



Holiday Meringues

Makes: 100 meringues

Prep Time: 30 minutes Bake Time: 2 hours

Total Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Meringues:

- 1 cup (7 oz) granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup (2 oz) water
- 3 (3 & 1/2 oz) large egg whites
- 1/2 vanilla bean, split & seeds scraped
- 1/8 tsp peppermint oil
- 1/8 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp Cognac (optional)
- 1/8 tsp cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp ginger
- pinch clove
- pinch nutmeg

For Dipping:

- 4 ounces 70% dark chocolate
- 6 ounces white chocolate
- 6 ounces milk chocolate
- 1/4 cup crushed candy canes
- 1/4 cup roasted hazelnuts, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup roasted pistachios, finely chopped

Preheat oven to 175°F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or a Sil-pat.

Place egg whites and vanilla bean in a stand-mixer bowl with a whip attachment.

In a small pot, add sugar and pour water over sugar to saturate. Cook over medium-high heat, until sugar mixture begins to simmer. At this point, begin whipping the egg whites on high speed until stiff peaks form. While the egg whites whip, continue to cook sugar until it reaches

240°F. If any sugar sprays onto the sides of the pot, use a pastry brush dipped in cold water to wipe down the sides (this prevents the sugar from crystallizing). By the time the sugar is at the proper temperature the egg whites will have reached stiff peaks.

With the mixer on medium-low speed, slowly add the hot sugar syrup to the egg whites. Pour the sugar syrup down the side of the mixer bowl, avoiding the whip, and allow it to stream into the egg whites gradually. This prevents spraying sugar and from over-heating the egg whites. Once all the sugar syrup has been added increase the speed to high and whip whites until cool, about 5 minutes (the bottom of the mixer bowl should be cool to the touch).

Evenly divide the meringue into three separate bowls. In the first bowl, fold in the peppermint oil. In the second bowl, fold in the 1/8 tsp nutmeg and Cognac. In the third bowl, fold in the cinnamon, ginger, clove, and pinch of nutmeg. Transfer each meringue flavor into three separate piping bags fitted with a large round tip for each bag (Ateco #806 or #808). If only one tip is available, pipe one flavor at a time and rinse out the tip with cold water between each flavor.

On prepared baking sheet, pipe 1-inch wide meringues into rows, spacing 1/4-inch apart. Keep each flavor in the same row to avoid confusion later. To create the peaked shape: Hold piping tip 1/2-inch directly over baking sheet, gently squeeze bag until 1-inch wide base is formed, and then gently pull bag up until meringue breaks away from tip forming a peak.

Bake for 2 hours, with oven door just slightly ajar if possible (if you can't keep the door open, it should be fine, you may just get a bit of cracking), until dry to the touch. Place a heat-proof spoon in the door if needed, as this will allow steam to escape while baking and prevent the meringues from cracking. Once finished, remove meringues from oven and let cool.

Meanwhile, place the crushed candy canes and nuts into three separate bowls. Place dark, white, and milk chocolate into three separate bowls. Microwave each bowl just until chips are mostly melted, 30 seconds at a time. Then stir to incorporate the small unmelted bits. This will help to keep the chocolate in temper and provide a firm setting of the chocolate. Dip the peppermint meringues into the dark chocolate and then directly into the crushed candy canes. Dip the eggnog meringues into the white chocolate and directly into the hazelnuts. Dip the gingerbread meringues into the milk chocolate and directly into the pistachios. Place all finished meringues onto a parchment or Sil-pat lined baking sheet to set. Store meringues, in an air tight container at room temperature, for up to three days or seal in gift bags and share with others to enjoy.

Recipe from Now, Forager