

# *Lady Arianna's Holiday Brownie Recipes*

A special compendium  
created by

Andrea Penrose

(Inspired by the *Lady Arianna* historical mystery series)



[www.andreapenrose.com](http://www.andreapenrose.com)



*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 for the coming holidays—or any time you need a chocolate hug!

*Enjoy!*



## *Supernatural Brownies*

**2 sticks (16 tablespoons) butter, more for pan and parchment paper**

**8 ounces bittersweet chocolate**

**1 cup dark brown sugar, such as muscovado**

**1 cup granulated sugar**

**4 eggs**

**½ teaspoon salt**

**2 teaspoons vanilla extract**

**1 cup flour**

**½ cup chopped walnuts or ¾ cup whole walnuts, optional**

1. Butter a 13-by-9-inch baking pan and line with buttered parchment paper. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In top of a double boiler set over barely simmering water, or on low power in a microwave, melt butter, chocolate and sugars together. Cool slightly. In a large bowl or mixer, whisk eggs. Whisk in salt and vanilla.
3. Whisk in chocolate mixture. Fold in flour just until combined. If using chopped walnuts, stir them in. Pour batter into prepared pan. If using whole walnuts, arrange on top of batter. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until shiny and beginning to crack on top. Cool in pan on rack.



## ***Fudgy Nutella Brownies***

**$\frac{1}{2}$  cup/113 grams unsalted butter (1 stick)  
plus more for greasing the baking dish  
4 ounces/113 grams bittersweet chocolate, chopped  
1 cup/296 grams chocolate-hazelnut spread, like Nutella  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  cup/134 grams granulated sugar  
2 large eggs  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon espresso powder  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup/96 grams all-purpose flour  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon kosher salt**

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and line an 8x8-inch baking dish with parchment paper.
2. Combine the chopped chocolate and butter in a heat-safe bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Stir the mixture occasionally until melted. Set aside.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup/222 grams chocolate-hazelnut spread, sugar and eggs. Mix on medium-high for 5 minutes, scraping down the bowl a couple of times. Add espresso powder and vanilla and mix briefly to combine.
4. Turn the mixer to low and stream in the chocolate-butter mixture. Mix until well combined, then fold in the flour and salt.
5. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan, spread evenly with a knife or offset spatula and spoon several dollops of the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup/74 grams chocolate-hazelnut spread evenly over the top. Use a toothpick or skewer to swirl the spread and brownie batter a few times, leaving big streaks of the spread on the surface.
6. Bake the brownies for 25 to 30 minutes, or until just set in the middle. A toothpick inserted into the center should pull out some moist crumbs.





## *Guinness Brownies*

**1¼ cups/160 grams all-purpose flour**

**⅓ cup/30 grams unsweetened cocoa powder**

**1 tablespoon instant espresso powder (optional)**

**½ teaspoon fine sea salt**

**12 ounces/340 grams finely chopped bar bittersweet or semisweet chocolate**

**6 tablespoons/85 grams unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch pieces**

**¾ cup/150 grams granulated sugar**

**4 large eggs, at room temperature**

**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

**1 ¼cups/300 milliliters stout beer, at room temperature**

**8 ounces/225 grams milk chocolate chips**

1. Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a 9-by-9-inch pan with butter.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, cocoa powder, espresso powder (if using) and salt to combine; set aside.
3. Fill a medium pot with about 2 inches of water, and bring to a simmer over medium-low heat. Place a large bowl on top of the pot, and add all the chocolate and the butter to the bowl, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is fully melted. Add the sugar and continue to heat, stirring constantly, for 1 minute.
4. Remove the bowl from the heat. Whisk in the eggs, one at a time, whisking well until each is fully incorporated before adding the next. Whisk in the vanilla.
5. Whisk in half the flour mixture, then gradually whisk in the stout, mixing just until combined. Add the remaining flour/cocoa mixture and whisk just until combined. Do not overmix.
6. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Sprinkle the chocolate chips evenly over the surface of the batter, then transfer to the oven and bake until the brownies appear just set in the center, 23 to 30 minutes. They should seem slightly underbaked and will firm up as they cool.
7. Cool to room temperature, then transfer to the refrigerator for at least 2 hours. (It's easier to cut the brownies when they're chilled.)



## *Olive Oil Brownies with Sea Salt*

**6 tablespoons/90 milliliters mild extra-virgin olive oil,  
plus more for greasing the 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.



## ***Ginger Brownie Cookies***

**1½ cup/45 grams all-purpose flour**  
**⅓ cup/30 grams Dutch-processed cocoa powder**  
**¾ teaspoon baking powder**  
**½ teaspoon kosher salt**  
**8 ounces /225 grams bittersweet chocolate, broken or chopped into pieces**  
**¼ cup/55 grams unsalted butter (½ stick)**  
**2 large eggs, at room temperature**  
**½ cup/100 grams granulated sugar**  
**¼ cup/55 grams light brown sugar**  
**1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger**  
**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**  
**4 ounces/115 grams bittersweet chocolate chips (about ⅔ cup)**  
**8 to 10 pieces candied ginger slices, thinly sliced crosswise**

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Combine flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl, and whisk to combine. Set aside.
2. Combine the 8 ounces bittersweet chocolate and the butter in a small heatproof bowl that fits on top of a small saucepan without falling in. Bring 1 inch of water to a boil in the saucepan, reduce to a simmer, then set the bowl on top. Stir until completely melted. Remove bowl from saucepan to cool slightly.
3. Combine eggs, granulated sugar and light brown sugar in the bowl of an electric stand mixer fitted with the whip attachment. Beat on medium speed to combine, scraping down the sides once. Increase speed to high and beat until pale and fluffy, about 5 minutes, scraping the bowl as needed. Add the ginger and vanilla. Beat to combine.
4. Add the melted chocolate mixture and beat on medium speed to combine. Add the flour mixture and beat on low speed until just combined. Remove bowl from mixer, scrape sides and fold a few times to make sure everything is well combined. Add the 4 ounces bittersweet chocolate chips and fold to combine.

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5. Use a small cookie scoop to scoop dough (which will be pretty runny) into generous 1-tablespoon portions. Transfer to parchment-lined baking sheets, setting each scoop 3 inches apart. Top each cookie with a good pinch of candied ginger. Bake until surface is crinkled and edges are firm, 8 to 10 minutes, rotating sheets from front to back and top to bottom halfway through.
6. Let cookies cool for a few minutes on the baking sheets, and transfer them to a wire rack to cool further.





## *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.