

## MACAROONS VS. MACARONS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Do you know the difference between a macaroon (two os; pronounced “mack-ah-ROON”) and a macaron (one o; pronounced “mack-ah-ROHN”)? Macarons are sometimes called macaroons, but they are not the same! In the case of macaroon vs. macaron, a single letter makes a huge difference.

From looking at the cookies, they are visually different. Macarons are meringue-based sandwich cookies, with a layer of filling in between two delicate cookies. They are usually brightly colored and are made in many different flavor variations. Macarons are carefully made so that the size and shape of each cookie are the same. Macaroons are dense coconut drop cookies that are baked until they become golden brown.

The main ingredient for macaroons is shredded coconut. On the other hand, the main ingredient for macarons is almond meal. The ingredients in a macaron make a smooth surfaced cookie that is almond flavored, and light and airy. The meringue macarons are then filled with various ingredients such as buttercream, jam, or ganache and then topped with another cookie to create a sandwich with a smooth shell and a soft center.

Both types of cookies contain sugar, egg whites, and either shredded coconut or ground almonds. But after baking and comparing the two similarly named cookies, you will see that they look and taste entirely different.

The dense coconut macaroon is unleavened and chewy. They are held together by sugar and egg whites. Chocolate-covered coconut macaroons are a common variation of this delicious treat.

The Arabs introduced almonds to Europe around the 8<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed that the first almond-meringue cookies were made in Italy. People of Jewish-Italian descent liked the coconut macaroons because they could be eaten for Passover since they are unleavened. Dried coconut didn't become readily available to Europe and America until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. After coconut was experimented with by bakers, they realized they could substitute coconut for other ingredients, such as ground almonds, and create baked goods with longer shelf lives that were not as delicate as those made with ground almonds.

The English word macaroon is derived from the French word macaron. Macaron is a translation of the Italian word maccarone. Until about ten years ago, the French macaron was not a popular or common baked good in the United States. Since the macaron has become extremely popular in the United States, it has created confusion because some bakers say the name of the sandwich cookie in English, but others stick to the French version. There is no confusion in France because they call coconut macaroons rochers coco.

Due to their coconut flavor, macaroons are a hit with those who are loco for coco(nut). There are countless ways that you can tweak a basic macaroon recipe for your taste. Add more coconut for lighter macaroons, or whip the whites and sugar into a meringue for an even crunchier version. You can also add nuts, chocolate chips, or both inside the macaroons or fold dried fruit into the batter. And never underestimate the power of a little drizzled chocolate to take your macaroons up yet another notch!

The best part is that macaroons are much easier to make than macarons. All you have to do is mix the ingredients together, place the dollops on a baking sheet, pop them in the oven, and you have cookies!

(Sources: [www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com); [www.thespruceeats.com](http://www.thespruceeats.com))