

# Ghost Meringues

Egg whites & sugar form the backbone of these ghost meringues - do ghosts have backbones? Egg whites are made of water & proteins, and as you whisk air into the egg whites, the proteins help keep it all in place. The proteins start curled up, but as you whisk, you encourage them to unfurl, or become denatured. These proteins are made of both hydrophilic (water-loving) and hydrophobic (water-fearing) amino acids, so as they unfurl, the hydrophilic parts go where the water is and the hydrophobic parts attach to the air pockets, and they all bond with their protein neighbours, forming bonds that keep the air pockets from leaving and the egg whites from deflating. Fat will interfere with these bonds being formed, so make sure not to get any egg yolks involved!



Sugar also plays a part in helping it all stay standing more soundly and for a longer time and must be added slowly. You want to make sure that you add the sugar in a slow trickle or 1tbsp at a time. You'll know the meringue is ready when it holds stiff peaks and it doesn't feel gritty between your fingers anymore.

Cream of tartar will give you a whiter meringue and provide stability that helps prevent overwhipping, which is when you whip past stiff peaks and to the point of no return as the meringue falls apart.

**Tip:** Use 3 bowls when separating the eggs: one to hold the whites, one to hold the yolks, and one to separate into. That way even if you break a yolk, you don't have to start over from scratch.

## Ingredients

- 4 egg whites (120g)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp cream of tartar
- 1 cup (200g) superfine or caster sugar (place granulated sugar in food processor for 30s if you don't have any)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp vanilla extract
- Mini chocolate chips

## Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°F. Prepare two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Start whisking the egg whites with the cream of tartar. Once the mixture gets past the foamy stage and into soft peaks, start adding in the sugar either 1tbsp at a time, or in a slow trickle, until all the sugar has been incorporated and the mixture has reached stiff peak stage (pull the whisk out and the egg whites should hold the peak without drooping). Mix in vanilla extract.
3. Spoon into piping bag and pipe 2" tall blobs, an inch apart. Put mini chocolate chips onto the blobs as eyes (or paint chocolate eyes on after the bake). Bake for 1-1.5hrs (depends on humidity and size of blobs) or until crisp and dry when you touch them, then turn off the oven and leave the door cracked open for a few more hours to continue drying them out.

