

[Meringue Stars](#)

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These chocolate-dipped stars look beautiful on the table, and their ethereal texture means guests can nibble without filling up. All three flavors—vanilla, chocolate, and coffee—come from one batter.

Yield: Makes about 7 dozen cookies

Active Time: 35 min

Total Time: 4 1/2 hr (includes cooling)

ingredients

3 large egg whites, at room temperature 30 minutes, divided
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
3 pinches of cream of tartar, divided
3/4 cup superfine granulated sugar, divided
1 1/2 teaspoons instant-espresso powder
2 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa powder
1 (3 1/2-ounce) bar 70%-cacao bittersweet chocolate, melted
1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Equipment: 3 (12-inch) disposable pastry bags; a 1/2-inch star tip

preparation

Make vanilla and coffee meringues:

Preheat oven to 200°F with racks in upper, middle, and lower thirds of oven (or use 2 racks and bake in batches). Line 2 or 3 large baking sheets with parchment paper.

Beat 1 egg white with vanilla (for vanilla meringues) and a pinch each of cream of tartar and salt with an electric mixer at medium-high speed until it just holds soft peaks. Add 2 tablespoons superfine sugar, a little at a time, beating, then increase speed to high and beat until meringue holds stiff, glossy peaks. Fold in 2 tablespoons superfine sugar gently but thoroughly.

Transfer meringue to a pastry bag fitted with tip, then dab some meringue under corners of parchment on all baking sheets to secure to sheets. Pipe 1-inch-wide stars (1 inch high) about 1/2 inch apart.

Make coffee meringues using same amounts and procedure as above but using espresso powder (1 1/2 teaspoons) in place of vanilla.

Make chocolate meringues:

Sift cocoa through a fine-mesh sieve and whisk together with 2 tablespoons superfine sugar.

Beat remaining egg white with a pinch each of cream of tartar and salt with mixer at medium-high speed until it just holds soft peaks. Add remaining 2 tablespoons superfine sugar, a little at a time, beating, then increase speed to high and beat until meringue holds stiff, glossy peaks. Fold in cocoa mixture gently but thoroughly.

Transfer meringue to a pastry bag and pipe more stars.

Bake meringues:

Bake, switching position of upper and lower sheets halfway through baking, until dry, crisp, and firm, 1 1/2 to 2 hours. (Meringues are done when they release from parchment.)

Turn off oven and cool meringues in oven with door propped open about 1/2 inch using handle of a wooden spoon 1 hour, then slide parchment with meringues onto racks to cool completely.

Dip meringues in chocolate:

Line a large baking sheet with parchment or wax paper.

Stir together chocolate and vegetable oil until completely smooth. Peel meringues off parchment, then dip bottom of each into chocolate, allowing excess to drip off. Transfer meringues to lined baking sheet, arranging as close together as possible, and when baking sheet is full, freeze meringues just until chocolate is set, about 3 minutes. Remove meringues from freezer.

Cook's notes:

· We used a Wilton 2110/1M star tip for our meringues. An Ateco 885 swirl star tip also works well. · To avoid stickiness, try to bake meringues on a dry day. · Dipped meringues keep, layered between sheets of parchment or wax paper, in an airtight container at cool room temperature 1 week or frozen, container tightly wrapped in plastic wrap, 1 month. Thaw frozen meringues, still in wrapped container, until container reaches room temperature, at least 30 minutes. (Do not unwrap and open container until completely thawed.)

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