



Meringue Kisses

(makes about 30 bite-sized meringues)

The combination of fragrant French Earl Grey tea and freeze-dried strawberries is a match made in heaven! Serve them dipped in or sandwiched together with glorious ruby chocolate, or just eat them plain, by the handful, with a pot of tea!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 teaspoons French Earl Grey tea
- 15g freeze-dried strawberries
- 2 large egg whites
- Pinch of fine sea salt
- 55g caster sugar
- 80g icing sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla bean paste
- 100g ruby chocolate, melted, to decorate (optional)
- Dried edible cornflower petals, to decorate (optional)



METHOD

Preheat oven to 120°C (fan-forced) and line two baking trays with baking paper. Place French Earl Grey tea and freeze-dried strawberries into a small spice grinder, or mortar and pestle, and grind until fine. Set aside.

Place the egg whites and salt into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment and whisk on medium speed until soft peaks form. Add the caster sugar, one tablespoon at a time, whisking well between additions. When all the caster sugar has been incorporated, add the icing sugar to the meringue in the same way, one tablespoon at a time. Once all the sugar has been added, continue to whisk the meringue for a few minutes until thick and glossy, and the meringue holds firm peaks. Gently fold through the vanilla bean paste followed by the ground tea and strawberries.

Transfer the meringue mixture to a piping bag fitted with a 1.5-2cm star-shaped nozzle. Dot a little meringue onto the underside of each corner of the baking paper and use this to glue the paper to the trays. Pipe bite-sized meringues onto the trays, leaving a little space in between.

Place trays in preheated oven and immediately lower the oven temperature to 80°C. Bake meringues for 1 hour, or until they are crisp on the outside and lift off the baking paper easily. Turn the oven off and allow the meringues to cool in the oven with the door slightly ajar.

Serve meringues on their own, dip or sandwich them together with melted chocolate and sprinkle with edible flowers. Store any leftover meringues in an airtight container for up to a week.