

Lady Arianna's Favorite Brownie Recipes

A special compendium
created by

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Inspired by the *Lady Arianna* historical mystery series



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Dear Friends,

Writing a book can be very stressful. It demands fortitude, patience—and unlimited chocolate! You see, The Muse often gets cranky, and decides to behave like a Diva. She sulks. She pouts. She refuses to buckle down and provide her share of scintillating prose. Groveling and pleading have no effect. But offering a fudgy brownie works magic. So I've had to do a lot of research on chocolate recipes (yes, I know—work, work, work!)

Whether or not you have your own Muse to feed, I hope you enjoy the following compendium of my favorite brownie recipes.

Enjoy!

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Chocolate Truffle Brownies

11 tablespoons (155 g) unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing the pan

6 ounces (170 g) good unsweetened chocolate, chopped

2 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups (465 g) sugar

6 large eggs

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons vanilla extract

1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups (165 g) all-purpose flour

$\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt

1 cup/120 grams chopped nuts or 1 cup/175 grams chocolate chips (optional)

Cocoa powder

1. Preheat oven to 350°F with rack in middle. Butter and flour a 13- by 9-inch baking pan.
2. Melt butter and chocolate with espresso powder in a 3-quart heavy saucepan over low heat, whisking until smooth. Remove from heat and cool to lukewarm. Whisk in sugar and vanilla. Whisk in eggs 1 at a time until mixture is glossy and smooth.
3. Whisk together flour, cinnamon, and salt, then whisk into chocolate mixture.
4. Spread batter in pan and bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with crumbs adhering, 25 to 30 minutes. Cool completely before cutting.



Olive Oil Brownies with Sea Salt

6 tablespoons/90 milliliters mild extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for greasing pan
1 cup/130 grams all-purpose flour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup/25 grams Dutch-processed cocoa powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup/60 milliliters boiling water
3 ounces/90 milliliters melted unsweetened chocolate
1 large egg, at room temperature
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup/165 grams packed dark brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup/65 grams granulated sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup/90 grams mini or regular chocolate chips
Flaky sea salt, such as Maldon, as needed

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees, and grease an 8-by-8-inch square baking dish with some of the olive oil. Line pan with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on 2 sides so you can pull the brownies out easily
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, salt and baking powder.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together cocoa powder and boiling water until smooth. Whisk in 6 tablespoons oil, melted chocolate, egg and vanilla.
4. Whisk in brown and granulated sugars, then fold in flour mixture, then chocolate chips. Scrape into prepared pan, and bake until set and firm to the touch, 20 to 25 minutes.
5. Immediately sprinkle brownies with flaky salt while still warm, and let cool. Cut into 16 squares and serve.



Fudgy Coffee Brownies

2 sticks (1/2 lb) unsalted butter
5 oz unsweetened chocolate
2 tablespoons instant-espresso powder
2 cups sugar
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
5 large eggs
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt

1. Preheat oven to 350°F with rack in middle. Butter and flour a 13- by 9-inch baking pan.
2. Melt butter and chocolate with espresso powder in a 3-quart heavy saucepan over low heat, whisking until smooth. Remove from heat and cool to lukewarm. Whisk in sugar and vanilla. Whisk in eggs 1 at a time until mixture is glossy and smooth.
3. Whisk together flour, cinnamon, and salt, then whisk into chocolate mixture.
4. Spread batter in pan and bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with crumbs adhering, 25 to 30 minutes. Cool completely before cutting.



Olive Oil and Coconut Brownies

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup olive oil, plus more to grease pan
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cocoa powder
2 ounces unsweetened chocolate, finely chopped
2 large eggs
2 large egg yolks
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon kosher salt
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
2 cups shredded sweetened coconut
Fleur de sel, for sprinkling

1. Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a 9-by-13-inch baking pan.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the cocoa powder and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons boiling water until smooth. Add the unsweetened chocolate and whisk until the chocolate has melted. Whisk in the olive oil. Add the eggs, yolks and vanilla, and continue to whisk until combined. Add the sugar, whisking until fully incorporated. Using a spatula, fold in the flour and salt until just combined. Fold in the bittersweet chocolate pieces.
3. Pour half the batter into the prepared pan and smooth with a spatula. Sprinkle 1 cup of the shredded coconut on top of the batter. Pour in the remaining batter and smooth. Top with remaining coconut. Sprinkle with fleur de sel and bake until just set and firm to the touch, about 25 to 30 minutes. (These brownies solidify as they cool, so inserting a toothpick to check for doneness will not work; it does not come out clean.)
4. Transfer the pan to a wire rack and allow to cool completely before cutting into 2-inch squares.



Salted Caramel Peanut Brownies

For the chocolate base:

- 1 cup/128 grams all-purpose flour
- ½ cup/47 grams natural cocoa powder
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 12 tablespoons/170 grams unsalted butter (1 ½ sticks), at room temperature
- ½ cup/101 grams granulated sugar
- ½ cup/110 grams packed dark brown sugar
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 4 ounces/113 grams semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, chopped

For the caramel peanut topping:

- 1 cup/201 grams granulated sugar
- ½ cup light corn syrup
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 4 tablespoons/57 grams unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 1 ½ cups/225 grams unsalted roasted peanuts
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- Flaky salt for sprinkling

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9-inch square pan with parchment, leaving a 2-inch overhang on two sides.
2. Prepare the base: In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, salt and baking soda. In a large bowl, or in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat together the butter, granulated sugar and brown sugar until creamy, 1 minute. Add the egg and vanilla and beat until combined. Mix in the flour mixture and the chocolate until evenly moistened.

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3. Transfer the thick batter to the prepared pan and spread it out into an even layer with an offset spatula. Bake until the base looks dry and set, about 25 to 30 minutes. Transfer to a rack to cool.
4. Prepare the topping: To a small saucepan with high sides add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup/60 milliliters water. Pour the sugar and corn syrup into the center of the pan. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat and cook until the mixture is a medium amber color, about 15 minutes, swirling the pan occasionally. Quickly and carefully add the cream and the butter. Take care: The mixture will steam and sputter. Stir the mixture until combined and clip a candy thermometer to the side of the pot.
5. Cook the caramel until the mixture reaches 238 degrees, about 5 to 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the peanuts and the kosher salt. Pour the caramel over the base, using the raised edges of the base that formed while baking to keep the caramel on top. Sprinkle with flaky salt. Let stand until the caramel is completely cool.