

THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES



Green Pig Macarons (Green Tea Macarons with Vanilla Bean Swiss Meringue Buttercream) (adapted from Thomas Keller and Sebastien Rouxel's *Bouchon Bakery* via Annie's Eats)

Makes 24 sandwich cookies

The very small amounts of almond meal, powdered sugar, and egg whites are for the white eyes. If you're just making regular green tea macarons, you can skip that.

Where I went wrong with the batter was adding too much meringue. Once I got to the point where I had thick ribbons of batter, it was definitely too much meringue and the batter was too loose, spreading on the baking sheet. All I can recommend to correct this, until I gain more experience with macaron-making, is that you watch for VERY thick ribbons of batter falling off the spatula.

Green tea cookies:

212 grams almond meal, plus 16 grams
212 grams powdered sugar, plus 16 grams
1½ teaspoons matcha powder
82 and 90 grams egg whites, plus 6 grams (about 6 eggs total)
236 grams granulated sugar, plus ¼ teaspoon
158 grams water

Vanilla bean buttercream:

2 egg whites
½ cup (3.5 ounces) granulated sugar (vanilla sugar if you have it)
pinch table salt
12 tablespoons (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, softened
seeds from ½ vanilla bean
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. For the cookies: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and place a rack in the middle of the oven. Line baking sheets with parchment paper. Fit one pastry bag with a ½-inch round tip and two with ¼-inch round tips (for the white eyes and the green ears and nose).
2. In a large bowl, combine the 212 grams almond meal, 212 grams powdered sugar, and matcha powder. Whisk together to blend and break up any clumps. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and pour in 82 grams of the egg whites. Blend the egg whites into the dry ingredients until evenly mixed. The mixture will be thick and paste-like. For the white eyes, in a small bowl, mix together the 16 grams of powdered sugar, 16 grams of almond meal, and 6 grams of egg whites.
3. Combine 236 grams granulated sugar and the water in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. When the temperature is around 210 degrees, combine the 90 gram portion of egg whites with ¼ teaspoon sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer. Begin whipping on medium-low speed. Continue whipping the whites on medium speed until they form soft peaks. If soft peaks are achieved before the syrup reaches the target temperature, reduce the speed to low to keep the whites moving.

4. Once the syrup reaches 248 degrees, immediately remove it from the heat. Increase the mixer speed to medium and pour the syrup down the side of the bowl in a slow drizzle until fully incorporated. Increase the mixer speed to medium-high and whip the meringue until stiff, glossy peaks form.
5. Add one third of the meringue mixture to the bowl with the almond mixture with the matcha. Fold in gently until the mixture is smooth. A bit at a time, gently fold in the remaining meringue until the batter is smooth and runs in thick ribbons off of the spatula. You may not need all of the meringue, so add it gradually. Repeat the process with the white batter.
6. Add most of the green batter to the pastry bag with the ½-inch tip. Hold the bag perpendicular to the baking sheet about ½-inch above the surface of the pan. Steadily pipe rounds about ¼- to 1½-inches in diameter. The batter may create small peaks immediately after piping, but if it is the correct texture these will smooth themselves away after a minute or two. If the batter is too stiff, the peaks will remain and the tops of the shells may not be totally smooth. If the batter is too thin, the rounds will spread further.
7. For the ears: Transfer some green batter to a piping bag with a ¼-inch tip. Pipe small ears adjacent to the larger circles of batter.
8. Transfer the baking sheet to the oven and immediately reduce the temperature to 325 degrees. Bake for 9-12 minutes, until the tops are smooth and set and “feet” have formed around the bottom.
9. Transfer the white batter to a piping bag with an ⅛-inch tip. Remove the baked cookies from the oven and immediately pipe on a green nose in the middle of the circle and 2 white eyes to the side of the nose. Return the cookies to the oven for 3-4 minutes, until the nose and eyes are set. Add noses and eyes only to every other batch; the backs of the sandwiches will just need ears.
10. Transfer the baking sheet with the cookies to a cooling rack; cool 5 minutes, then peel the cookies away from the parchment and transfer to a cooling rack. Repeat as needed with the remaining batter, replacing the parchment paper with each batch, bringing the oven temperature back up to 350 degrees before baking each sheet.
11. For the buttercream: In the bowl of a stand mixer (or a large bowl if using a hand-held mixer), combine the egg whites, sugar, and salt. Set the bowl over a pot of simmering water, making sure the bottom of the bowl does not touch the water. Whisk constantly until the mixture reaches 160 degrees.
12. Fit the mixer with the whisk attachment; beat the egg white mixture on medium-high speed until stiff peaks form and it has cooled to room temperature, about 8 minutes. Reduce the mixer speed to medium and add the butter 2 tablespoons at a time, adding more once each addition has been incorporated. Increase the mixer speed to medium-high and beat until the buttercream is thick and smooth, 3-5 minutes. Add the vanilla seeds and extract; mix until incorporated.
13. To assemble: Pipe the buttercream onto the flat sides of half of the cookies. Top with the remaining cookies. Serve immediately or cover and store overnight in the refrigerator (bring to cool room temperature before serving).