

Mad about Macarons!

A LITTLE TASTE OF PARIS



Brightly coloured Parisian macarons are so temptingly dressed here in France with highly imaginative displays in pâtisserie windows. But at a less tempting price per kilo, it's motivation enough to create them at home yourself.

After some experimentation and endless tasting sessions, I have reduced the sugar content as much as can be dared without affecting the macaron's appearance. Several of the recipes are inspired by the great pâtisserie masters of macarons, but are simplified to make our lives at home easier. Others I have concocted myself, using the basic recipe outlined on pages 24–29 and some more unusual ingredients!

So that those with nut allergies needn't miss out, I've invented the nut-free macaron (see page 48), made with delicious nutty-tasting quinoa. My children – my fiercest critics – said they were delicious.

I'm particularly proud of my spicy concoctions. The combination of fiery spices with the sweet macaron is absolutely dynamite. Tikka Macsala, Beetroot and Horseradish or Thai Green Curry (see pages 100, 103 and 105) can also be served as *amuse-bouches* or unique *entrées* to surprise your guests.

The basic recipe outlined in this book requires precise measuring and careful following of instructions but it's not difficult. You'll discover that it's also easy to make pastry cream or chocolate ganache fillings. Once you've mastered the classic flavours of macarons you can then go on to produce more adventurous varieties.

American readers may be disappointed not to see measurements in cups. I recommend that all readers do buy digital scales as there are often quite precise, small amounts of ingredients that can't be measured easily using cups or spoonfuls.

I've added tips to give the macarons a professional look, too. Dress them to impress as flowers in a flowerpot (see page 93) or create your own chocolate dome for special occasions (see page 90).

In addition, you can transform macarons into dazzling desserts. Without much effort, you can produce giant macarons topped with lightly perfumed cream and seasonal fruits.

