

Lime & Basil Macarons

Ingredients

Makes about 36 macarons

For the filling - lime-basil cream:

7 large basil leaves (also called sweet basil)
2 tbsp water
1½ tsp granulated sugar

2 large eggs
2/3 cup granulated sugar
2 limes, zest finely grated and juice extracted (about 2 tbsp lime zest and 1/3 cup juice)
Basil puree (above)
1 gelatine sheet
30 g almond meal

For the shells:

3 large egg whites, aged for at least 24 hours
125 g almond meal
210 g powdered sugar
Zest of 2 limes, very finely grated (using a Microplane is best)
30 g granulated sugar
Green and yellow gel food coloring

Method

To make the filling:

Bring about 1 cup water to a boil (using a kettle, the microwave, or the stovetop). Fill a small bowl with cold water and add 2-3 ice cubes in it.

Wash and dry the basil leaves. Plunge the leaves in boiling water for 5 seconds, then fish out the leaves and immediately transfer to ice cold water. Once they are cool, take the basil leaves out of the cold water and pat them dry with paper towels.

In a small microweavable container, heat 2 tbsp water with 1½ tsp sugar until boiling so the sugar dissolves. Add the basil leaves and use a hand mixer to puree the mixture. Reserve.

Place the gelatin sheet in a bowl of cold water for 15 minutes so it becomes soft and ready to use. Bring a large pot of water to a boil - no need to fill the pot, 1-2 inches of water in the bottom of the pot is enough. In large a stainless steel bowl (that will comfortably sit over the pot of boiling water), whisk together the eggs, sugar, lime zest and juice and basil puree. Set over the pot of boiling water (bain-marie, or water bath method) and whisk continuously until the mixture reaches 183°F [84°C].

Pass the mixture through a strainer to get rid of the lime zest and bigger basil leaf bits, then transfer back into a mixing bowl. Whisk in the softened gelatin sheet and then use a hand mixer to mix for 10 minutes. If the mixture seems too thick (if it doesn't seem to move around the mixer easily) add a bit of warm water, 1 tbsp at a time, being very careful not to add too much. The mixture should have a loose pudding consistency. Add the almond meal and mix thoroughly. Transfer the



Recipe Credit: Shells: Based on a basic recipe by Pure Gourmandise / Lime-Basil Cream: Adapted from Pierre Hermé.

Photo Credit: Marie Asselin

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Lime & Basil Macarons (cont'd)

mixture to a small bowl and cover by putting plastic wrap directly on the surface of the cream. Refrigerate until set and cold (at least 5 hours or overnight).

To make the shells:

Take the egg whites out of the refrigerator about an hour before making the macarons to bring them back to room temperature. Line two doubled baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside.

Place the almond meal, powdered sugar and lime zest in the bowl of a food processor. Finely grind the two together for a minute or two. Stop the processor, scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl, and process again for a minute. After processing the powdered sugar and almond meal, carefully sieve the mixture but keep any zest that doesn't go through the sieve (you want that flavor in your macarons!). Reserve the almond-sugar mixture.

Put the egg whites in a large stainless steel bowl. Beat at medium/high speed with a handheld or stand mixer. Once they start to get bubbly and white and the whisk is lightly leaving marks, slowly add the granulated sugar. Keep on beating until stiff peaks form.

Add 4 drops green and 2 drops yellow food coloring (or to taste) to the egg whites along with a third of the almond-sugar mixture. Fold to incorporate by sliding a rubber spatula down to the bottom of the bowl and gently bringing it back to the top. Keep on adding the almond-sugar mixture a third at a time until everything is incorporated, always folding gently and never beating.

Pour the batter in a pastry bag fitted with a round ½-inch tip, then pipe equal rounds of batter on the parchment-lined baking sheets. Let rest for 20-30 minutes before baking.

Preheat oven to 300°F (150°C). When the shells have rested enough, bake for about 15 minutes, or until the shells are firm on their feet when lightly tapped.

Let cool the shells completely, then remove from parchment paper. Fill with lime-basil cream, then refrigerate for 24 hours before eating. Enjoy within the next 5 days for the best texture and flavor.

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For detailed how-to instructions, troubleshooting advice and a video, visit: <http://foodnouveau.com/macarons>

