

Celebrate spring with irresistible coconut macaroons

Written by Gallupsun Staff
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Passover is upon us, it's time to savor the simple pleasures of the season with a classic treat: coconut macaroons.

Picture this: Moist, chewy coconut mingling with hints of vanilla, crowned with a delicate golden crust. Bonus points — they're gluten-free! Passover, a time of remembrance and renewal, calls for dishes that honor tradition. Enter the coconut macaroon, a timeless treat with a rich history. With its origins dating back to medieval Italy, this dessert has evolved into a beloved staple of Passover celebrations around the world.

What makes coconut macaroons perfect for Passover? These delectable delights are inherently kosher for the holiday, free from leavening agents and grains such as flour. Just check your vanilla extract, as some are made with grain alcohol.

Now, you might be wondering: How can something so delicious be budget-friendly? With just a handful of pantry staples — coconut, sweetened condensed milk, egg whites and a splash of vanilla — you can whip up a batch of these coconut macaroons in no time, all without breaking the bank.

There can be confusion between macaroons and macarons. While they share a similar name, they are distinct desserts with different characteristics. Macaroons are dense, chewy coconut-based cookies, while macarons are almond meringue sandwich cookies with a smooth exterior, and a wide range of colors and flavors, often filled with ganache, buttercream or jam. Both desserts offer unique and delicious experiences for dessert lovers. Today we're on team macaroon! For a macaron recipe, go to my website: divasonadime.com/easy-french-macaron-recipe/

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Easy Coconut Macaroons

Yield: 14 to 18 cookies

Total Time: 35-40 minutes

14 ounces sweetened shredded coconut

14 ounces sweetened condensed milk

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

3 egg whites, at room temperature

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Optional: ½ cup chocolate chips for dipping

Preheat the oven to 325 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, combine the coconut, condensed milk and vanilla. In a separate bowl, whip the egg whites and salt until they form firm peaks using a stand mixer or hand mixer on high speed. To ensure a light and airy texture, carefully fold the whipped egg whites into the coconut mixture in three stages, using a gentle hand with a wooden spoon. This step is crucial for maintaining

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the meringue's integrity and preventing deflation.

Drop mounds of batter onto your prepared sheet pans using either an ice cream scoop or two spoons. Shape them with moist hands to prevent sticking. There is no bad shape for a macaroon. If you're making nests, press your thumb or a wine cork into each cookie to make an indent.

Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until golden brown. Cool and serve.

To dip and drizzle with chocolate, melt chips in the microwave. Dip the cookie as desired.

Sometimes the egg white can puddle around the cookie while baking. Simply cut around it and eat the delicious scraps when no one is looking.

For extra fun, add a half cup of finely chopped nuts. I'm partial to macadamias, but pecans and almonds are spectacular. Toast the coconut first for golden crunchy macaroons. Shape like bird's nests and fill the indent with jam, chocolate or Nutella.

To make larger or smaller macaroons, don't change the recipe but adjust the baking time to match (longer for big macaroons; shorter for small macaroons). I love to dip tiny ones completely in dark chocolate for little pop-in-your-mouth goodness. This recipe also makes a delectable pie crust.

Until next time, happy baking and may your days be filled with the sweet joys of spring!

Lifestyle expert Patti Diamond is the penny-pinching, party-planning, recipe developer and content creator of the website Divas On A Dime -- Where Frugal, Meets Fabulous! Visit Patti at www.divasonadime.com and join the conversation on Facebook at Divas OnADimeDotCom. Email Patti at divapatti@divasonadime.com

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