

CHOCOLATE FUDGE BROWNIES

So gooey, so good

Julie Hirschhom
Miami Herald

There's an important question all dessert lovers must answer at some point in their lives: Do you prefer cakey brownies or fudgy brownies?

For me, the answer is simple. I want the fudgiest, gooey-est, most chocolaty brownies I can get my hands on. In fact, if it were up to me, I'd just take a spoon and eat the batter as is. But the CDC tells me that's not exactly safe, so we'll go with the second-best option: Brownies that are fully baked, but still warm and gooey.

These brownies were the very first recipe I learned how to make. And for a while, they were the only thing I made. I've since ventured into making other desserts, but I always come back to my brownies.

I have two secrets for this recipe. The first is adding semi-sweet chocolate chips to the batter. It makes the

brownies fudgier and you get more chocolate, and when is more chocolate ever a bad thing? Spoiler alert: It's never a bad thing. The second is replacing half the amount of butter with unsweetened applesauce for a healthier twist. I promise you'll never even know it's there.

I'll say this: Baking these brownies is easy. Cutting them up into neat squares is the hard part. I recommend chilling them in the freezer for about two hours before cutting with a plastic knife (I know that sounds weird, but this trick has changed my life).

Whenever I make these brownies, I remember my cardinal rule of cooking: A recipe is only as good as the cleanup process. This recipe only requires a bowl for mixing and a baking dish. The end result is gooey brownies and minimal cleanup. Could you ask for anything better?

Serve warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream for a



Dreamstime/TNS

Gooey, chocolatey fudge brownies.

brownie sundae that's out of this world.

CHOCOLATE FUDGE BROWNIES

Adapted from Ghirardelli's Classic Chocolate Brownies

4 ounces semi-sweet chocolate baking bar
1/4 cup unsalted butter
cut into pieces

1/4 cup canola oil (for a healthier substitute, you can swap the oil for unsweetened applesauce)
1 cup brown sugar, dark or light, packed
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 large eggs
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
3/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease an 8-by-8-inch oven-safe baking dish. In a microwave-safe dish (a 2-cup glass measuring cup works great for this), add your chocolate and butter. Microwave, stirring often, for 1 to 3 minutes until the mixture is smooth. In a large bowl, mix together melted butter, chocolate, vanilla, salt, eggs, baking powder, applesauce, and sugar. Fold

in chocolate chips. Transfer batter to baking dish, making sure to lick the spoon clean every now and then. Bake the brownies until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes with just a few soft crumbs attached, about 25-30 minutes. Cool completely, then cut into 9 large squares or 16 small squares.

Yield: about 16 brownies.

One-pot version of chicken fricassee

Linda Gassenheimer
Tribune News Service

Here's a quick and light version of a classic French stew, chicken fricassee. Here I've shortened the usual slow cooking time for the stew, but it captures the essence of the dish's traditional flavor. Microwaveable brown rice, which takes only a minute to microwave, helps make this an easy, one-pot meal.

Shiitake mushrooms and a hint of nutmeg add flavor. Shiitake mushrooms have a dark brown cap and meaty texture. They're available in most markets year-round, but you can use any type of dried wild mushroom or portobello.

Countdown

- Microwave rice and set aside.
- Prepare ingredients.
- Cook the recipe.

Shopping List

To buy: 1 package microwaveable brown rice, 3/4 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs, 1 bunch celery, 1 carton unsalted chicken broth, 1 red bell pepper, 1 container shiitake mushrooms, 1 bunch fresh tarragon, 1 bottle ground nutmeg and 1 multigrain baguette.

Staples: olive oil, onion, garlic, flour, salt and black peppercorns.

CHICKEN FRICASSEE

Recipe by Linda Gassenheimer

1 package microwaveable brown rice to make 1 1/2 cups
3/4 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 cup sliced onion
1 cup sliced celery
3 crushed garlic cloves
1 tablespoon flour
1 cup unsalted chicken broth
1 cup sliced red bell pepper
1 1/2 cups sliced shiitake mushrooms
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon
2 slices multigrain baguette

Microwave rice according to package instructions. Measure 1 1/2 cups and save remainder for another meal. Set aside. Remove visible fat from the chicken thighs and cut into 2- to 3-inch pieces. Heat oil in a medium-size nonstick skillet. Add chicken and brown about 2 minutes. Turn chicken over and add onion, celery and garlic. Saute 3 minutes. Sprinkle flour over the vegetables and chicken and stir until absorbed. Add chicken broth, red bell peppers, mushrooms and reserved 1 1/2 cups rice. Stir to combine all ingredients. Cook 2 to 3 minutes. Add nutmeg and salt and pepper to taste. Divide between two dinner plates and sprinkle tarragon on top. Serve bread on the side. Yield 2 servings.

New twist on old 'beans and greens'

■ This vegetarian version puts a Latin American spin on the traditional Italian classic

Gretchen McKay
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

"Beans and greens" in Pittsburgh usually evokes the humble dish served at the city's old-school red sauce Italian-American restaurants.

Traditionally made with cannellini beans and escarole, it's an iconic Italian comfort food best served in a bowl. It often features hot sausage or banana peppers as add-ins and a sprinkle of grated Parmesan on top. Yet the dish doesn't have to speak just to southern Italy to fill our appetites and make us happy. A recipe from the vegetarian cookbook "Leaf" by Catherine Phipps puts a Latin American spin on the Italian classic.

Pinto beans and chopped tomato are paired with a fresh mix of spinach and kale lightly seasoned with garlic, cinnamon and cumin seeds. A charred tomatillo salsa adds a bright and zesty finish.

Don't be put off by the many different elements — each step is easy to make in its own right, and both the tortillas and salsa can be made ahead.

Speaking of which: I don't have a tortilla press and so rolled the dough out by hand. As my sister noted on social media (grrrr), they didn't come out perfectly round. Far from it. But even with their jagged edges, they tasted great. I just need more practice.

This recipe makes a filling vegetarian main course, but it also could be served as a side with chicken or beef. Serve the tortillas on the side as you would bread, or fill them taco-style with the greens and beans.

I didn't add any cheese but shredded cheddar would totally elevate this dish. You

also could top the beans and greens with a fried egg for extra protein.

PINTO BEANS AND GREENS WITH CORIANDER TORTILLAS

For salsa

10 1/2 ounces tomatillos, dehusked
2 jalapenos
2 garlic cloves
4 spring onions, trimmed
Juice of 1 lime
Few sprigs of cilantro
Few mint leaves, roughly torn

For tortillas

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup blue or yellow masa harina
4 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro
1/2 teaspoon salt
3/4 ounces vegetable shortening, melted and slightly cooled

For beans and greens

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 red onions, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
Pinch of ground cinnamon
14 ounces spring greens, kale or chard, shredded
8 ounces cooked pinto beans
2 ripe tomatoes, chopped
Sea salt

Make salsa: Put tomatil-

los, jalapenos, garlic and spring onions in a frying pan, preferably cast-iron. Cook over medium-high heat for 15 minutes, shaking the pan, until everything is charred. Keep a close eye and remove garlic and chilies when they blacken.

Remove from heat. When cooked, chop finely or put in food processor and pulse to a chunky puree. Add plenty of salt and the lime juice, then stir through the cilantro. Set aside.

Make tortillas: Put flour, masa and cilantro in a bowl with the salt. Pour in shortening, then 2/3 cup tepid water. Mix thoroughly — if it's crumbly, add a little more water, a few drops at a time. Keep mixing to a minimum, so you don't work the gluten too much. You should end up with a soft, slightly tacky dough that will firm up more as the lard/shortening re-solidifies.

Divide dough into 16 equal balls and roll out as thinly as you can, or press in a tortilla press, making sure the dough is pressed between plastic wrap or nonstick baking paper.

Heat a cast-iron frying pan and when medium hot, cook the tortillas for a couple of minutes on each side until they are dappled brown. They may also puff up a bit, but will subside as they cool. Keep warm until ready to use.

Make beans and greens: Heat oil in a large lidded frying pan or Dutch oven. Add red onions and cook over medium-high heat until softened and slightly charred. Add garlic, cumin seeds and cinnamon, and cook for a couple more minutes. Add greens to pan along with 1/2 cup water. Press down in pan then cover.

Cook until greens have just wilted, about 5 minutes, or 10 minutes for a softer texture. Stir in beans and tomatoes and cook just long enough for everything to be piping hot.

Check for seasoning and adjust accordingly. Stir mint into salsa and serve with tortillas. Serves 4.

— "Leaf" by Catherine Phipps (Quadrille Publishing; 2019)

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