

## **RASPBERRY MACARONS**

*(adapted from Saving Room for Dessert)*

for the shells:

150 grams almond meal, sift twice  
150 grams confectioners' sugar, sifted  
55 grams egg whites, aged overnight

for the meringue:

150 grams granulated sugar  
37.5 grams water  
55 grams egg whites, aged overnight  
gel food color, red

for the filling:

3 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature  
1 ounce cream cheese, room temperature  
1/2 cup fresh raspberries, pureed and strained  
a few drops of vanilla extract  
2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted (more or less as needed for desired consistency)

Prepare 2 sheets of parchment paper and two baking sheets. To ensure consistent sized cookies, trace a cookie cutter on the parchment paper as a template then turn it over before piping. Prepare a pasty bag fitted with a large round tip. Set aside.

Place the almond meal and the confectioner's sugar in the bowl of a food processor and pulse a few times. In a large mixing bowl sift together the almond meal and confectioners' sugar. Make a well in the center and add 55 grams of egg whites. Fold the mixture with a spatula until it becomes a thick, paste-like batter.

Place the remaining 55 grams of egg whites in the large mixing bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Set aside. In a small saucepan combine the granulated sugar and water. Stir until the sugar is dissolved. Attach a candy thermometer to the pan and heat to 225 degrees. Once the syrup reaches 225 degrees, turn on the stand mixer and beat the egg whites on high. Continue to beat the whites while cooking the syrup until it reaches 239 degrees. You want the meringue to be at soft peak stage so if it reaches that stage before the syrup reaches 239 degrees, turn the mixer down to low. When the syrup hits 239 degrees remove it from the heat and slowly pour it into the egg whites while the mixer is running. Try to stream the syrup directly into the whites close to the side of the bowl so it won't cool too quickly. Whip on high for a minute then reduce the speed to low and continue beating until the bowl has cooled slightly and glossy stiff peaks have formed.

Add about half the meringue to the batter, gently folding until combined and smooth. Gradually add the remaining meringue, and food color if using, and fold until the batter is smooth. To test consistency, pick up the spatula and if the batter ribbons back into the bowl, it is ready. It should be like lava blending back into itself after about a minute.

Heat oven to 300 degrees. Fill pastry bags with the macaron batter. Pipe the batter into rounds. Once the first sheet is filled, rap the pan on the counter a few times to rupture any air bubbles trapped in the cookie. Rotate the pan and rap again. Set the baking sheet aside to allow a shell to form. This will take about 20-30 sitting out at room temperature. Pipe another sheet of cookies and repeat.

Bake for about 18 – 20 minutes for until you can lift the cookie off the parchment coming away clean. Remove the entire sheet of parchment paper with cookies intact to a wire rack to cool. Once completely cool, remove the macarons from the parchment and fill as desired.

To prepare the buttercream, blend the butter and cream cheese together until smooth. Add the vanilla, raspberry puree, and about 2 cups of the confectioners' sugar. Blend until smooth. Add the remaining confectioners' sugar until you reach the desired consistency for the filling. It does not have to be as thick as cake icing as it will harden once refrigerated. Pipe mounds of buttercream on once cookie, top with a matching macaron and twist a little to spread the filling. Refrigerate macarons for 24-48 hours before serving for the best flavor. Allow them to rest at room temperature about an hour before serving.

Makes 30 filled macarons, or about 60 individual shells.