.5 oz (100 g) short-grain rice
- 4 tablespoons honey
- ½ cup (50 g) slivered almonds
- 5 oz (150 g) dates, pitted and chopped
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 egg yolks
- 2 tablespoons rose water
- Candied rose petals or ground cinnamon to taste for garnishing

Instructions:

Bring the milk and rice to a boil, then reduce the heat and let it simmer for up to an hour and a half, stirring frequently until the mixture is thick and creamy.

Whisk in the honey, slivered almonds, and dates. Simmer another 20–30 minutes stirring frequently. Add the butter and stir until it has dissolved completely, then take the saucepan off the heat.

Cool the pudding slightly and then fold in the egg yolks, one after another. Finally, add the rose water and pour the custard into a shallow bowl or several small bowls. Chill completely.

Serve the pudding at room temperature or cold and garnish with rose petals or ground cinnamon.

