

French Macarons

Chef Danielle DiSanto

Hazelnut Macarons with Dark Chocolate Ganache

Yield: 35 sandwich cookies

7 ounces powdered sugar, divided
2-1/2 ounces almond flour or meal
1-1/2 ounces hazelnut flour or meal
4 large (4 ounces) egg whites, room temperature
Pinch of cream of tartar
3-1/2 ounces granulated sugar
Brown food coloring (optional)

Preheat oven to 325°F. Line baking sheets with silicone mats on top of paper templates.

Sift powdered sugar, almond meal and hazelnut flour. Set aside.

To make the meringue: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, whip whites and cream of tartar on medium speed until foamy. Gradually add granulated sugar. Once all sugar is incorporated and the mixture is thick, scrape down sides of bowl, add food coloring and increase speed to high, whipping until stiff, firm, glossy peaks form.

To complete the macaronnage step: Add sifted mixture 1/3 at a time over the egg white mixture and fold using a large spatula until mixture is smooth and shiny. Once all the almond flour mixture is incorporated, check for the correct consistency, as the batter should be nicely firm, have a glossy shine and drip slowly from the spatula.

Transfer batter to a pastry bag fitted with a 1/2-inch plain round tip (#12) and pipe 1 1/3-inch rounds on parchment-lined baking sheets. Gently tap the bottom of each sheet on work surface to release trapped air. Let stand at room temperature for 15 to 30 minutes. Check for a slight crust to form on the macaron. The macarons should not stick to your finger when lightly touched.

Bake macarons one sheet at a time, rotating halfway through, until macarons are crisp and firm, about 10 to 15 minutes. If the macarons are still soft inside, lower oven to 300 degrees, cover with aluminum foil and bake for a few more minutes. If the top of the macarons look crinkled, your oven temperature may be too hot. Allow macarons to cool on baking sheets for 2 to 3 minutes and transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before filling.

Dark Chocolate Ganache

Yield: 1 cup

6 ounces heavy cream
8 ounces bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
1 ounce (2 tablespoons) unsalted butter, softened

In a small saucepan, heat cream over medium-high heat to a simmer. Place chocolate in a medium heatproof bowl and pour hot cream over the chocolate. Let stand for 1 minute.

Slowly stir chocolate mixture with a silicone spatula to combine. Add butter and whisk mixture until smooth. Let cool, stirring every 10 minutes. Once ganache cools, use a small offset spatula and gently spread between two macarons.

Lemon Macarons

7 ounces powdered sugar
4 ounces almond meal or flour
4 large (4 ounces) egg whites, at room temperature
Pinch of cream of tartar
3-1/2 ounces granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract, or seeds from 1/2 vanilla bean

Preheat oven to 325°F. Line baking sheets with silicone mats on top of paper templates. Sift powdered sugar and almond flour. Set aside.

To make the meringue: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, whip whites and cream of tartar on medium speed until foamy. Gradually add granulated sugar. Once all the sugar is incorporated and the mixture is thick, scrape down sides of bowl, add food coloring and increase speed to high, whipping until stiff, firm, glossy peaks form.

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Lemon Buttercream

8 ounces (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened

4 cups confectioners' sugar

1/8 teaspoon kosher salt

2 teaspoons lemon juice

1 tsp of Lemon Zest

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment add butter. Whip butter on medium-high speed until pale, light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and starting on low speed whip, stopping to wipe down the bowl as needed, until well combined. Transfer buttercream to a pastry bag with a small round tip.