

MaryJanesFarm, Raising Jane Journal

## Pistachio Melon Cake

(RaisingJane.org/journal/40245)

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Ingredient Substitutions:

##### **What can I use in place of the powdered sugar?**

Alternate sweeteners with lower glycemic indexes can be used (think honey crystals, maple crystals, coconut sugar, date syrup, or honey in small amounts). If you do make a substitution, use a little cornstarch to stabilize the frosting. We also recommend using granules over liquid sweeteners to maintain the structure of the whipped coconut cream.

##### **I'm allergic to almonds. What I use in place on the almond extract?**

Try vanilla or coconut extract, or any other extract you're not allergic to.

##### **I'm allergic to pistachios. What can I use instead?**

If you are not allergic to all nuts, try a nut you aren't allergic to. The pistachios can be eliminated and replaced with more blueberries, or any other low-moisture fruit (fresh or dried).

##### **I don't like/I'm allergic to coconut, what can I use for the frosting instead?**

At this time, we have not successfully created a suitable substitute for the coconut cream frosting.

##### **I'm allergic to blueberries. What can I use instead?**

If you are allergic to blueberries, swap them out for a fruit that you aren't allergic to.

##### **I'm allergic to watermelon, cantaloupe, and/or honeydew. What can I use instead?**

As long as you aren't allergic to all the melons in this cake, just swap out the ones you can't have for the ones you can. If you can't have watermelon, you'll need to add more filling to the center of the cake. To create the center with less frosting, try mixing in some blueberries or other low moisture fruit (fresh or dried). If all you can have is watermelon, but still want the coconut cream and pistachio center, use a round cookie cutter to create a hole in the center.

#### Troubleshooting the Coconut Frosting:

##### **My coconut cream never solidified. What do I do?**

Make sure you are using *full-fat* coconut milk. Do not shake the cans. If your refrigerator gets a lot of traffic, it may take longer to firm up the cream. Once the cream has solidified, it will be a rather firm mass (think barely-room-temperature butter). Once the cream is whipped, it will become smooth and creamy.

If your coconut cream refuses to solidify, you can skim the cream off the top, put it in a bowl, and freeze it, stirring every 10 minutes or so until it is solidified. If it freezes in some places, that's okay, it will still whip up.

### **When I whipped the cream, it liquefied. I tried adding more and more sugar, but it just would not firm up!**

If the cream gets warm, it will liquefy. While this recipe was invented in the heat of the summer, the humidity in northern Idaho is no match for the humidity in other parts of the country. Try whipping the cream and refrigerating it to keep the frosting firm before frosting the cake. While the powdered sugar in the recipe adds some stability to the cream, its main purpose is to sweeten the frosting. Please take a moment to look through the how-to photos. You will see that the coconut cream is semi-solid when scooped out of the cans and that it has body after being whipped, even before the powdered sugar is added. If anything, adding a lot of powdered sugar would make the frosting viscous, creating an icing rather than a thick, creamy frosting.

To stabilize the frosting, some readers from areas with much more heat and humidity than us have dissolved gelatin in boiling coconut milk, and have commented that it worked for them. To keep it vegan, try [MaryJane's ChillOver Powder](#).

### **Assembly & Storage:**

#### **What if the frosting is slipping away from the melons?**

During assembly, if the melons have too much moisture on them, the frosting will slip. Be sure to pat the melons dry with a paper towel before frosting. If your melons seem to have too much moisture to pat dry, try draining the melon slices overnight on a cooling rack placed inside a cookie sheet inside your refrigerator to catch the liquid.

#### **How long will this cake keep before becoming watery? How far in advance can it be made?**

This cake is best served just after it has chilled for the 2 hours recommended in the recipe. We have had an uncovered cake keep for 3 days in the refrigerator, and still hold together. However, the amount of liquid in each melon can vary greatly. If you would like to make this cake in advance, we suggest draining the melons in the refrigerator overnight on a cooling rack placed inside of a cookie sheet to catch the liquid. Also, other readers who have commented have used skewers to stabilize the cake, and if you are storing the cake for a couple of days, this will add some stability and help keep the melon slices from slipping if they do begin to leach liquid. In general, it shouldn't be stored for longer than 3 days.