

RED VELVET MACARONS

MAKES 24 MACARONS

The French *macaron* seems to have had a revival recently. Once only seen at old-school French patisseries or weddings, they've made a comeback, becoming one of the hottest dessert trends in America. The delicate meringue and almond cookie is seen everywhere in various flavors and colors and is often used to give as a gift or add to the décor of an event. Technique is important when making a macaron, so here is my variation on the popular cookie with some tips to help you along the way. **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** 2 pastry bags, #4 plain tip

1 cup confectioners' sugar

1 cup almond meal/flour

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

2 large egg whites

1/4 cup granulated sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted

1 bottle (1/4 ounce) red food coloring

1/2 recipe [Cream Cheese Frosting](#)

In a food processor, combine the confectioners' sugar, almond meal, and salt and process until finely ground. Sift the mixture into a large bowl, discarding any lumps or unground almond meal.

In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the egg whites on medium speed to medium peaks while slowly adding the granulated sugar. The sugar will stabilize the whites.

Sprinkle a small amount of the ground almond mixture over the meringue and gently fold it in with a rubber spatula. Add the meringue to the remaining almond mixture and gently fold in

with the spatula until well combined. Fold in the cocoa powder and food coloring.

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Line a 10 x 15-inch rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or a nonstick silicone liner.

Fit a pastry bag with a #4 plain tip and spoon in the batter. Pipe 1-inch rounds of batter on the baking sheet, spacing them 2 inches apart. (You'll get about 16 cookies per baking sheet. If you have a second baking sheet, line it and pipe more cookies. Otherwise bake them in three batches for a total of 48.) Let each sheet of cookies air-dry for 30 minutes before baking, to form a slight skin on top, so they will rise and form the characteristic "foot" when baked.

Bake the cookies until they have puffed up a little and look dry on top, 10 to 20 minutes. Let the cookies cool for 2 to 3 minutes on the baking sheet, then transfer to a wire rack.

To assemble the macarons, carefully flip the cookies over on the baking sheet so the bottoms are facing up. Fit a clean pastry bag with a #4 plain tip and fill with the frosting. Pipe frosting right out to the edge of the cookie on every other row of cookies. Top with an unfrosted cookie, flat side down. Serve right away or store in an airtight container for up to 1 week. (These freeze well, already filled and all. Wrap the container in plastic wrap to avoid ice crystals. Take the container out of the freezer and let it thaw in the refrigerator overnight before serving.)

INSIDER TIP • TANT POUR TANT

Macarons always start with what the French call *tant pour tant*, meaning equal parts (by weight) of almond meal and confectioners' sugar.

