

CHEF SUSAN'S FAVORITE ITALIAN MERINGUE BUTTERCREAM (IMBC)

EQUIPMENT

- 6 qt. or 5 qt mixer with whip attachment (grease free)
- Small saucepan
- Small bowl with water
- Pastry brush
- Measuring spoons (including 1/8 spoon)
- Rubber Scraper
- Food safe gloves (1-2 pairs)
- 3 Ice packs
- Scale
- Hot pads
- Timer
- Digital thermometer (refer to video for style, use, and calibration)
- Candy/deep fry thermometer (refer to video for style)
- 4 storage containers with lids (each approximately 5.5 inch tall)

INGREDIENTS

For a **6 qt mixer** (yields approx. 4 lbs.):

- 2 lbs. + 3 oz unsalted butter (cut into cubes and around 66-67 degrees F)
- 16 oz clean granulated sugar
- 11 ounces egg whites at room temperature (completely free of egg yolks)
- ½ TSP cream of tartar
- 2 ½ oz granulated sugar
- 6 oz water
- 2 TBSP vanilla extract or any clear extract depending on flavor of the cake
- 1 ½ TSP almond extract

For a **5 qt mixer** (yields approx. 3.75 lbs.):

- 1 lb. + 14 oz unsalted butter (cut into cubes and around 66-67 degrees F)
- 13 ½ oz clean granulated sugar
- 9.5 ounces egg whites at room temperature (completely free of egg yolks)
- ¼ + ⅛ TSP cream of tartar
- 2 oz granulated sugar
- 5 oz water
- 1 TBSP + ½ TSP vanilla extract or any clear extract depending on flavor of the cake
- 1 ¼ TSP almond extract

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED:

WHAT IS MERINGUE?

Meringue is a sweet dessert made primarily from whipped egg whites and sugar. The whipped eggs provide the structure and volume when beaten while sugar stabilizes the egg whites while adding sweetness. Adding cream of tartar adds additional stability to the meringue and results in a light, airy, and sometimes glossy texture.

Overbeaten egg whites look dry and curdled. Under beaten meringue foam looks coarse and off white. Correctly beaten egg white/sugar foam (meringue) looks white due to the egg white protein trapping air within its cellular structure.

There are different types of Meringue such as Swiss and French meringue—depending on the technique used to make the meringue. BACAA uses Italian Meringue because pouring hot sugar syrup into the egg white mixture destroys salmonella bacteria which is prevalent in eggs and would otherwise be harmful. Furthermore, BACAA uses Italian Meringue Buttercream (IMBC) because it is the most stable buttercream—making it perfect for displaying cakes at higher temperatures and for longer periods of time. Of course, cakes should not be displayed in direct sunlight or at temperatures higher than 85 degrees F.

Be sure to practice *mise en place* or “everything is in place” before starting the IMBC:

- Use the food scale to carefully weigh all your ingredients
- Make sure your ingredients are all at room temperature including your eggs white. The unsalted butter should be 66-67 degrees F as you begin your IMBC preparation.
- Calibrate your candy thermometer in boiling water. Refer to video to learn how to adjust the reading of the thermometer to obtain the temperature readings below.
- You will whip egg whites into a meringue and cook the sugar syrup at the SAME TIME. Therefore, arrange your kitchen to make the two procedures efficient. Once you combine the two mixtures you will be creating Italian Meringue. Once the meringue cools to the appropriate temperature, you will then add unsalted butter which creates Italian Meringue Buttercream.

DIRECTIONS

MAKE THE SUGAR SYRUP

- Mix 6 oz of water with 16 oz of granulated sugar in the saucepan.
- Place the calibrated candy thermometer into the saucepan with the sugar/water mixture. Cook 220 degrees F, brushing down the sides of the saucepan with a pastry brush dipped in the small bowl of water. This prevents crystals from forming that will otherwise fall into your sugar syrup—making your meringue grainy. You will not need to brush the sides of the saucepan once the syrup reaches 220 degrees F.

MAKE THE MERINGUE

- Place your eggs white in your 6 QT mixing bowl. Add ½ TSP cream of tartar. Once the sugar syrup reaches 232 degrees F, immediately begin whipping the egg whites until foamy.
- Once the egg whites are foamy, slowly and steadily add 2.5 oz of granulated sugar until you have stiff peaks and the egg white mixture is glossy.

COMBINE THE SUGAR SYRUP AND MERINGUE TO MAKE ITALIAN MERINGUE

- When the sugar syrup reaches 238 degrees F, slowly pour the sugar syrup down the side of the mixing bowl into the whipped egg whites.
- Whip the mixture on high for 5 minutes.
- After 5 minutes, lower the mixer speed to medium-high, and continue to whip until the egg white/sugar syrup mixture reaches 87-88 degrees F.

You may find that placing ice packs under the mixer bowl may help cool the meringue, but you must whip the mixture for 10 minutes before placing the ice packs to prevent the egg whites from losing their structure and cause the meringue to collapse or lose volume. Total cooling takes about 25 minutes.

Watch the video which shows Chef Susan cooling the bowl with ice packs. Since the meringue may be too hot, Chef Susan also temporarily removes some of the mixture from the bowl to help lower the temperature of the meringue so that the butter can be added without melting.

MAKE THE BUTTERCREAM

- Once the Italian Meringue reaches 87-88 degrees F, increase the mixer speed to high and add the unsalted butter about 2 to 4 oz at a time. Whip until light and fluffy. Be sure to scrape the bowl occasionally to ensure that meringue and butter combine.
- Add the extract and beat on high until the extract is blended into the buttercream.
- With a rubber scraper, divide the buttercream into 4 containers making sure to leave room. Leaving room in the containers allows the buttercream to temper to 78 degrees F more easily once removed from the refrigerator or freezer.

Watch the Italian Meringue Buttercream video for more helpful hints from Chef Susan.