Desserts / France

French Macarons

Gossamer almond shells that shatter at the tooth then melt into a chewy, jammy core — the product of aged egg whites, a precise batter, and the ruthless alchemy of the macaronage.

Time 180 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 g Almond flour (blanched, super-fine)
- ☐ 75 g Aged egg whites (room temperature)
- ☐ 25 g Water (for sugar syrup)
- ☐ 80 g Unsalted butter (softened, for filling)
- ☐ 100 g Icing sugar (powdered sugar, sifted)
- ☐ 75 g Caster sugar (fine granulated)
- ☐ 1 g Fine sea salt
- ☐ 160 g Icing sugar (for buttercream filling)

Let's make it.

01 Pulse almond flour and icing sugar together in a food processor for 30 seconds to eliminate any lumps and evenly combine. Sift through a fine-mesh sieve. Discard any large almond pieces that won't pass. The mixture should feel like talc — if it clumps, your almond flour is too moist; spread it on a sheet tray and dry in a 100 C oven for 10 minutes.

02 Cook caster sugar and water in a small saucepan to 118 C (soft-ball stage), without stirring. Meanwhile, whip the aged egg whites with salt to soft peaks on medium speed. When the syrup hits 118 C, increase mixer to high and pour the syrup in a thin, steady stream down the bowl wall (not onto the whisk). Whip on high for 8-10 minutes until the bowl is no longer hot to the touch and the meringue is stiff and glossy.

03 Add the tant-pour-tant to the Italian meringue in two additions. Macaronage: using a wide rubber spatula, fold by pressing the batter flat against the side of the bowl, then scooping from the bottom and folding over. Work decisively — this is not a gentle fold. You are deliberately deflating the meringue to achieve the correct flow. Perform roughly 40-50 strokes. Stop when the batter flows from the spatula in a thick, continuous ribbon that disappears back into the bowl within 10 seconds.

04 Pipe 3.5 cm rounds onto silicone-mat-lined baking sheets, spacing 3 cm apart. Tap the sheet firmly on the counter 3-4 times to release large air bubbles. Let rest at room temperature for 30-45 minutes until the surface forms a dry skin — it should not stick to your fingertip. Bake one sheet at a time at 150 C (fan-forced) for 14-16 minutes. Shells are done when they slide cleanly off the mat with no resistance at the base.

05 Beat the softened butter alone for 3 minutes until very pale and fluffy. Add icing sugar in three additions, beating for 1 minute between each. The finished buttercream should be smooth, ivory, and stiff enough to hold a peak but soft enough to pipe easily. Add 1 tsp of vanilla or other flavouring, and a pinch of salt to balance.

06 Match shells by size into pairs. Pipe a generous, even disc of buttercream onto the flat side of one shell, leaving a 2 mm border. Sandwich with its pair and press gently until the filling reaches the edge. Refrigerate, uncovered, for 24 hours — this is the 'maturation' step. The moisture from the filling softens the shell interior to its characteristic chewy texture. Bring to room temperature for 20 minutes before serving.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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