

Brawny Brownies

Makes about 16 brownies

When The Sneaky Chef first came out, one of the most talked-about recipes was the brownie recipe. Everyone was amazed that no one—neither kids nor adults—could detect the hidden spinach, blueberries, oats, wheat germ, or the missing fat and sugar.



Here, I've slightly modified my signature recipe by adding a bit more sophisticated flavoring for the adult palate (although that didn't stop my kids from devouring them again!). You can also savor the fact that dark chocolate is the new health food, loaded with antioxidants and credited with the ability to lower blood pressure. Add that to the spinach, blueberries, and whole grains, and you'll see why I call these Brawny Brownies!

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 5 ounces good-quality dark chocolate (not unsweetened), coarsely chopped (or use 3/4 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips)
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup Purple Puree (see Make-Ahead Recipe #1)
- 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons Flour Blend (see Make-Ahead Recipe #13)
- 1/4 cup oat bran
- One-half teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee powder
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Butter or non-stick cooking spray
- Optional extra boost: 1 cup chopped walnuts

> Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

> Butter or spray only the bottom, not the sides, of a 13-by- 9-inch or 9-inch square baking pan.

> Melt the butter and dark chocolate together in a double boiler or metal bowl over simmering water (or in a microwave, checking every 15 seconds). Remove from heat and allow mixture to cool a bit. Meanwhile, in another bowl, stir together the eggs, vanilla, sugar, and Purple Puree. Combine this purple egg mixture with the cooled chocolate mixture.

> In a mixing bowl, stir together Flour Blend, oat bran, cinnamon, coffee powder, cocoa powder, and salt. Add this to the chocolate mixture and blend thoroughly. Mix in the chopped walnuts, if using, then pour the entire mixture into the baking pan.

> Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean. Allow to cool completely in pan before cutting the brownies and use a plastic or butter knife. Dust with powdered sugar, if desired.

Keeps for a week in the refrigerator, covered tightly.

Sneaky Tip: Sorry fellas. British scientists found women's heart rates rose 20 percent and their bodies released four times more endorphins when eating dark chocolate than from passionate kissing! Dark chocolate made with at least 65 percent cacao will ensure this success.