

# Graybeh (shortbread)

*Slightly adapted from a recipe published in a book (in Arabic) by Mary Salah Khabbaz, in 1970, in Ramallah.*

## **Ingredients**

3–3¼ cups flour, sifted (see note below)  
 1 cup butter or margarine, room temperature  
 1 cup powdered sugar, sifted  
 Pine nuts, almonds, or pistachios for decorating

## **Note**

Depending on the weather and humidity, you may need to use more or less flour (e.g., more humidity in the air, less flour in the dough). The consistency of the dough should be as thick as bread dough.

## **Preparation and cooking**

1. Beat the butter or margarine by hand or using a mixer, until it becomes white, light, and fluffy.
2. Add half the sifted sugar and beat well. Add the rest of the sifted sugar and beat well for 15 minutes.
3. Using your hands now, slowly add half the sifted flour and knead well. Then add the rest of the flour, and continue kneading, until the dough is soft and silky (that might take 30 minutes of kneading).
4. Let the dough rest in the refrigerator for an hour to allow the gluten to develop.
5. Cut the dough into small balls (the size of a walnut). Knead each ball lightly with the fingers, and then shape it into an S shape (or thick disks, or any other shape of your choice). Place the shaped dough pieces, apart, on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Top each of the pieces with a pine nut (or your choice of nut), pressing the nut lightly into the dough. Leave to rest for 10 minutes.
6. While the dough rests on the baking sheet, heat the oven to 125° Celsius.
7. Bake for no more than 15 minutes. The graybeh is ready when it puffs a bit and gets slightly darker. Overbaking will make the center of the finished cookie crunchy, while under-baking makes it chewy. An excellent graybeh is one that melts in the mouth as butter would – no crunch or chewiness in the center.
8. Cool completely on a rack. Store in an airtight container.

