**MACAROONS WITH CHOCOLATE AND ORANGE**

These coconut macaroons go together in a flash, making them the ideal cookie to turn to when you’re in need of a little instant holiday cheer. Preparation is simplicity itself: There’s no rolling, cutting, or decorating. All you do is mix the ingredients together, then roll dough into balls. In just a few minutes you’ll be rewarded with delicate sweets that melt in your mouth. These coconut macaroons are extremely versatile. Give our variations a try, or experiment with your own favorite flavors.

Makes about 20 cookies

**INGREDIENTS:**

1. 2 cups sweetened shredded coconut (7oz)
2. 2/3 cup sugar
3. ¼ cup all-purpose flour
4. 1 Tsp. minced orange zest
5. 1/8 Tsp. table salt
6. 2 egg whites
7. 2 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted
8. ¼ Tsp. pure almond extract
9. 3 oz. semisweet bar chocolate, chopped

**DIRECTIONS:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper. Whisk together coconut, sugar, flour, zest, and salt. Stir in egg whites, butter, and almond extract. Fold in chopped chocolate. Drop a tablespoon-sized ball of dough onto prepared baking sheet. Bake macaroons, one sheet at a time, until macaroons are firm to the touch and lightly brown on the bottoms, 20-25 minutes. Let macaroons cool on baking sheets 5 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.

**MAKE AHEAD DIRECTIONS:**

Prepare macaroon dough as directed, then form it into a disk. Cover disk with plastic wrap. Store dough in the refrigerator for up to 3 days or in the freezer for up to 1 month. Thaw dough in the refrigerator before forming cookies and baking as directed.

(\*) Combine dry ingredients in a bowl. Don’t toast the coconut first; it will toast while baking.

(\*) After mixing dough, add chopped chocolate and carefully fold it in until it’s well distributed.

(\*) For a more uniform shape, gently roll dough into 1-inch balls; place in rows on a baking sheet.

(\*) Candied Orange Macaroons: Instead of chocolate, try this orange treat. Substitute ½ cup diced, candied orange peel for the chocolate; fold into dough as directed in the recipe.

(\*) Nutty Island Macaroons: For a tropical treat, use 3 oz. chopped macadamia nuts instead of semisweet chocolate, and lime Zest instead of orange zest.