

## Macaroon master or disaster? It's a tough call

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The way to a partner's heart is through the stomach, so take a class at L'atelier des Chefs this Valentine's

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With just two weeks to go before Valentine's Day, the pressure to impress my hard-to-please other half is mounting.

Flowers are too cliché, chocolates boring and a romantic meal in a restaurant invariably turns into a who-will-kiss-first-before-desert battle of the sickening couples contest.

So, despite my inability to boil an egg without setting the kitchen on fire, I decided to give a gift with a more personal touch and booked myself into the L'atelier des Chefs cookery school in London, England, for their Marvellous Macaroons class.



Mmmm delish, I thought, as I set about filling my box with other people's more aesthetically pleasing products like a greedy macaroon cuckoo.

Well, why not? It may be what's inside that counts but no-one wants to eat the elephant man.



L'atelier des Chefs hold regular cooking classes, where you can make everything from a quick lunch to three course meals.

And this Valentine's Day the school will be holding special romantically themed classes, which include a free glass of prosecco on arrival.

Below is the recipe to make chocolate macaroons.

For the macaroon:

Icing sugar 205g

Ground almonds 140g

Unsweetened cocoa powder 15g

Caster sugar 90g

For the ganache:

Double cream 20cl

Dark chocolate 200g

Honey 50g

For the macaroon shells:

Whisk together the egg whites and the caster sugar. Whisk until you have a stiff and glossy meringue mixture.

Pass the icing sugar, cocoa powder and the ground almonds through a sieve and make sure that you have a very fine, lump-free powder.

Incorporate the dry ingredients into the meringue mixture. Use a spatula to cut and fold the mixture until is smooth, shiny and ribbon-like.

Fill a piping bag with the macaroon mix and pipe the macaroons onto a lined baking tray. Leave the macaroons to dry slightly for 15minutes at room temperature and then bake for 15-20minutes.

For the ganache:

Place the cream and the honey in a pan and bring to the boil. Once at boiling point pour over the chocolate and whisk together. Leave to cool in the fridge for at least an hour.

Fill half of the macaroons with the honeyed ganache, top with a second macaroon shell and serve with a dusting of cocoa powder.