

Macaron Cookies

Ingredients:

For the macaron shells:

300g almond flour
300g powdered sugar(without corn starch) also known as icing sugar
110g egg whites
300g sugar
75g water
110g egg whites (yes you need 2 measurements of 110g)
Caramel sauce to fill center

Toffee(optional I did not do this)

200g sugar
60ml water

Custard filling:

250ml skim milk
3 egg yolks
50g sugar
1 tbsp flour
1 tbsp cornstarch
185g butter
1 tsp vanilla
Sea salt

Directions:

Custard Frosting

In a large mixing bowl, mix the yolks, vanilla bean paste and the sugar and whisk until well combined and the mixture lightens in colour. Add the corn flour and plain flour and stir until mixture is smooth Add 1/3 of the hot milk and stir well. Then slowly add the rest of the milk while stirring

Microwave for 1 minute at a time, staring each time until mixture thickens and becomes smooth. You should be able to run your finger along the back of a spoon and it will be thick enough to not come back together.

Add the cold butter cubes and stir until well combined.

Transfer custard to a bowl, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 3-4 hours or overnight to allow it to completely set.

Add half the icing sugar and almond meal into a food processor and process until well combined. Repeat with the other half. This will help get rid of any lumps in the sugar. Alternatively you may sift the two together. This must be done at least 3 times.

Toffee Mixture.

Prepare a large baking tray with baking paper. Set aside.

To make toffee, add sugar and water into a medium sized saucepan. Bring to a boil and then let it gently simmer until it goes a dark golden colour. When it begins to colour it will darken very quickly. It may take 10 min or so to get to this stage but never leave it's side otherwise you'll end up with a burned mess! Also! Don't be tempted to stir the mixture otherwise the syrup will crystalize. Instead let the sugar dissolve on it's own and brush the sides of the pot with a pastry brush dipped in water to brush away any of the syrup that may have accumulated

Once it's dark quickly transfer to baking tray and allow to firm up before breaking apart. You can either chop this into small pieces using a large knife or crush in a food processor until you get small chunks. To store any excess, allow

Macarons

Empty the almond mixture into a large mixing bowl, add the first portion of egg whites and mix until it forms a paste. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside.

Add the sugar and water into a small saucepan. Give them a very gentle stir to get them mixed together. Bring to a boil on medium high heat, then turn down to a simmer. Add a candy thermometer to the pot to help you measure the temp of the syrup. As the syrup bubbles away it will splatter small bubbles of sugared water on the sides of the pot. Use a pastry brush dabbed in a little water to brush those back into the syrup. This will help prevent the syrup from crystallizing. When the syrup reaches 115C, add the second portion of egg whites to the bowl of a stand mixer and start whisking them on medium/high speed to help break them apart and get them a little frothy.

When the syrup reaches 118C, pour it over the egg whites in a slow and steady stream. Whisk to stiff peaks for about 6 min. Add the COLOUR and vanilla extract at about the 3 min point,

whisk into the meringue for a couple of minutes. Stop the mixer and scrape down, then whisk for an extra couple of minutes. When you can turn the bowl over and the meringue doesn't fall out, you know you've reached stiff peaks.

Grab a spatula full of the meringue and fold it into the almond-sugar mixture, mix until well combined. This allows the mixture to thin out a little before you add the rest of the mixture. Fold everything together by going around the bowl with a spatula then through the middle (as demonstrated in the video). Continue folding until the batter gets thin enough that it drips off the spatula and falls in a ribbon. It should take about 10 seconds for the ribbon to disappear into the rest of the batter. That's when you know the batter is ready to pipe.

Spoon the batter into a piping bag with a round tip.

Pipe rounds of batter about 3.5cm (1.38 inches) in diameter, spacing them 2cm apart on (flat) baking trays lined with baking parchment. Sprinkle with sprinkles.

Gently tap the tray on the work surface covered with a kitchen cloth. Leave to stand for at least 30 minutes, until a skin forms on the shells. They shouldn't be sticky when you touch them. It's at this point that you can preheat a fan forced oven to 180C (360F)

Bake for 12 minutes. If you feel your oven is causing the macarons to brown on one side (usually the side closest to the fan) turn the tray around about half way through baking. Once they're baked, let them cool completely.

Once cooled pipe custard filling onto half the shells. Fill with a little drizzle of caramel. Place top of cookie and roll the outside in toffee pieces.

Handy Tips:

PREPARE BEFORE YOU START:

1. Trays (lined with baking paper NOT grease proof paper)
2. Eggs - separate egg whites from the yolks and allow them to sit in the fridge for a couple hours. These must be measured accurately.
3. Sift almond and sugar together (if you don't have a food processor)

STORAGE: store in an airtight container for up to 3 days (refrigerated or unrefrigerated).

AGEING YOUR EGGS: Egg whites will liquefy if you sit them in the fridge for several days, preferably a week. During that time, the egg whites lose their elasticity, the albumen breaks down and they will be much easier to whisk to soft peaks without turning "grainy".

HALVING THE RECIPE: This recipe can be halved

EQUIPMENT:

You will need a candy thermometer for this recipe to know the exact time to take the syrup off the heat. They can be purchased on Amazon or from your local cake supply store.

Equipment

Spatula,

Sift

Glass bowls

Whisk attachment (or hand mixer)

Candy thermometer

Stove top

Small saucepan

Teaspoons

Piping bag

Round piping tip (medium size, 1.5cm in width)

Piping bags