Prep Time: 25 minutes | Cook Time: 10 minutes (stovetop, lemon curd) | Chill Time: 4 hours | Total Time: 4 hours 35 minutes
Yield: 9 servings | Difficulty: Easy

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Ingredients

For the Shortbread Crust:

- 1½ cups (180g) shortbread cookie crumbs (about 12 cookies)
- 6 tbsp (85g) unsalted butter, melted

- 2 tbsp (25g) granulated sugar
- Pinch of salt

For the Pistachio Layer:

- 1 cup (120g) shelled unsalted pistachios, plus extra chopped for garnish
- 1 package (8 oz / 225g) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup (240ml) heavy whipping cream, cold
- ½ cup (100g) granulated sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp almond extract (optional, enhances the pistachio)
- 3–4 drops green food coloring (optional)

For the Lemon Curd Swirl:

- 3 large egg yolks

- ½ cup (100g) granulated sugar
- ⅓ cup (80ml) fresh lemon juice (about 2 lemons)
- 1 tbsp lemon zest
- 4 tbsp (55g) unsalted butter, cubed

For Garnish:

- Chopped pistachios
- Lemon zest curls
- Whipped cream (optional)

Instructions

Step 1: Make the Crust (10 minutes)

Pulse the shortbread cookies in a food processor until fine crumbs form. Combine with melted butter, sugar, and salt until the mixture resembles wet sand. Press firmly into the bottom of an 8×8-inch baking dish. Place in the freezer for 15 minutes while you prepare the layers.

Step 2: Make the Lemon Curd (10 minutes)

In a small saucepan, whisk together egg yolks, sugar, lemon juice, and zest over medium-low heat. Stir constantly for 6–8 minutes until the mixture thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon. Remove from heat and whisk in butter one cube at a time until glossy. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl, cover with plastic wrap pressed directly onto the surface, and refrigerate.

Step 3: Toast the Pistachios (5 minutes)

Spread pistachios on a dry skillet over medium heat for 3–4 minutes, stirring frequently, until fragrant. Cool completely, then pulse in a food processor until finely ground (stop before it becomes paste).

Step 4: Whip the Cream (3–4 minutes)

In a chilled bowl, beat heavy whipping cream on medium-high speed for 2–3 minutes until stiff peaks form. Refrigerate until needed.

Step 5: Build the Pistachio Base (5 minutes)

Beat softened cream cheese, sugar, vanilla, and almond extract on medium speed for 2 minutes until smooth. Fold in ground pistachios, then gently fold in the whipped cream in two additions until no streaks remain. Add food coloring if desired.

Step 6: Assemble (5 minutes)

Spoon the pistachio mixture over the chilled crust and smooth the top. Dollop lemon curd over the surface and swirl gently with a knife — don’t overmix; you want ribbons of yellow.

Step 7: Chill (4 hours)

Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, or overnight for best results.

Step 8: Garnish & Serve

Top with chopped pistachios, lemon zest curls, and whipped cream. Slice into 9 squares and serve chilled.

Recipe Notes & Tips

- Room temperature cream cheese is essential — cold cream cheese will leave lumps.
- Don’t skip straining the curd — it guarantees a silky texture.
- Grind pistachios carefully — over-processing releases oils and turns them into paste.
- Make ahead: This dessert keeps beautifully for up to 3 days covered in the fridge.

Nutrition (per serving, 1 of 9)

Values are estimates and depend on specific ingredients used.

- Calories: 385
- Total Fat: 28g (Saturated: 14g)

- Cholesterol: 105mg
- Sodium: 145mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 28g (Fiber: 1.5g; Sugars: 21g)
- Protein: 6g
- Vitamin C: 6% DV
- Calcium: 5% DV
- Iron: 6% DV