

Chocolate Macarons with Chocolate Ganache Filling

This recipe comes from Sue of www.youcandoitathome.com. I have altered it slightly by increasing the amount of cocoa powder and reducing the amount of icing sugar from her original formula.

Makes 16-18 sandwich cookies.

Notes

1. The day before you plan to make these, separate 4 large eggs. Freeze or discard the yolks and put the whites in a bowl in the fridge overnight to age and dry out somewhat. Remove them from the fridge about 2 hours before you plan to make them so that they can come to room temperature.
2. A scale is necessary for measuring out the ingredients. There is too much margin for error when scooping into measuring cups. Macarons are finicky!
3. If you can't find fine ground granulated sugar, just give regular granulated sugar a whiz in the food processor for 30 seconds.
4. Filled macarons will keep refrigerated for about 4-5 days. If you want to make them ahead of time, freeze the shells only and then fill with ganache the day you plan to serve them.

For macaron shells

100 grams egg whites (about 3 egg whites, at room temperature for about 24 hours)
110 grams almond meal (ground almonds)
145 grams icing sugar
60 grams finely ground granulated sugar
20 grams cocoa powder
Unsweetened cocoa nibs (optional)

For chocolate ganache filling (This makes more than you will need for the recipe. The extra keeps well in the fridge for a month. You can also roll up the excess ganache into little balls for truffles and coat them in cocoa powder for a second excellent Passover dessert.)

1 cup 35% cream
1 1/2 cups finely chopped dark chocolate (at least 60%)
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature

1. Stack 2 heavy duty baking sheets.

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2. Find a round cookie cutter or drinking glass that measures about 1 ½ inches across. (A shot glass is ideal for this.) Using a sheet of parchment paper measuring the same size as your baking sheets, trace out staggered rows of circles, spacing the circles about ½ inch apart. This will be your template to help you pipe even sized macrons. If you have 13 x 18 inch baking sheets, you should be able to get about 20 circles (4 across and 5 down).
3. Lay the circle drawn sheet on stacked baking trays and cover with a second piece of blank parchment. You may want to paperclip them together so they do not slide when piping. Set aside.
4. In the food processor, grind almond meal and icing sugar until they resemble a finely ground powder. About 2 minutes. Add cocoa powder and blend for another minute.
5. Transfer ground almond mixture to a sieve, set over a large bowl and using a bowl scraper or rubber spatula or the back of a spoon, push the mixture through the sieve into the bowl. This process ensures a smooth and shiny macaron shell. This can be done a day ahead.
6. Using an electric mixer with a very clean bowl, beat egg whites on low speed and gradually increase to medium speed until egg whites are foamy and soft peaks have just started to form. Gradually add in castor sugar, a tablespoon at a time and continue beating on medium speed until whites are glossy and form a stiff peak.
7. Fold the egg whites into the almond mixture. You don't have to worry about being too gentle here. You are making a cookie not a meringue. The best way I have learned from www.youcandoitathome.com is to mix quite vigorously for the first 10 strokes and then lift the mixture with spatula, turn and push it against the bowl. Lift, turn and push, lift, turn and push, until you achieve a well-combined and shiny mixture. I find that this helps to incorporate egg white into dry ingredients really well. The finished batter will be thick and smooth and flowing. Be careful not to over mix or your meringues will be flat.
8. Fit a disposable piping bag with a ½ inch plain round piping tip. Stand pastry bag with tip in a tall glass or pitcher and fold down top of bag, over sides of pitcher. Fill pastry bag about 2/3 full. Twist top of bag closed. Pipe batter onto prepared baking sheets, using circles as a guide. Most likely your piped macarons will have a little peak on them. Tap the tray on the counter to slightly flatten them out. If you want the tops of your cookies to have a decoration, you can sprinkle half the wet shells with a bit of cocoa nibs. You only need to do half the shells, because the other half will be the bottom of your sandwich cookie.

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9. Put rack in middle position in oven. Preheat oven to 320°F. Let the macarons sit at room temperature for about 30 minutes so that the tops can dry out a bit before baking. This will help them rise a bit better. After 30 minutes, touch the top gently with your finger. If it does not stick to your finger, they are ready to bake.
10. When macarons are ready to go into the oven, reduce oven temperature to 285° F. Bake, one sheet at a time for about 14-16 minutes, rotating the tray after 8 minutes for even baking. You will notice after about 8 minutes, little feet will start appearing as the macarons begin to rise. This is the mark of a well made macaron. You will know they are ready if you are able to slightly nudge the macaron with your finger and it slides. If they do not move at all, they need another minute or so.
11. Set baking sheet on a cooling rack and let cool completely. When completely cool, gently lift macarons off the parchment paper and transfer to a wire rack. While macarons are cooling prepare chocolate ganache.
12. Bring cream and butter to a simmer in a medium sized pot over medium heat. Do not boil. When simmering, remove from heat and add chocolate. Let sit for about 2 minutes. Mix cream and chocolate together with a spatula until smooth. Transfer to a small bowl, cover with plastic wrap and chill for at least 2 hours.
13. Transfer chilled ganache to a disposable piping bag and pipe a scant tablespoon onto half the shells. Cover the piped shells with plain shells for sandwich cookies.