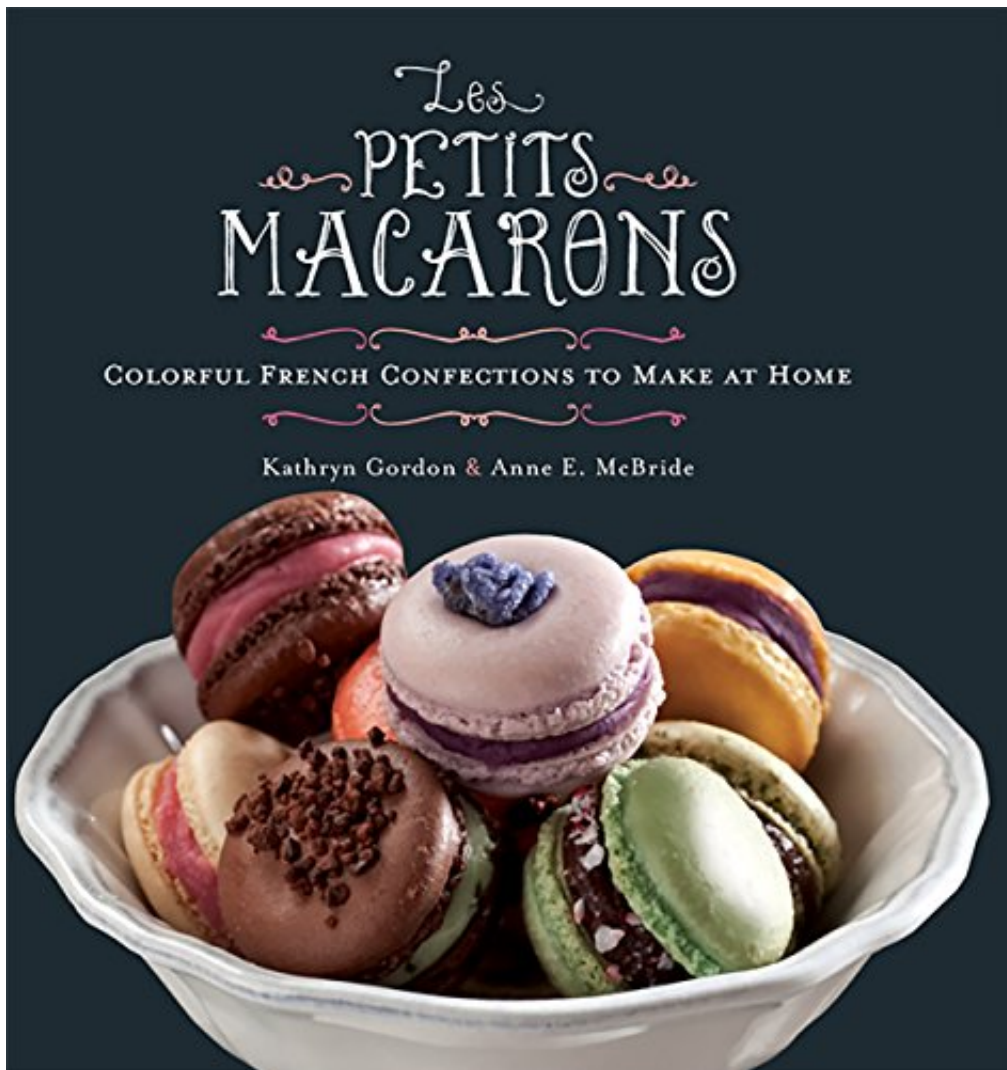


Les Petits Macarons: Colorful French Confections to Make at Home

by

Kathryn Gordon



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Synopsis

Les Petits Macarons is your ultimate and easy guide to making delectable, bakery-quality macarons - at home! Macarons have become a worldwide sensation, whether it be because of their dazzling assortment of colors, their associations with Parisian elegance, or just because they taste amazing! These delectable little delights may seem daunting for any home baker, but authors Kathryn Gordon and Anne E. McBride are here to demystify macarons. This book is like a private baking class in your very own kitchen, with careful, detailed instruction and recipes guaranteed to bring the flavors of France right to your door. It features dozens of flavor combinations, structured around three basic shell methods—French, Swiss, and Italian—with a never-before-seen Easiest French Macaron Method (and a convenient Troubleshooting Guide) that is sure to make macaron magic possible for anyone using nothing more than a mixer, an oven, and a piping bag. Shell flavors include: Pistachio, Blackberry, Coconut, Red velvet. With an array of fillings: Crunchy dark chocolate ganache, Lemon curd, Strawberry, guava, pate de fruit. There are even savory flavors like saffron, parsley, and ancho chile paired with fillings like hummus, foie gras with black currant, or duck confit with port and fig. Les Petits Macarons offers endless possibilities for everyone to enjoy!

Sort review

"Kathryn and Anne have put together a great collection of Parisian macarons, today's top must-have sweet indulgence."—Nick Malgieri, author of *Bake!* and *The Modern Baker* "I thought I had to go to Paris to find these luscious confections, but now I have them in my own kitchen. Thank you Kathryn and Anne for sharing the technique and demystifying the method! With these detailed recipes and clear explanations, we can all create dazzling French macarons in every imaginable flavor. A must for serious bakers."—Susan G. Purdy, author of *Pie in the Sky*, *Family Baker*, and *Have Your Cake & Eat it, Too* "This is a wonderful book on a on a mouth watering delicacy - macrons. I am amazed, impressed and educated with your contribution, research, diversity and skills. I enjoyed the simplicity and the depth of information in the book. Well done Kathryn."—Anil Rohira, World Pastry Champion --This text refers to an alternate kindle_edition edition. About the Author Kathryn Gordon is a professional baking instructor and chef with sold-out classes at the Institute of Culinary Education in New York City. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Anne E. McBride is the co-author of six books and the director of the Experimental Cuisine Collective at New York University. She lives in New Jersey. --This text refers to an alternate kindle_edition edition.

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Look inside the book

LesPETITS MACARONSCOLORFUL FRENCH CONFECTIONSTO MAKE AT HOMEKathryn Gordon & Anne E. McBrideRUNNING PRESSPHILADELPHIA • LONDON© 2011 by Kathryn Gordon and Anne E. McBridePhotographs © 2011 by Steve LegatoPublished by Running Press,A Member of the Perseus Books GroupAll rights reserved under the Pan-American and International Copyright ConventionsThis book may not be reproduced in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system now known or hereafter invented, without written permission from the publisher.Books published by Running Press are available at special discounts for bulk purchases in the United States by corporations, institutions, and other organizations. For more information, please contact the Special Markets Department at the Perseus Books Group, 2300 Chestnut Street, Suite 200, Philadelphia, PA 19103, or call (800) 810-4145, ext. 5000, or e-mail special.markets@perseusbooks.com.Library of Congress Control Number: 20109415449 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1Digit on the right indicates the number of this printingCover and interior design by Amanda RichmondEdited by Kristen Green WieworaTypography: Neutra and Mrs. EavesThe publisher would like to thank: Crate & Barrel, King of Prussia, PA; Manor Home & Gifts, Philadelphia, PA; Scarlett Alley, Philadelphia, PA; and Sur la Table, King of Prussia, PA; for graciously loaning merchandise to be used in the photography.Running Press Book Publishers2300 Chestnut StreetPhiladelphia, PA 19103-4371Visit us on the web!to JESSIE RILEY & RON McBRIDE,who indulge our macaron obsessionCONTENTSALL ABOUT MACARONS* A Brief History* Skin and Feet* The Four Main Ingredients* BEFORE YOU BAKE* BASE MACARON RECIPES* French Meringue Method* Italian Meringue Method* Swiss Meringue Method* Kathryn's Easiest French Macaron Method* SWEET SHELLS* SAVORY SHELLS* GANACHE FILLINGS* CREAMY FILLINGS* CARAMEL FILLINGS* FROZEN FILLINGS* FRUIT-BASED FILLINGS* FAVORITE AMERICAN CLASSICS* SAVORY FILLINGS* FOR LESS-THAN-PERFECT MACARONS* TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE* RESOURCES* ACKNOWLEDGMENTS* INDEXALL ABOUT MACARONSMacarons first capture our attention with tantalizing colors—light green, golden yellow, hot pink, or velvety brown—that give them the appearance of jewels in a pastry shop case. But they do not stand on looks alone. The contrast between their crisp shells and soft fillings make them the most perfect way to satisfy a craving. Evoking timeless images of polished Parisians nibbling in delicate tea salons or sophisticated pâtisseries, they transport us to a more elegant time and place in just two bites.I first began making macarons more than fifteen years ago, when I was working at The Rainbow Room in New York City. We served them as mignardises to diners who would momentarily turn away from the stunning views to admire them—a pleasure more instantaneous, more within reach. Ever since that time I've been fascinated with macarons, experimenting with different shell and filling flavors and always looking for them when traveling. I am fortunate to go to France every year, so my research is always fresh—and

delicious. Not all macarons are created equal. Some are light and airy, others almost cake-like. Some have almost no shell and are very delicate, and others have a very thick shell that resists the bite. In 2003, this interest led me to teach just one class on the subject at the Institute of Culinary Education in New York, where I had just begun working. Macarons have become so popular that I now offer a series of those classes, covering anything from savory to holiday macarons. I have also begun leading a macaron walking tour, for which I take students to various New York pastry shops. More recently, I have noticed more people asking about macarons because they are gluten-free, providing those suffering from celiac disease or gluten sensitivity with a treat they can consume without consequences. The macaron should be one of the easiest cookies to make; after all, it only includes four ingredients. It speaks to its complexity, then, and makes it even more special, that top-ranked pastry chefs around the world can't agree on how to combine these ingredients to turn them into the footed, smooth-shelled marvel we love. Different macaron production techniques have evolved, primarily related to the meringue component. But my theory is simply that chefs learned to make a macaron where they first trained—as I did. Under the “if it's not broke, don't fix it” theory, unless they encounter a persistent issue, I think that most chefs have not thought much about what really makes their favorite macaron method work, and simply believe their method to be the best one. The one technique they will probably agree on is the prolonged folding required to incorporate all the ingredients, called *macaronner* (more on this unusual technique in a moment). About twelve years ago, I was privileged to become involved in the World Pastry Forum, an annual gathering of professional chefs. This unparalleled access allowed me to interview every world-champion pastry chef I met about his or her method, to figure out what truly works and what can be fixed at various stages of the process. This book is a result of those discussions. It includes three different base methods for meringues, along with all the tips, tricks, and troubleshooting techniques I've ever come across. But one word of caution: Although experienced bakers do occasionally switch their production method (going from a French meringue to an Italian meringue base, for example), I believe strongly that there is no single holy grail. When you find the meringue procedure—and whatever additional tricks you might need—that works for you, stay with that base method. You may have a “bad macaron day,” as even the best *pâtisseries* confess to having. But the best approach is to practice that technique, keep a diary of what you did, and evolve flavor variations off that base.

MACARON OR MACAROONS? THE FRENCH-STYLE COOKIE (WHAT WE CALL THE PARISIAN MACARON, but in France refers to all sorts of macarons) is spelled with only one “o,” and pronounced mah-kah-rohn. The final syllable is a very nasal sound that doesn't quite exist in English, almost as if saying “round” but with lips tightly pursed, and the “nd” is silent. No syllable is emphasized. The American macaroon, pronounced mah-kah-ROON, refers most often to unleavened cookies made with sweetened coconut flakes or with almond paste.

A Brief History

The lore of macarons often suggests that Catherine de' Medici brought them to France in 1533 when she married Henry II. Many similar stories of imported foods and techniques revolve around her and her Italian chefs, not all of them true, so accurate or not, we'll accept that this is

part of the macaron's myth. The word macaron comes from the Italian *maccherone* or *macaroni*, which a 1650 volume, *Les Origines de la Langue Française*, defines as "a pasta dish with cheese." Macaron long referred not just to a cookie, but a savory preparation as well, which seems to have consisted of lumps of flour-based "paste" cooked with spices and grated cheese and served with a liquid. The Italian term itself is of Greek origin, from the word for kneading or mixing, from which "cook" and "baker" are then derived. *Maccare*, an Italian verb that signifies "to beat" or "to pound," is another related meaning. A 1673 French-English dictionary defines macaron as "little Fritter-like Buns, or thick Losenges, compounded of Sugar, Almonds, Rosewater, and Musk, pounded together, and baked with gentle fire." Almond-based foodstuffs were popular in the Middle Ages already. Macarons are often thought to have appeared in the eighth century in Venetian monasteries (after almonds arrived in Italy with the Arabs), with some sources also mentioning a French abbey in Cormery that supposedly began making them in 791, even though some believe that this particular macaron emerged only in the nineteenth century. One way or another, a cookie made from almonds and sugar became popular in France, where various cities, such as Paris, Reims, Montmorillon, Saint-Jean-de-Luz, and Amiens, went on to develop it into their own specialties. Nuns were often the driving force behind macarons, which they made for both nutritional and commercial purposes (baked goods, honey, and other such food products were a source of revenue for most monastic orders, which had very limited ways of making money). Such is the case in Nancy, another French city famous for its macarons, which are flatter than Parisian macarons and don't have a smooth surface. In the late eighteenth century, the nuns of Les Dames du Saint Sacrement's Convent, who were forbidden from eating meat, started making macarons because they were nutritious. After the closing of the convent at the French Revolution, two of the sisters began selling the macarons in order to make a living. They became legendary as "les Soeurs Macarons," (the Macaron Sisters) to the point that a street now bears that name in Nancy. By the middle of the seventeenth century, recipes for macarons had begun appearing in French cookbooks. François Pierre de La Varenne's *Le Pâtissier François*, published in 1653, mentions macarons several times as elements of other recipes, seemingly to give them body (they continue to appear through the nineteenth century at least). The 1692 *Nouvelle Instruction pour les Confitures, les Liqueurs, et les Fruits* states that macarons are a combination of sweet almonds, sugar, and egg white, and offers instructions that include flavoring the batter with orange blossom water and icing them once baked, if desired. From that point on, macarons appear regularly in cookbooks. And if nineteenth century books about Paris are to be believed, by then the city was teeming with macaron street vendors. The macaron as we now best know it—two shells sandwiching a filling—is a more recent invention. Ladurée, the famed Parisian tea salon and pastry shop perhaps most associated with them today, was founded in 1862, but it was not until the early twentieth century that Pierre Desfontaines, second cousin of Louis Ernest Ladurée, had the idea of piping ganache on a shell and topping it with another. It is now the ubiquitous way to sell and serve Parisian-style macarons—called *gerbet*, a name that still appears today—around the globe, and

perhaps only the blue box of Tiffany's rivals Ladurée's elegant green box in the gasp it might inspire. WHAT SHOULD A PARISIAN MACARON LOOK AND TASTE LIKE? SINCE MACARONS ARE SO SPECIALIZED, PEOPLE ARE NOT ALWAYS sure of what to expect when eating a macaron, let alone when baking one. They might never have eaten one before and have no point of reference. Look for three things: * A SLIGHTLY SHINY, THIN SHELL WITH A SLIGHT CRUNCH that resists the teeth for a second when you bite into it; it should not be so delicate that it melts into the filling, or so thick that it is mostly crust; * A PROPORTIONAL, NARROW FOOT AROUND THE SHELL of the macaron, certainly not non-existent; and * AN INTERIOR THAT IS SOFT, MOIST, AND ONLY SLIGHTLY CHEWY (excessive chewiness can be a sign of excessive baking time); the shell and filling, eaten together, should not be excessively sweet.

Skin and Feet Yes, macarons have been very much anthropomorphized— that's how much we chefs care about them. The crust of the macaron shell is often called its "skin" in the pre- or early baking stages. When you very gently touch the piped shell after it has dried for a while (in or out of the oven), you can feel a barrier with your finger. It will feel a little dry, like a crust only about a hair's width thick. As the meringue expands in the oven, it pushes outward and upward. This expansion results in the formation of a foot: a round, even circle at the bottom of the shell that has more texture and is about two millimeters thick. Feet will not form in an oven that is too hot, where the macaron bakes too quickly and the crust itself cannot form properly. In such a case, the interior batter will still be moist, causing steam and therefore some bubbling; cracking is a typical result. Some recipes advocate leaving the piped shells out for a few hours before baking, which lets them form a skin that then helps create crispy shells and proper feet. But macarons, like all meringues, are very sensitive to humidity: sugar attracts the moisture that is in the air. Other chefs believe that by letting the macarons form a skin at room temperature, moisture from the air may land on the shell, and instead might cause cracks to form. That's the theory I subscribe to. Christian Godineau, a pastry chef and owner of La Duchesse Anne in Saumur, France, taught me to put them in a very low temperature oven immediately after piping, to allow the skin to form in a dry environment. Then, when the skin has formed, I increase the heat to a typical temperature and the macaron shells begin baking.

THE ANATOMY OF A MACARON

SKIN: The hair's width-thick crust of the macaron, which forms as the piped shell dries in the oven.

FOOT: A textured ring around the base of the shell, which forms as moisture in the macaron turns to steam and rises.

The Four Main Ingredients As we've established, macarons might have few ingredients, but each one carries much importance in the complete baking process. Here are some thoughts on each of the four main players, as well as on the supporting cast that contributes to making perfect—or nearly perfect—macarons.

Almond Flour Almond flour, or almond meal, is simply almonds that are ground into an extremely fine powder. The almonds are usually blanched (de-skinned) before grinding, but not always. The whiter your almond flour, the whiter your final macarons, but unblanched almond flour will result in macarons that are just as tasty. Commercially milled flour is usually finer than home-ground almonds, but never as fine as wheat flour. It should be very dry and powdery when you rub some

in your fingers. If one brand isn't working for you, or seems oily, try a different brand (see Resources, page 257, for mail-order options if the ones you find locally are not yielding good results). It can go rancid, so I divide it and store it in freezer-safe resealable plastic bags in the freezer. Commercially ground pistachio and hazelnut flours are also available.

DRYING ALMOND FLOUR SLIGHTLY WET OR OILY ALMOND FLOUR CAN CAUSE CRACKED MACARON shells. If you store your flour in the refrigerator or freezer, drying it before using—to remove any moisture from storage—will improve the structure and shape of your macarons and reduce the risk of cracks. Preheat the oven to 200°F (95°C). Spread the almond flour on a baking sheet and bake it for 30 minutes. Remove the flour from the oven and let it cool completely before proceeding with the recipe.

Confectioners' Sugar Confectioners' sugar is one of the key elements of macarons. Its fine structure means that it is completely incorporated into the ground nuts, creating what is called *tant-pour-tant* in pastry: an equal percentage of almond flour and confectioners' sugar that is at the base of many cookies. It contributes to the macaron's smooth texture by dissolving quickly into egg whites. American confectioners' sugar contains cornstarch to keep it from clumping. Certain French chefs import their own starch-free confectioners' sugar from France in order to make macarons here, but regular supermarket confectioners' sugar (used in all the recipes in this book) works just fine. Wrap any leftover confectioners' sugar tightly so that it does not clump up until your next baking session, and store it at room temperature.

Granulated Sugar Granulated sugar is the pure white form of sugar that is used to build the meringue structure of the macaron in combination with egg whites. Some chefs prefer to use superfine sugar instead, believing that the finer crystal size helps form a stable meringue more quickly when combining with the water and protein from the egg whites. The recipes here use regular granulated sugar, but if you feel like experimenting, try using superfine sugar in French or Swiss meringues (it won't matter much for Italian meringue because the sugar is cooked into a fully dissolved syrup).

Egg Whites Egg whites provide the proteins necessary to the structure of macarons. Water constitutes 90 percent of the egg white, and protein makes up the rest. When air is beaten into it, it foams up. As Harold McGee explains it in *On Food and Cooking*, the white's proteins "unfold and bond to each other." Aged egg whites, in which some of the water has evaporated and proteins have thinned, foam more quickly and generally produce smoother, more even macarons. See the Note on Egg Whites (opposite) for details on aging your eggs before baking.

When whisking egg whites, a medium speed will result in more stability than a meringue whipped quickly strictly on high speed. However, I always turn the mixer speed up to high at the very end of the process for about three seconds, to obtain the maximum volume before incorporating the dry ingredients.

NOTE ON EGG WHITES "AGED" EGG WHITES HAVE A CONCENTRATED PROTEIN STRUCTURE that works best when forming the meringue that is the macarons' whole infrastructure. Fresh eggs make for a less solid shell structure that can cause macarons to crack or not take shape properly. You can safely age egg whites in the refrigerator for several days, especially since they are then baked. Even if you don't have time to do so (sometimes you just must make macarons right now), letting them sit a few hours on your

kitchen counter before baking will help, as will the addition of powdered egg white (see page 20). Two to five days before baking macarons, separate four egg whites. Place them in a container, whisk them until they are thoroughly combined, and cover the top of the container with plastic wrap. Poke holes in the plastic wrap so that air can reach the whites and evaporate some of their water content, and leave them refrigerated until ready to bake. Remove them from the refrigerator two hours before baking, so that they reach room temperature and can whip to a high volume. Measure the exact amount of egg white needed before using, whisking them again if needed.

Supporting Ingredients

POWDERED EGG WHITE: Powdered egg white is a pasteurized product created by freeze-drying egg whites to extract their water. You will find it in the baking aisle of most supermarkets (Just Whites is a popular brand) or online. I use it when making French meringue-based macarons, which tend to spread a bit more than Swiss or Italian, but also add a small quantity (from just a pinch up to about ¼ teaspoon per egg white) if the weather is very humid, regardless of the method used. If you are located in a very dry climate, you won't need powdered egg white for anything but Kathryn's Easiest French Macaron Method. Adding dehydrated powdered egg white to fresh egg whites strengthens the protein bonds that form when beating them, since proportionately, there is less water per egg. You can also use it if you haven't had a chance to age your eggs for several days: add ½ teaspoon of egg white powder per egg white that you need in the recipe, whisking it into the "real" egg whites before proceeding.

CREAM OF TARTAR: Adding acid, such as cream of tartar or lemon juice, at the beginning of the egg whipping process helps stabilize the egg white foam and prevents overwhipping the meringue. The acid can be particularly helpful if you are making meringue with freshly separated egg whites (unaged). You can whip a glossy, non-grainy meringue without cream of tartar in most situations, but if you have it, use it: the resulting meringue will be firmer and more stable.

SALT: Salt acts as a flavor balancer and enhancer in nut-based recipes. I add it in with the recipe's other dry ingredients so it does not affect the foaming power of the egg whites. I prefer fine sea salt for all baking, which easily dissolves in batters, and use salt from France because I have found it to be the most flavorful. Baleine, a fine sea salt formed by natural evaporation, is available in most grocery stores and sold in cylindrical blue canisters. When flavor and texture both matter, such as with salted caramel fillings, you need to use fleur de sel—"flower of the sea." This salt is hand-raked off shallow clay beds near Brittany, a process that raises its price tag; it is a finishing salt, meant to be added to a savory dish once it is cooked. When used in caramels and ganaches, it is often stirred in, but can also be sprinkled on top of a filling or a shell; its strong flavor and crunchy texture providing maximum impact.

FOOD COLORING: A major appeal of macarons is their colorful appearance, which typically indicates their flavor. A pink macaron will taste like strawberry or raspberry, a yellow one like mango, a green one like pistachio, and a dark brown one like chocolate. Colorings exist in liquid, gel, paste, or powder form (see Resources, page 257). You will find liquid coloring in the baking aisle of most supermarkets, but usually only in basic colors. When we specify a type of color, such as mint green, we refer to the colorings found in specialty baking stores, which carry a wide range

of types and shades of food colorings. You can use basic colorings instead; the shells' colors will just not be as subtle and your range of possible colors might be more limited. I prefer gels to liquids, but either will work so use what you like best or have on hand. Traditional light pastel colors can be achieved with just a few drops of liquid or gel, but the deepest colors, particularly jewel-tone shades or dark solids, such as black, require powders. It would take too much liquid coloring to achieve those results, which would destabilize the structure of the meringue. Add in the liquid, gel, or paste coloring towards the end of the macaronnage stage (page 26), when the batter appears to be about two-thirds mixed. If you add the food color too early, the air you are whisking into the batter will lighten the color (for example, red may turn pink). It will also keep you from overfolding the batter. Pulse powdered colors in the food processor together with the confectioners' sugar and almond flour at the beginning of the process.

FLAVOR COMPOUNDS: Concentrated flavor compounds allow you to flavor macaron shells without changing the composition of the ingredients and adding too much liquid to the base. Think of them as "super gels," with a ketchup-like consistency. They are sold in jars and exist in a wide range of flavors, such as passion fruit, violet, and licorice. These compounds are typically sold wholesale, but a number of retailers are now offering quantities small enough for home bakers. see Resources, page 257, for addresses. To use them, fold 3 tablespoons (60 grams) of the compound into the macaron base (any method will do) just before it reaches the macaronnage stage.

Before You Bake Read this section carefully before baking your first batch of macarons, and continue to revisit it as you get more and more familiar with the techniques and recipes. The more knowledge and practice you have, the higher your rate of success.

For Macaron Shells

MEASURING INGREDIENTS: Everyone measures dry ingredients differently, which is why using weight measurements ensures the most precision in baking. The recipes in this book give you both options: to use a scale (digital scales can be found in most kitchenware and department stores for about \$30) or measuring cups and spoons. Dry ingredients, such as flour, are often ingredients in which wide variations in measurements appear, since it depends on how much you pack into the measuring cup, how aerated the flour is, or if you scoop it into the cup or dip the cup into the flour bag, for example. The same is true of confectioners' sugar.

IN ALL THE RECIPES IN THIS BOOK, nut flours and confectioners' sugar were measured by firmly packing the ingredient into a measuring cup, as you would brown sugar. The eggs used are large.

PARCHMENT PAPER VS. SILICONE MATS: You can use parchment paper and obtain great macarons. I prefer using silicone baking mats (available for about \$20 alongside baking equipment in most department and kitchenware stores; Silpat is a popular brand), which disperse the heat of the oven more evenly on the baking sheet and shield the bottom of the macarons better, since they are thicker than parchment paper. These mats should not be cut or stored folded, and are dishwasher safe. If possible, purchase at least two; this will allow you to immediately pipe a new batch of macarons while the ones just out of the oven cool on the mat. Parchment paper will flap around in a convection oven and ruin the smooth shells of the macarons. If you are baking in a convection oven, pipe a dab of batter under each of the four

corners of the parchment paper; this will hold it in place. There is no need to do that with silicone baking mats, which are heavier.

IN RECIPES THAT USE AN ELECTRIC MIXER—including the base recipes—“medium” speed means medium on the high side, not low side, of mixer speeds. Speed levels vary from machine to machine, but this will be between 4 and 6.

WHIPPING EGG WHITES: When whipping a small amount of egg whites in a stand mixer, the whisk attachment might not make contact right away with the whites if the bowl is too big. To remedy that, lift the bowl slightly with your hands and hold it in place as the whisk turns for a minute or so, until the process looks to be underway.

MACARONNER (FOLDING THE INGREDIENTS TOGETHER): Folding the dry ingredients into the meringue is the key to obtaining the right structure for macarons. Not incorporating them enough might result in a meringue that is too strong to allow the formation of the feet and popped-up crust that characterize macarons, while folding them too much will cause the shells to crack or spread unevenly. You probably already know how to incorporate non-homogenous ingredients together through folding if you have made a cake or a mousse; this is often referred to as “J folding” (see box). Unlike most cake batters, which instruct you to fold “until just incorporated,” here you will need to fold the ingredients until the batter is loose enough to drip down from the spatula back to the bowl in one continuous lava-like flow, which takes slightly longer than you might expect. This special step is called macaronner (also referred to here as the macaronnage stage or process). During the macaronnage process, you need to look for the beginning of movement in the batter; it will become slack, or loose, and just slightly shiny. To test that the viscosity is correct, once the ingredients appear to be just combined, use the spatula to lift some of the mixture about 3 inches above the bowl. If it retains a three-dimensional shape, fold it briefly again. Test repeatedly every time you stir, to make sure that you are not overmixing. When folded just enough, the mixture should fall right back into the bowl, with no stiffness, in one continuous drip. Folding by hand, it should take about 18 folds to complete this process. To double-check that the batter’s viscosity is correct, slam the mixer bowl firmly on the counter: the batter should move and not hold a three-dimensional shape.

“J” FOLDING IS THE TERM USED WHEN COMBINING TWO OR MORE non-homogenous ingredients together, quickly and efficiently, by drawing a spatula through the middle of a batter as if forming the letter “J.” See photos of the step-by-step technique below.

1. Bring the spatula down the middle of the batter.
2. Scrape it up toward the left-side quarter of the bowl (9 o’clock), forming the letter “J.”
3. Rotate the bowl by 90 degrees and repeat the steps above.
4. Continue rotating the bowl and folding, so that in four folds you will have incorporated the ingredients in all four quadrants of the bowl.

PIPING TIPS: Piping macarons of different sizes onto the same baking sheet will yield poor results, because little ones will be hard and dry before the large ones are fully cooked. Even experienced production bakers often use a piping guide under the parchment paper or silicone baking mat to ensure even piping. We’ve made a downloadable guide available on our website, [. You can also make your own:](#) Draw one circle of the size desired, and then use it as a stencil to draw circles on a sheet of paper the size of your baking sheet, drawing the circles about 1½ inches apart (to allow for spreading) across and down.

Photocopy your guide so that you always have one handy. A proper pastry bag will be the easiest tool to use to pipe. You can buy disposable ones in the baking aisle of most supermarkets, in specialty baking stores, and in the cake decorating aisle of craft stores. Resealable plastic bags are harder to handle, but will still work better than spoons. You can use two teaspoons or a ½-inch scoop if you are really averse to piping; the shells might not be as smooth, however. When making mini, ½-inch macarons, cut a small, ¼-inch hole straight across the tip of the pastry piping bag. For small (1 inch or 3 centimeters) or large (2 inches or 6 centimeters) macarons, you will get the most consistent piping results with a ½-inch-wide piping tip. After a bit of practice, you will also obtain great results without the tip, by simply cutting a ½-inch opening straight across the bag (a precise, straight cut is key). To refill the pastry bag with more batter cleanly and easily, open the bag up and put it in a measuring cup to hold it in place. This will free up both your hands for refilling. If you have more batter than will fit in your oven to bake at one time or to leave in your pastry bag, cover it so that it does not dry out and form a skin. Place a small piece of plastic wrap or waxed paper directly on the batter until you can pipe it.

BAKING TIPS: Professional kitchens abound with baking sheets, but that's not always the case with home kitchens. We've obtained the most consistent results when baking macaron shells on two baking sheets. If your oven bakes unevenly and your macarons consistently slope to one side, for example, invest in a third baking sheet, since it will resolve that problem by properly dispersing the heat that causes it. Rotating the baking sheets front to back as you increase the oven temperature after 15 minutes and rotate them again halfway through the second baking period, and even from the top to the bottom rack and vice versa in extreme cases, also helps. If you have enough baking sheets to bake two batches of macarons at once, you may need to rotate them from top to bottom as well as front to back, if the top batch turns darker than the bottom one.

COOLING AND REMOVAL: Macaron shells are very delicate and subject to overheating, so after removing the baking sheets from the oven, immediately slide the silicone mat or parchment paper onto a cooling rack, your kitchen counter, or wherever you can! Careful steaming can be helpful to loosen the shells. Lift the edge of the silicone mat or parchment carefully with a dry towel, and immediately pour 1 to 2 tablespoons of water under the mat or paper. Shake the baking sheet quickly, to create steam under the whole surface; this will help detach the macarons. Let the macarons cool completely before attempting to remove them, because they are inclined to crack when warm. If you are lucky, they lift up without problems. If they stick slightly, you may need a metal off-set spatula to help slide them off by placing the spatula under the macaron and applying downward pressure, without pushing up into the shell. If the macarons appear very dry or are hard to remove from the parchment paper, place them in the freezer for two hours or leave them out at room temperature for up to one day before filling them.

FILLING TIPS: If you like more filling in your macaron, or are piping fillings that are a little looser in texture and need to be secured, carefully make an indentation in the underside of the shell by pushing it in with your thumb. You can then pipe or spoon the filling in this space, giving it more real estate in the shell. Spread thicker, slightly chunky fillings on the shells with a spoon or a butter knife.

Smooth fillings can be piped: Spoon it into a pastry bag, only filling it halfway, and cut a ½-inch opening at the tip (or use a ½-inch-wide piping tip). Pipe the filling on half of the shells, then top with another shell, and twist the sandwiched macaron slightly to secure the filling. Most of the fillings in this book make 1 pint. Those with smaller yields are rich enough that a smaller amount suffices to fill the macarons; are paired with another filling; or need to be piped or spooned in smaller amounts, otherwise the sandwiched shells would slide apart.

REFRIGERATING TIPS: Keep macarons, filled or unfilled, in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to three days. You can also wrap them tightly in plastic wrap. Bring them to room temperature before eating them, leaving them wrapped or boxed as they warm up to release any moisture that may have collected on the shells.

FREEZING TIP: Macarons filled with ganache, buttercream, or ice cream freeze very well—and taste delicious that way. They might even become a dangerous addiction, particularly since the freezer will keep them available at all times. Wrap them with plastic wrap in groups of six and put them in a container so that they don't get crushed. Store them in the freezer for up to one month. When removing them from the freezer, let them thaw out in the container, still wrapped. Moisture that is released as they warm up will cling to the plastic wrap rather than to the macarons, and they will remain crispy. Don't freeze macarons filled with pastry cream or fruit-based fillings, which will become too soggy when thawing out.

BASE MACARON RECIPES

Parisian-style macarons are traditionally meringue-based, which means that they contain egg whites and sugar combined in an airy mixture that will rise and then crisp upon baking. Three different methods exist for meringues: Italian, French, and Swiss. Their variations depend on how the sugar is added to the egg whites and whether or not the sugar is heated. Most cookbooks offer just one recipe for macarons, because each chef has his or her favorite and tends to advocate for that one only. Although we have our favorite, too, here we offer recipes for each of the meringue methods, so that you can test them and determine not only which one you prefer, but which one works best for your skills and your equipment.

A key difference among the methods resides in the way in which the ideal protein structure of the meringue is achieved. For a Swiss meringue, the egg whites are cooked with the sugar; in an Italian meringue, the cooked sugar syrup is poured into the egg whites as they are being whipped; and in a French meringue, the egg whites and sugar are beaten together cold. Many production bakers prefer Italian meringue because it is the most consistently reliable. The Swiss meringue will be particularly useful if you have trouble with either method because of a less-than-reliable oven, since it combines the advantages of the other two methods (but makes for a stiffer meringue that can be harder to pipe).

Other than Kathryn's Easiest French Macaron Method (page 35), French meringue is the simplest one, since it requires minimal equipment and no manipulation of hot sugar. The degree to which the egg whites are pre-cooked—or not—varies within these methods. That's not critical, because the macarons will all fully bake in the oven, regardless of how they start out. For all meringue methods, however, the most important point is to get the meringue "right." It shouldn't be overwhipped (which could result in cracked shells), or break down, which will make it difficult to incorporate the dry ingredients, resulting in low yield and/or

spreading issues. It is important to obtain the glossy, smooth, good-bodied meringue with a firm peak that forms the infrastructure of the macaron. You will find the base recipes to be extremely detailed. It does not mean that making macarons is beyond the reach of anyone but the most accomplished pastry chef—on the contrary—but rather, we want to share with you all the tricks learned through more than fifteen years of making macarons.

THE FIRST TIME YOU MAKE MACARONS AT HOME, pipe and bake just a couple once your batter is ready. This will allow you to troubleshoot any oven or batter issues before baking the full batch. If they do not bake perfectly, consult the Troubleshooting Guide, page 249.

PREPARATION EQUIPMENT
2 baking sheets
Silicone mats or parchment paper
Food processor
Fine-mesh strainer
Waxed paper
Hand whisk
Electric mixer with whisk and paddle attachments
Candy thermometer
Heatproof spatula
Pastry bag with ½-inch round tip (or new disposable pastry bag)
Cooling rack

Preheat the oven to 200°F (95°C). Stack 2 (18 x 13-inch) baking sheets on top of one another. Line the top baking sheet with a silicone mat or parchment paper. Cut additional sheets of parchment paper, if using, at the dimensions of the baking sheet to pipe additional batches. Place a piping guide (see page 29) under the silicone mat or parchment paper.

To proceed with the **FRENCH MERINGUE METHOD**, turn to **PAGE 40**. To proceed with the **ITALIAN MERINGUE METHOD**, turn to **PAGE 45**. To proceed with the **SWISS MERINGUE METHOD**, turn to **PAGE 51**. To proceed with **KATHRYN'S EASIEST FRENCH METHOD**, turn to **PAGE 55**.

SUMMARY OF BAKING TIMES BY SIZE
MINIS (½ inch or 1 centimeter): 200°F (105°C) for 15 minutes. Increase the heat to 350°F (175°C) and bake for another 6 minutes.
SMALL (1 inch or 3 centimeters): 200°F (105°C) for 15 minutes. Increase the heat to 350°F (175°C) and bake for another 9 minutes.
LARGE (2 inches or 6 centimeters): 200°F (105°C) for 15 minutes. Increase the heat to 350°F (175°C) and bake for another 9 minutes. Reduce the heat to 300°F (150°C) and bake for 7 to 8 more minutes.

IN ALL FILLING PAIRING SUGGESTIONS, these unflavored shells are referred to as Almond Shells.

BASE MACARON RECIPE: French Meringue Method
French meringue is the most basic of meringue methods, the one you probably used before if you've made angel food cake or meringue cookies. The sugar is not heated, but rather is whisked with the egg whites. It takes slightly longer for the meringue to form but does not require a candy thermometer. Many pastry chefs make their French meringue by gradually adding the sugar once the soft peak stage is reached. I have found that this can sometimes make for a looser meringue, causing the shells to spread, so I prefer adding the sugar at the beginning of the whipping process. It can reduce the volume capacity of the egg whites, but makes for a firmer meringue, and makes it more difficult for the novice baker to overwhip it. Because this type of shell is more prone to spreading, I add powdered egg whites to strengthen the protein structure.

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Macarons

What people say about this book

Waves, "Outstanding, authentic and professionally written. Best book for creating perfect Macarons.. Outstanding. This is the best Macaron cookbook ever written with clear and concise instructions. I have a collection of hundreds of cookbooks. This one is a treasure. Not only is it written by a professional but the recipes are authentic French not recipes rewritten by bloggers. When you buy a book always look for one that has been written by a chef, Not only a chef but a chef from one of the highly respected culinary schools not a trade school. There is a huge difference between a highly skilled culinary school and a trade school program. Not only is Kathryn professionally trained at one of the country's best schools but she travels often to France to learn and to teach. She is a guest instructor at Le Moulin Bregeon in the Loire Valley in France where she teaches a week's course in pastry. I travel to France often and can say the Macarons in this book equal those of the famed LaDuree, the gold standard, in Paris. Kathryn teaches classes for home cooks at ICE culinary school in New York City. Her classes fill quickly."

Nika, "Best Book For Enthusiastic Beginners. I bought so many books for macarons (Secrets of macarons, Pierre Herme, LaDuree etc.) with wonderful recipes, but this is definitely the only book you really need to learn how to do it, if you want the perfect macarons. It explains the different methods to make macarons, the French, the Italian, the Swiss and an own one. With the Italian method my macarons turned out as perfect as the ones from Pierre Herme or LaDuree. But anyone who is starting: be patient with yourself. Creating macarons needs practice. It took me 10 trials until I was able to get them the way they are supposed to."

Cheryl Drummond, "Informative. Helpful book"

Marek Karasiewicz, "Five Stars. super book for everyone - everything You want to know about macarons! worth buying!"

Annie, "Nice little book. Not tried the recipes yet but instructions look clear and attractive pictures."

The book by Kathryn Gordon has a rating of 5 out of 4.6. 1,259 people have provided feedback.

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