

Marzipan

You've probably seen intricately colored and decorated flowers, fruits, animals, and other items made from marzipan, a soft and pliable almond-based paste. When I needed a substitute for the meringue mushrooms I used to make for *Bûche de Noël* in the 80's, I knew marzipan was the way to go. I am happy to report that making marzipan without refined white sugar, honey, or egg whites, which are some of the usual ingredients, and getting the proportions right, was far easier than I had expected. Make the mushrooms and other shapes, too, but save some of this almond-flavored paste to enrobe in chocolate and make lovely little bonbons.

Note: The marzipan may look oily after a few days in the refrigerator. Here's what to do. Wipe the oil off the marzipan with paper toweling and then dust with confectioners' sugar and/or cocoa.

Makes 1/2 cup

3 ounces blanched almonds

2 tablespoons organic powdered sugar, more for dusting^{[1][SEP]}

Pinch fine sea salt^{[1][SEP]}

2 tablespoons brown rice syrup (warm the jar in hot water, until liquid)

1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

3 /8 teaspoon pure almond extract

1. Grind the almonds in a food processor until the nuts look like flour, but stop grinding before the nuts become oily. Add the sugar and salt and process until incorporated.
2. Add the rice syrup and vanilla and almond extracts. Process to a smooth paste, about 5 minutes. Squeeze a small piece between your fingers to make sure it holds together. If it does not, process longer or add a teaspoon more of rice syrup.
3. Scoop the marzipan onto a piece of plastic wrap. Cover with another piece and press until flattened to about 8 x 6 inches. If the marzipan is too soft to shape, refrigerate briefly.

Keeping

Store the marzipan in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to three weeks.