

# THE KITCHEN

## Balsamic peaches with cottage cheese and toasted almonds

*Chef Fuad Al Qudsi – Fuad Fit*

**IT'S TIME** for dessert! If you have a sweet tooth, you know it can be difficult to find a way to satisfy that craving without consuming a lot of sugar. Make no mistake, whether it's the white granulated stuff, honey or organic maple syrup, it's still sugar.

Here, Chef Fuad Al Qudsi — who is also a registered dietitian — uses it with restraint. You'll get about 1 1/2 teaspoon of honey per serving. That and some balsamic vinegar (which also contains small amounts of sugar) bring out the natural sweetness in the peaches.

By pureeing the cottage cheese with the honey, you get satisfying protein in a smooth, ricotta-like base (think cannoli filling) that's pure heaven when topped with the peaches. Almonds add a great crunch and the thyme provides a touch of sophistication.

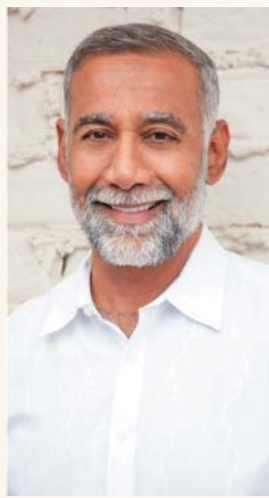
Note that you have to allow two hours for the cheese mixture to develop its flavors, and a little time for the peaches to sit in the balsamic syrup.

### Chef Bio

**FUAD AL** Qudsi is a registered dietitian and nutritionist and a certified fitness trainer, but above all, he is a food enthusiast at heart. Growing up in Saudi Arabia in a family that loved to cook influenced his connection with what people eat from a young age.

Even though he was interested in food and nutrition, his professional path took a different turn when he obtained a degree in geology and worked as an environmental engineer. Twenty years ago, when he moved to San Francisco, he decided to become a certified personal trainer. His interest in healthy, tasty food grew, prompting him to pursue and acquire a degree in nutrition and dietetics.

In the summer of 2020, Al Qudsi relocated from the San Francisco Bay area to Carmel. He is the founder of FuadFit, a private practice for nutrition counseling with an emphasis on geriatric nutrition.



Fuad Al Qudsi



### INGREDIENTS

**Serves 6**

- 3 large ripe peaches, pitted and cut into 1/2-inch wedges**  
*(remove the skins if you like)*
- 1 cup 2 percent cottage cheese**
- 3 tablespoons honey**
- 1/8 teaspoon almond extract**
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds**
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme, plus a few small sprigs for garnish**

Combine the cottage cheese, 2 tablespoons of the honey and the almond extract in a mini food processor and puree until smooth, about one minute. Transfer to a small bowl, cover and refrigerate for at least two hours.

In a small saucepan, combine the balsamic vinegar and the re-

maining tablespoon of honey and place over medium-high heat. As soon as the mixture begins to boil, reduce the heat to medium and cook for about three minutes, stirring occasionally, until it has reduced to a syrup measuring about 1/4 cup. It will thicken further as it cools.

Toast the almonds in a small, dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, until golden and fragrant, shaking the pan as needed to avoid scorching. Cool completely.

Toss together the peaches, thyme and the balsamic syrup in a medium bowl. This may be done up to 2 hours in advance. Divide the cottage cheese mixture among six cocktail glasses or dessert bowls. Top with the peach mixture, sprinkle with almonds and serve.



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