

a meringue tea menu



your favorite tea
your favorite tea sandwiches
petit meringue-studded cakes
little meringue sandwiches
eton mess yogurt parfait

the building blocks: meringues & frosting

cinnamon rose meringues

yield: 10 to 12 dozen small meringues

active time: 25 minutes

total time: 2 hours

- 6 large egg whites (about 210 grams)
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
 - 1 3/4 cup granulated sugar (340 grams)
 - 1 1/2 to 2 teaspoons rosewater (I use 1 1/2 teaspoons)
 - 1 teaspoon "true" cinnamon*
 - about 12 drops pink food coloring (or a couple drops of red)
 - extra cinnamon for sprinkling
 - (optional) edible dried rose petals and extra cinnamon for sprinkling
1. Wait for a dry day.** Preheat the oven to 225° F convection (105° C).
 2. Combine the egg whites, salt, and cream of tartar in the bowl of a stand mixer (or a large stainless steel bowl if you're using a hand mixer) fitted with the whisk attachment. Whisk at medium-low until frothy. Increase to medium and start to slowly add the sugar in a steady stream with the mixer running. Once the sugar is incorporated, add the rosewater, and increase to medium-high or high speed. Beat to stiff peaks.*** Add the cinnamon and food coloring toward the end of beating, or fold it in at the end.
 3. Pipe and/or scoop the meringue onto a parchment-lined baking sheet (I use an oversized star tip and a cookie scoop for this recipe). Don't worry about leaving too much room between them, as they won't expand much.

- To make meringue kisses (or star kisses, as pictured here), hold the piping tip pointed directly down, about 1/2 inch above the parchment, letting the bottom of the kiss fill out a bit before dipping in a *tiny* bit, and then lifting up. Use a steady stream, and don't worry too much about uniformity (have a confident hand/work somewhat quickly, gradually twisting the top of the bag to keep pressure on it).
 - To make more rustic scoops, use a leveled cookie scoop, and try to just let them drop onto the parchment from about 1/2 inch above. Don't mess with them, and don't worry if they don't all look the same. That's part of the appeal.
 - Optionally sprinkle some with rose petals and/or a little extra cinnamon.
4. Bake for about 1 hour for small meringues, longer for larger ones. Let them cool in the oven with the door open, to dry out completely. The meringues are done once they lift easily from the parchment and are crunchy all the way through once cool. You can store them in a tightly-sealed container or bag for about 1 to 2 weeks at room temperature.

* "True" Ceylon cinnamon has a delicate flavor, which doesn't overwhelm the rosewater. You can also use cassia cinnamon (more common in the US), which has more bite. Spice to taste, and hold back a little with cassia.

** It's really important to bake meringues on a dry day. If you absolutely need to bake them on a humid day, make sure you do so in a climate-controlled room. You'll probably need to bake them a while longer to dry all the way. Once they've baked through and are dry to their centers, let them cool for just a couple minutes, and move them straight to an air-tight bag or container. If you let them sit out too long, they'll get sticky and turn to goo.

*** Stiff peaks means that when you lift the beaters, the peak that forms won't fall over, but will stay sticking up (it might wobble a little, but it will bounce right back to where it started). You should be able to hold the mixing bowl over your head without any risk of disaster. As soon as stiff peaks form, stop beating before it is overdone (check it periodically to make sure you don't overshoot).

cream cheese frosting

- 2 8-ounce bricks of cream cheese, softened to room temperature *
 - 1 1/2 sticks (12 tablespoons) butter, softened to room temperature
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 2 cups (330 grams) powdered sugar
1. Mix together the cream cheese, butter, salt, and powdered sugar over low speed with a stand mixer and whisk attachment. Once the powdered sugar is all mixed in, increase speed to medium-high, and continue mixing until it lightens in color and consistency (this should take about 2 minutes). Use at room temperature.

* This makes a lot of frosting, so that you have enough to decorate both the mini cakes and fill the sandwiches. Feel free to halve the recipe if you're not baking for a crowd, and want to have a lot of plain meringues left.

petit meringue-studded cakes

- 5 large eggs (260 grams)
 - 120 grams granulated sugar
 - 120 grams all purpose flour
 - 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
 - cream cheese frosting
 - meringues
 - (optional) ground pistachios for sprinkling
1. Preheat the oven to 350° F convection, and line the bottom of a 12x16-inch nonstick rectangular pan with parchment paper.*
 2. Combine the eggs and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer (or use a stainless steel bowl and hand-held mixer). Beat on medium-high with the whisk attachment until it looks like [this](#) (about 5 to 8 minutes). It should increase significantly in size and become much lighter in color. When you lift the beaters, the trail will slowly disappear back into itself after 1 full second ("one Mississippi").
 3. Combine the flour, baking powder, and salt. Sift about 1/3 of the flour mixture evenly over the surface of the whipped eggs/sugar and carefully fold it in with a rubber spatula, scraping the bottom. Repeat with the next 1/3, and then the final 1/3.
 4. Spread the batter evenly all the way to the edges of the parchment-lined pan (careful that the parchment doesn't shift). Drop the pan from about an inch above the counter once or twice to knock out any big air bubbles (don't worry, it won't collapse).
 5. Bake for about 10 to 15 minutes (in my oven it takes 13 minutes, but it can vary). To test for doneness, *gently* press on the surface toward the middle—it should spring back after a second. Carefully run a knife around the edges to free the cake (go around once sawing up and down, then once dragging the knife), and invert it onto a (non-onion) cutting board. Peel off the parchment, and let it cool for about 30 minutes.
 6. Once cool, use a very large cookie cutter to stamp out as many rounds as you can. Enjoy or discard the scraps. Build the cakes by sandwiching a thin layer of frosting between layers of sponge, and building up at least 4 layers of sponge per cake (you'll probably end up with 2 5-layer cakes, depending on the size of your cookie cutter). Make sure they're straight, and then frost the tops and sides with an off-set spatula (using a rotating turntable, if you have one).
 7. Move the cakes to their plate or display (carefully lift each with a spatula), and decorate with the meringues however you'd like (optionally, sprinkle with pistachios after the meringues go on). Save the rest of the frosting for making little meringue sandwiches. The cakes can be made hours ahead of time, but don't decorate with meringues until the hour before serving, or they will soften too much.

* If you don't have convection, it'll just take a little longer.

little meringue sandwiches

- meringues
 - cream cheese frosting
 - ground pistachios or sprinkles
1. Use the rest of the cream cheese frosting to sandwich more meringues together. Pipe (or spoon) a generous tablespoon of frosting in the center of one meringue, and then squeeze another meringue on top, letting the frosting balloon out of the sides a little.
 2. Immediately roll the sides in ground pistachios or sprinkles. These should be made within an hour of serving.

eton mess yogurt parfait

- plain yogurt (either whole milk or 0% fat)
 - strawberry or raspberry preserves or jam
 - strawberries or raspberries
 - meringues
1. You can serve a family-style bowl, which people can scoop from, or you can serve them individually (which is much more of a tea party thing, but either will totally work). Clear bowls, glasses, etc., work best, but tea cups or little bowls work great too (just try to keep them on the small side if you're serving individual portions). Don't use tall champagne flutes, even though they look festive, because they're difficult to eat from (and also a pain to plate).
 2. Swirl several spoonfuls of the jam/preserves into the yogurt (sweeten it to taste, and only fold it a couple times to keep it swirled). Scoop spoonfuls of the yogurt into the serving bowl/bowls, top with berries and meringues, and serve immediately. Or make and plate everything ahead, and add just add the meringues at the last minute.