

## **MINNIE MACARONS**

*(from the Bewitching Kitchen)*

*for the filling:*

280 g strawberries, stems removed  
140 g sugar  
1 lemon, juiced  
250 g white chocolate, chopped fine  
1/3 cup heavy cream (about 80g)  
1 tablespoon butter

*for the shells:*

198 g powdered sugar  
113 g almond meal  
113 g egg whites at room temperature  
a pinch of cream of tartar  
100 g granulated sugar  
Pink Gel color from AmeriColor  
2 drops vanilla extract

*to decorate:*

pink bows (melted Candy Melts with a drop of pink gel color)  
gold and pink sparkling sugar

*Make the filling:* Prepare fresh strawberry jam by mixing strawberries, sugar and lemon juice in a small saucepan. Cook for 30 minutes, mixing every once in a while. After 30 minutes cool and refrigerate. Reserve (you will not need the full amount). You can also use store-bought strawberry jam, if more convenient. Make a white chocolate ganache by mixing very hot heavy cream with the white chocolate cut into small pieces. Mix until fully dissolved. To that, add 1/4 cup of the strawberry jam prepared before, and the butter. Mix well and refrigerate until it's time to fill the macarons. If too thick, bring to room temperature for an hour or so, whisking a few times.

*Make the pink bows:* Melt about 1/3 cup candy melts in the microwave. Whisk until smooth, add a tiny drop of pink gel color. Place in a silicone mold and freeze until solid. Un-mold the

decorations, make another batch until you have enough. I made 14 Minnie macarons with this batch, and 16 regular round macarons that did not need the bow on top.

*Make the shells:* Line 2 or 3 heavy baking sheets with parchment paper or Silpat mats. Layer the powdered sugar and almond meal in a food processor. Pulse until the mixture looks like fine meal, about 15 seconds. Pass through a sieve and transfer to a small bowl. Set aside.

Place the egg whites and pinch of cream of tartar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Make sure that the bowl and the whisk are impeccably clean. Starting on low-speed, whip the whites with the cream of tartar until they look like light foam. The whites should not appear liquid. The foam will be light and should not have any structure.

Slowly rain in the granulated sugar, trying to aim the stream between the whisk and the side of the bowl. Turn the speed up to medium-high. Continue to whip the meringue until it is soft and shiny. It should look like marshmallow creme. Add the gel color and the vanilla. Staying at medium-high speed, whip the egg whites until the mixture begins to dull and the lines of the whisk are visible on the surface of the meringue. Check the peak. It should be firm. Transfer the whites to a medium bowl.

Fold in the almond meal mixture in three increments. Paint the mixture halfway up the side of the bowl, using the flat side of a spatula. Scrape the mixture down to the center of the bowl. Repeat two or three times, then check to see if the mixture slides slowly down the side of the bowl. Divide the mixture (eye-balling is fine) in two piping bags, one fitted with a 1/2 inch piping tip, the other fitted with a 1/4 inch tip. Pipe macaron rounds using the bigger tip, filling one full tray. Pipe small rounds as ears on each round using the smaller tip. Finish one full tray before starting another one.

Slam each sheet hard four to six times on the counter. Then fist bump each end of the sheet's underside twice. If using sparkling sugar, sprinkle over the macarons. Let the unbaked macarons dry until they look dull but not overly dry. Drying time depends on humidity. In a

dry climate, the macarons can dry in 15 to 20 minutes; in a humid climate, it can take 35 to 40 minutes.

While the macarons are drying, heat the oven to 300 F (170 C/gas mark 3). Bake one sheet at a time on the middle rack. Check in 11 minutes. If the tops slide, then bake for 2 to 3 more minutes. The macarons should release without sticking. Check one or two. If they stick, put them back in the oven for 1 to 2 more minutes. Let the macaroons cool for 10 minutes before removing from the pan.

*Assemble the macarons:* find two macarons similar in size and add a good amount of filling to the bottom of one of them. Place the other on top and squeeze gently to take the filling all the way to the edge. Glue to each macaron one little pink bow using melted white chocolate.

Store in the fridge for 24 hours for perfect texture.