



## Is That Squash in My Cake?

Pastry chefs are reaching for unexpected ingredients—from bitter honey to smoky cardamom—with sweet results. Sugar and spice and everything nice are so last season.

BY SOPHIA LORENZI



FOR MICHAEL MINA'S  
SQUASH SPICE  
CAKE RECIPE  
GO TO [7X7.COM](http://7X7.COM)

### 1 Black Cardamom *Caitlin Williams Freeman of Blue Bottle Coffee*

"I wanted to rethink the spices that are usually in a ginger cookie. Black cardamom has all the herbal, bright notes of green cardamom and a smokiness that comes from being dried over wood smoke. It blends well with the black pepper, ginger, and cocoa powder in the cookie." **\$4 (5 ounces) at Bombay Bazaar; 245 S. Van Ness Ave. (at Erie), 415-864-2193, bombayicecream.com**

### 2 Chestnut Honey *Amaryll Schwertner of Boulettes Larder*

"Bees collect pollen from chestnut tree blossoms to create this unique flavor profile. Sourced from northern Italy, it's quite bitter in flavor compared to most honey. Its almost smoky flavor contrasts well with tart winter fruit. It's particularly delicious with cheese such as Roquefort too." **\$16 (1 pound) at Boulettes Larder; 1 Ferry Building (at Market), 415-399-1155, bouletteslarder.com**

### 3 Bellwether Farms Sheep's Milk Yogurt *Marylou Jaso of Contigo*

"I find that Bellwether's sheep's milk yogurt with its warm, grassy tang made into ice cream is great. I like to pair it with grapefruit sorbet or roasted winter fruits such as pears, apples, and quince. To make the ice cream, I first strain the yogurt overnight to make it nice and creamy." **\$6 (16 ounces) at Rainbow Grocery; 1745 Folsom St. (at Erie), 415-863-0620, rainbowgrocery.org**

### 4 Valrhona Ivoire White Baking Chocolate *Bill Corbett of Absinthe Group*

"I love cooking this white chocolate at a very low temperature until the milk turns a light caramel color. It gives it a whole new flavor and makes it nutty, almost like brown butter or dulce de leche. The chocolate comes in both little beans and bars. I use it in mousses, ice cream and panna cotta." **\$19 (1 pound of bar) at Whole Foods; 1765 California St. (at Franklin), 415-674-0500, wholefoodsmarket.com**

### 5 Mosquée de Provence Winter Squash *Lincoln Carson of Michael Mina*

"I've never waxed poetic like this over squash, but this massive squash is so sweet. The first time I had it, I put it in a bag to steam and was just eating chunks out of the bag. Its flavor has more in common with fruit. I like using it in a spice cake because it makes a moist, dark-orange loaf that I top with fried sage." **\$1.25 (1 pound) at Allstar Organics; Saturday Ferry Plaza Farmers Market, allstarorganics.com x**