

AMBROSIA MACAROONS – CHRISTMAS COOKIES

Ingredients:

2/3 cups unsalted butter, softened

6 oz. cream cheese, softened

1 1/2 cups sugar

2 large egg yolks

2 teaspoons orange zest

2 tablespoons fresh orange juice

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

4 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

16 oz. crushed pineapple in juice, drained and patted very dry with paper towels

10 cups sweetened flaked coconut (from 2 14 oz. packages) divided

35 stemless red maraschino cherries, halved

Directions:

1. Beat butter, cream cheese and sugar with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until blended, 3-4 minutes. Add egg yolks, orange zest and orange juice; beat on low speed until blended, about 1-2 minutes.
2. Whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl until combined; gradually add to butter mixture, beating on low speed until blended about 1-2 minutes.
3. Stir in pineapple and 6 cups of the coconut. Cover and chill for 1 hour.
4. Preheat oven to 350 ° F.
5. Shape dough into 1-inch balls; place remaining 4 cups of coconut in a bowl; roll balls in coconut and arrange on 2 baking sheets lined with parchment paper.
6. Working in 2 batches, bake macaroons in preheated oven until lightly browned, 12 – 14 minutes. I baked one sheet at a time, keeping extra dough in refrigerator.
7. Remove from oven; immediately press 1 cherry half into center of each warm macaroon. Cool on baking sheet for 1 minute. Transfer macaroon to wire racks and cool completely for a least 30 minutes.
8. Store in an airtight container up to 3 days.

Makes 5 – 6 dozen

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