

Forest Floor Vegan Meringue Mushroom Cookies

Ingredients

- ½ cup chickpea aquafaba (liquid in can of chickpeas)
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp. cream of tartar
- 2/3 cups granulated sugar
- 1-2 tsp. cocoa powder (optional)
- 1.5 oz. vegan chocolate (you may need a little more or less)

Steps

1. Add the aquafaba, vanilla, and cream of tartar to a stand mixer, attach your balloon whisk, and turn on high. You can in theory do this with a hand mixer, but aquafaba takes a good bit longer to mix up than egg whites, so a stand mixer will save your arms. Whip the aquafaba until you have stiff peaks (about 10 minutes). While the mixer is still going, add the sugar slowly to the whipped aquafaba. Keep on mixing until all the sugar is incorporated, and the meringue is silky and smooth, and not at all grainy.

2. Preheat the oven to 200°F (95°C). Prepare a couple baking trays with silicone mats (or you can use parchment paper). Place the whipped meringue into a piping bag (no tip needed), or you can use a Ziplock bag and cut one corner off to make a piping bag. To pipe the caps of the mushrooms, make circular shapes with smooth, rounded tops. You can vary the size and how flat or circular they are for fun variations. To create dots on top, use a small metal mesh strainer to dust with cocoa powder. To pipe the stems, simple pipe a dot, and pull the piping bag straight up to create the stalk. Place the piped meringue in the oven for 90 minutes to dry. After 90 minutes, turn off the oven but leave the meringues inside to cool or another hour or so.

3. Once the meringues are fully cooled, melt your chocolate in 30 second increments in the microwave, stirring between each time, until it is liquid. You can add a little coconut oil, if your chocolate isn't melting smoothly. Use a brush to spread chocolate onto the bottom of a mushroom cap, leaving the brush marks going around the edges so they look like the mushroom gills. Take a stalk and press it onto the bottom of the mushroom- I found it helped to cut a very small amount off the top of the stalk to make a level surface to join the two. Leave the mushroom upside down, until the chocolate sets. Repeat with the remaining meringue mushrooms as you wait. Once the chocolate has firmed up, the mushrooms should be stored in an airtight container.

