

Robin's Egg Malted Milk Chocolate Macarons

Makes about 36 macaron sandwich cookies.

Macaron recipe very slightly adapted from the book, "*Secrets of Macarons*". (José Maréchal). The method for making them is a compilation of tips and tricks I have learned from Erin at [cloudykitchen](http://cloudykitchen.com), Stella at [seriouseats](http://seriouseats.com) and Natalie at [loveandmacarons](http://loveandmacarons.com).

The buttercream recipe is slightly adapted from www.bravetart.com

Notes:

1. A scale is necessary for measuring out the ingredients. There is too much margin for error when scooping into measuring cups. Macarons are finicky!
2. If you can't find fine ground granulated sugar, just give regular granulated sugar a whiz in the food processor for 30 seconds.
3. 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 before you plan to serve them.
4. A candy thermometer is needed.

For macaron shells:

180 grams almond flour (I like Bob's Red Mill brand)
20 grams malted milk powder
200 grams icing sugar
3 drops royal blue gel food colouring (Chefmaster brand)
80 grams egg whites, room temperature
175 grams finely ground granulated sugar
75 grams water, room temperature
25 grams finely ground granulated sugar
80 grams egg whites, room temperature

For Speckles:

3 Tablespoon vanilla extract
3 drops brown gel food colouring
1 Tablespoon cocoa powder

For Malted Milk Chocolate Buttercream:

142 grams egg whites, room temperature
142 grams white sugar
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
454 grams unsalted butter, cut into 2" chunks and softened at room temperature for 30 minutes
1 teaspoon vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste
42 grams malted milk powder
2 Tablespoons hot water
113 grams milk chocolate, melted and cooled
71 grams bittersweet chocolate, melted and cooled

1. **Make macaron shells:** Prepare templates for macaron cookies so that your shells will all be the exact same size. You can download a template from <http://barbarabakes.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/macarontemplate.pdf> Print out enough templates to line a 13x18 inch baking sheet. Lay templates on baking sheet and cover with a plain piece of parchment paper.

2. Fit a large pastry bag with a plain $\frac{1}{2}$ inch diameter round tip, and place in a large drinking glass or pitcher. Fold the cuff of the pastry bag over the rim of the glass or pitcher. This will make filling the pastry bag quite easy.
3. In the food processor, grind almond flour, icing sugar and malted milk powder for about 2 minutes until it resembles a finely ground powder. Transfer ground almond mixture to a sieve with medium sized mesh holes, set over a large bowl and using a rubber spatula or the of back of a spoon, push the mixture though the sieve into the bowl. This process ensures a smooth and shiny macaron shell. Add 80 grams of egg whites and 3 drops food colouring and stir until all the dry ingredients have become incorporated into the egg whites. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside.
4. Place 175 grams granulated sugar and water in a small saucepan. Clip a candy thermometer to the side of the pan. Turn heat to high and cook, without stirring, until you reach a temperature of 240°F. You can swirl the pan, to even out the melting sugar, but don't put a spoon in it and stir.
5. While sugar is cooking, place 80 grams egg whites into stand mixer with whisk attachment. Whisk on high speed until egg whites become bubbly. Add 25 grams sugar and whisk until soft peaks form. If soft peaks form before the sugar and water reach 240°F, turn mixer to low speed.
6. When the sugar reaches 240°F, turn the mixer to low and carefully pour the sugar syrup, in a thin stream into the mixer. Aim for the side of the bowl, rather than the whisk. Turn up the speed of the mixer to high and beat until the bowl of the mixer is warm to the touch, body temperature.
7. Add $\frac{1}{3}$ of the meringue to the almond flour mixture. Fold meringue into the mixture to lighten it slightly. Add remaining meringue and fold it into the ground almond mixture. The best way to do this is to use both a folding motion and a pressing motion. Use a flexible rubber spatula to scoop the batter up from the bottom of the bowl and then press it against the side of the bowl to gently deflate. Keep turning bowl and repeating this folding and pressing motion until the batter flows like lava. If this is your first time making macarons, watch [this video](#) a few times. It will give you a great idea of the consistency you are looking for.
8. Spoon half the batter into the piping bag. Twist top of bag closed. Pipe batter onto prepared baking sheets, using circles as a guide. Hold piping bag perpendicular to the pan. Apply pressure, leaving tip of piping bag stationary, until batter has almost filled the circle. Finish off each piped circle with a little "flick" of your wrist.
9. Most likely your piped macarons will have a little nipple or peak on them. Tap the tray on the counter a few times to slightly flatten them out. Repeat with the remaining batter on second and third cookie sheets if necessary. **Remember to slide out the paper templates before baking.**
10. Put rack in middle position in oven. Place an empty baking sheet on the middle rack to allow it to heat up. Preheat oven to 300°F.
11. Let the macarons sit at room temperature for about 30-60 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.
12. Place one sheet of macarons in the oven, on top of the pan you left in there to preheat. The double pans help with insulation and more even baking. Bake for about 14-16 minutes, rotating the tray after 7 minutes for even baking. You will notice after about 5 minutes, little feet will start appearing as the macarons begin to rise. This is the mark of a well-made macaron.

13. While macarons are baking, take a clean kitchen towel, place it under the tap briefly to dampen it. Lay damp towel out on the counter.
14. After 14 minutes, check the macarons. Press down gently on the top of one of the macarons. If the foot wobbles it needs a little longer, if it is stable, then it is close to being done. Do a little test. Try to peel a macaron off the paper. If they are stable but cannot yet peel away cleanly, give them another minute or so.
15. Remove from oven and carefully slide parchment paper off the baking sheet onto the dampened towel. This creates a thermal shock that makes the macarons easier to get off the parchment paper. Let cool for a few minutes, then transfer macarons to a wire rack to finish cooling.
16. **Speckle macarons:** Once macarons are totally cool, mix vanilla extract, brown food colouring and cocoa powder together in a small bowl. Line the counter with a sheet of parchment paper to keep it clean while speckling. Place macarons on parchment paper. Dip a small new toothbrush into the food coloring mixture. Hold the brush over top of the macarons and run it across the prongs of a fork to throw specks of brown food coloring onto the macarons. Let specks completely dry before filling the macarons.
17. **Make buttercream:** Combine the egg whites, sugar and salt together in the bowl of your stand mixer. Set the bowl over a pan of water and turn the heat on medium low. You don't need the water to even simmer, you just want it hot enough to steam, since steam is what actually heats the whites.
18. Whisk frequently to prevent an egg white omelet forming on the sides, but continual mixing isn't necessary. Aim to get the mixture to at least a 145°F for food safety reasons, but reaching 150°F would make for a nice margin of error. If your egg whites are at room temperature, this won't take very long, maybe just a few minutes. Whites straight from the fridge will take longer.
19. When the mixture is sufficiently hot, remove from the heat and use the whisk attachment to whip on medium high speed until the mixture has doubled in volume and turned snowy white. Continue whipping until the meringue is cool. Use your hands to feel the bowl itself, rather than simply testing the temperature of the meringue. You want it to feel perfectly cool to the touch with no trace of warmth. Note: if you are using a glass or ceramic bowl, even if the meringue has cooled, the bowl itself may still be quite warm and continue conducting heat into the buttercream over time. If you are using a glass or ceramic bowl, transfer the meringue to a new bowl before proceeding or continue mixing until the bowl itself is cool.
20. Replace whisk attachment with paddle attachment. Turn the mixer down to medium-low and begin adding in the butter, one chunk at a time. If you didn't let your meringue cool enough, this is when you'll really regret it. By the time you've added all the butter, you may need to scrape down the bowl to fully incorporate any butter or meringue that's stuck at the sides. At one point it will look like the buttercream has curdled, but just keep beating and it will come together. Add vanilla extract or paste.
21. Beat in dissolved malted milk powder, melted milk and bittersweet chocolate. Buttercream will keep in fridge for a week and freezer for 6 months.
22. Transfer buttercream to a disposable piping bag and pipe a scant tablespoon onto half the shells. Cover the piped shells with plain shells for sandwich cookies.

