



# CHOCOLATE MACAROONS

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 10–12 minutes

Use: 2 large baking sheets, large pastry bag with 2cm (3/4 in) nozzle

- 125g (4 1/2 oz) ground almonds
- 25g (1oz) cocoa powder
- 250g (9oz) icing sugar
- 4 large egg whites, at room temperature
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 10g (1/2 oz) cocoa powder for dusting

## GANACHE

see Micah's Truffles, page 147

Whisk the egg whites until they are light and fluffy, add the reserved 25g (1oz) of icing sugar and continue to whisk until they are stiff and shiny but not dry. Gently fold the dry ingredients into the egg whites. Leave to rest for 10 minutes.

Stir the vanilla extract into the mixture, allowing it to deflate a little. This will help to stop the macaroons from cracking on top. Pour the mixture into the piping bag. Pipe the mixture on to the baking sheets in rounds the size of walnuts – try to make them as regular as possible. Tap the base of the baking sheets on a flat surface to remove some more of the air out of the macaroons. Sprinkle some cocoa on top of each one.

Put the first baking sheet on the top shelf of the oven and bake for 1 minute, and then reduce the temperature to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Cook the macaroons for a further 10–12 minutes or until they are obviously cooked but not gooey and are still soft to the touch.

About 1 minute after you have removed the baking sheet from the oven gently lift one end of the paper and immediately pour a splash of hot water under the paper. The hot baking sheet causes the water to form steam and makes it easy to remove the macaroons. Carefully peel the macaroons from the paper and place on a wire rack to cool. Repeat the process with the second batch.

Once the macaroons have cooled, sandwich two together with the Ganache.

Preheat the oven to 240°C/475°F/gas mark 9.

Butter the baking sheets and then line them with greaseproof paper or baking parchment with an overlap of about 2.5cm (1in) at either end. Prepare your pastry bag and nozzle.

Sift together the ground almonds, cocoa and 225g (8oz) of the icing sugar (reserving 25g/1oz of the icing sugar for the egg whites).

It is important that you have the correct amount of egg white for this recipe to work, so weigh out exactly 100g (3 1/2 oz) by carefully adding part of the fourth egg white to the other three. The best way to do this is to whisk the fourth white in a cup with a fork and then add enough to the other whites to up the amount.

**HINT:** The secret is to use 'old' egg whites that have been kept uncovered in a fridge for at least a week.



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