

Party Pistachios

Here's a bare-bones recipe that serves as a flexible canvas for your own creativity. The spicing is light, so you should up those elements (sweetness, saltiness, heat) to fit your own tastes. I've experimented successfully with several kinds of sugars (even coconut sugar), different powdered chile peppers (ancho, chipotle), and funky salts, too. Go crazy, even adding cinnamon, curry powder, or any spices that suit your fancy.

Makes enough to fill two 8-ounce mason jars

2-1/2 teaspoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
Large pinch black pepper
Pinch (large or small) cayenne pepper
8 ounces dry-roasted, unsalted pistachios
2 teaspoons water

Combine spices in a large skillet and set over medium heat. Warm for 3 minutes, shaking the pan and swirling the seasonings frequently. Add the pistachios and water.

Cook for almost 4 minutes longer, stirring frequently with a heatproof spatula. At first the spices will stick to the bottom of the skillet, but towards the end the sugar will melt and the spices will loosen and cling to the nuts. Don't walk away or you risk burning the nuts.

Turn out onto a rimmed baking sheet, scraping out any stubborn spices, and leave alone for 10 minutes to cool. The nuts harden and get nice and crunchy upon standing. Once fully cool, pack into airtight glass jars to retain optimal crunch.