

Triple Coconut Macaroons

Makes about 4 dozen 1-inch cookies

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS: Early in the development of this recipe, our tests showed that our choice of coconut would make a big difference in both taste and texture. Unsweetened shredded coconut resulted in a less sticky, more appealing texture. Sweetened shredded coconut packed more flavor than unsweetened, and together they worked very well. To add one more layer of coconut flavor to our coconut macaroon recipe, we tried cream of coconut and hit the jackpot. The flavor was superior to that of any of the cookies we had tasted to date.

Cream of coconut, available canned, is a very sweet product commonly used in piña colada cocktails. Be sure to mix the can's contents thoroughly before using, as the mixture separates upon standing. Unsweetened desiccated coconut is commonly sold in natural food stores or Asian markets. If you are unable to find any, use all sweetened flaked or shredded coconut, but reduce the amount of cream of coconut to ½ cup, omit the corn syrup, and toss 2 tablespoons cake flour with the coconut before adding the liquid ingredients. For larger macaroons, shape haystacks from a generous ¼ cup of batter and increase the baking time to 20 minutes.

1 cup cream of coconut

2 tablespoons light corn syrup

4 large egg whites

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

½ teaspoon table salt

3 cups unsweetened, shredded, desiccated coconut (about 8 ounces)

3 cups sweetened, shredded or flaked coconut (about 8 ounces)

1. Adjust oven racks to upper-middle and lower-middle positions and heat oven to 375 degrees. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper and lightly spray parchment with nonstick vegetable cooking spray.

2. Whisk together cream of coconut, corn syrup, egg whites, vanilla, and salt in small bowl; set aside. Combine unsweetened and sweetened coconuts in large bowl; toss together, breaking up clumps with fingertips. Pour liquid ingredients into coconut and mix with rubber spatula until evenly moistened. Chill dough for 15 minutes.

3. Drop heaping tablespoons of batter onto parchment-lined cookie sheets, spacing them about 1 inch apart. Form cookies into loose haystacks with fingertips, moistening hands with water as necessary to prevent sticking. Bake until light golden brown, about 15 minutes, turning cookie sheets from front to back and switching from top to bottom racks halfway through baking.

4. Cool cookies on cookie sheets until slightly set, about 2 minutes; remove to wire rack with metal spatula.