

Macarons

Equipment

Baking Trays

Greaseproof paper

Sugar thermometer

Stand mixer

Templates

Food colouring

Paintbrush

Scales

Spatulas

Bowls

Clingfilm

2 Icing bags, each with round 1 cm icing nozzle

Food processor or hand blender with sharp blades



Ingredients

Almond paste:

190g ground almonds (pulse in food processor or hand blender to refine)

205g icing sugar

72g egg whites

1 tsp almond essence

Food colouring (paste or gel)

Meringue mix:

72g egg whites

60ml water

190g caster sugar

Ganache filling:

200g chocolate

70g double cream

Food colouring, if desired, to colour white chocolate

Method

Sift icing sugar and ground almonds together.

Mix in 72g of egg whites to form a paste.

Add food colouring (it will fade when mixed with meringue; add enough to make the mixture a couple of shades more intense to allow for this).

Cover the bowl with clingfilm and leave to one side.



Meringue (Italian meringue)

Put the other 72g of egg whites into the bowl of your stand mixer so it's ready to be switched on.

Put the sugar thermometer, the 60ml of water and caster sugar into a saucepan to dissolve the sugar and bring it to boil.

When the temperature reaches 110°, turn the stand mixer on to a medium speed to start beating the egg whites.

When the sugar mixture reaches 118°, take it off the heat and pour carefully down the inside surface of the mixer bowl so that it gets incorporated into the egg white. Avoid the beater or the sugar will get splattered around the inside of the bowl and not into the egg whites!

Leave the mixer to beat on a higher speed until the bowl and mixture are room temperature. The egg whites should be white and glossy. Stiff but not rigid; there should be a little floppiness to it.

Take a small amount of the meringue and mix it into the almond paste to loosen it up and make it easier to fold in the rest of the meringue.

Add the rest of the meringue by folding it gently so as not to knock too much air out of it.

The mixture is ready when you can lift the mixture up on a spatula and it 'ribbons' back into the bowl and leaves the lines of the ribboning for a few seconds. Spoon the mixture into your icing bag.



Take your baking tray and place a piping template on top. Over that, place a sheet of greaseproof paper. Pipe into circles using a template.

Take the tray of piped macaron mixture and give it a rap on the worktop. This forces any trapped air bubbles to the surface. Pop them with a cocktail stick and 'twizzle' the mixture to fill the popped crater.

Put the oven on: 140°.

Leave the tray(s) of macaron mixture to dry out. This can take anywhere from 15 to 40 minutes, depending on the humidity and temperature of the room they're in. Gently touch the surface on one of the macarons and if dry to touch, they're ready to go in the oven.

Place in oven (remove the template but not the greaseproof paper) and bake for 20 minutes.

Take out of the oven and transfer the greaseproof paper with the macarons onto a cooling rack.

Leave them to go cold before you try to peel them off the greaseproof paper. You can decorate the macaron shells with food colouring when they're nearly cool, though. I used 100% edible gold food colouring and a fine paintbrush to paint tridots on mine.



Ganache

Break up 200g of chocolate into a microwavable bowl. Pour the 70g double cream over it.

Place on full power in microwave for 1 minute. Let it stand for about a minute then stir and blend them together.

Leave the mixture to cool to about room temperature, then use a mixer to beat them together till smooth and firmish.

Peel the macaron shells off the greaseproof paper.

Turn half of them upside down and pipe a circle of cooled ganache onto them. Top the ganache with a macaron topshell.

If you can, leave them for a day in the fridge to really bring out the flavour. If you can't—and the temptation is overwhelming, make a good coffee, sit down and enjoy the bloody gorgeous treat you've fuffed over for the last couple of hours! Enjoy.

