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Score Some Brownie Points

The history behind this classic treat plus a recipe

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Brownies are the simplest of desserts. Not having a culinary school background; and most people don't, these are a dessert that you really don't need to be a pastry chef to master. They are not part of the trendy French macaron moment, cupcake drama that has been created around "Cupcake Wars," or pie popularity with all of the pop-up pie shops featuring numerous pies in every flavor combination.

The recipe that I love is the classic one that my mother makes. My fondest memory was making brownies with unsweetened chocolate, and thinking I was being sneaky by eating some of those chunky-looking bars of baking chocolate. Little did I know that unsweetened chocolate is not the Hershey's bar that I was looking for...bitter, awkward and completely strange, that experience had me confessing to my mother that there was a problem with our chocolate. That is where I learned all about baking chocolate vs. eating chocolate.

My favorite parts were the crusty edges that my mother always cut off and put in a bowl for scrap; the crunchy bits were always the yummiest to me. The brownies themselves were creamy, fudgy and incredibly rich. Goey, buttery and delicious, even the tiniest piece satisfied my sweet tooth.

Being that brownies are so ubiquitous, it's interesting that no one really knows their history. According to culinary sources, in the early 1900's, a New Englander forgot to put baking powder in her chocolate cake batter, and it didn't rise. The results were these deeply rich dessert bars that first appeared in Fanny Farmer's Boston Cooking School Cook Book.

Our fantastic recipe has expanded to include variations from milk and white chocolate to caramel, various nut combinations, cheesecake, mint, butterscotch, peanut butter, raspberry, cappuccino, etc... The possibilities are endless. One of the best parts of making brownies is that they are so simple to make. All you need is a great hand mixer, bowl, timer, and an easy recipe like ours.

Marcia's Yummy Brownies

14 tablespoons (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ sticks of unsalted butter)

4 ounces of unsweetened baking chocolate

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of granulated sugar

4 large eggs

1 teaspoon of pure vanilla extract

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons of unbleached flour

Pinch of salt

Butter a 9 x 9 inch baking pan with butter, dust with flour and tap out the excess.

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees

Melt the chocolate and butter in a saucepan over low heat, stirring often. Set aside to room temperature.

Cream the sugar, eggs, and vanilla together. Add the cooled chocolate mixture and mix until well blended.

Measure the flour, and salt and sift together directly into the chocolate mixture. Mix the batter until combined and all dry ingredients and blended into the chocolate.

At this point if you choose to add chopped nuts, chocolate, peanut butter or butterscotch chips, stir those in.

Spread the batter into the baking pan and bake for 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean with crumbs and not batter on it.

Remove from the oven and cool before serving.

Makes 12-16 brownies depending upon how you cut them.

They are best served with a glass of cold milk! Occasionally we dust them with confectioner's sugar, or cocoa powder to garnish. Some recipes swear by their brownies being fudgy, and others cakey. Some use cocoa and others use chips. Either way you choose to make them, they will no doubt be better than any pre-packaged box brownies you could buy.

These are the brownies you remember from yesteryear. You know the ones - they're the brownies that every kid and mother bought up at every bake sale (at least they bought all of mine). Homemade, from scratch, and from Marcia!

Eat, Love, Party!



With an extensive background in luxury event planning, honed at some of the country's most exclusive hotels, Jeffrey Selden leverages his two decades-long party history in his role as Managing Partner of his family owned business, Marcia Selden Catering and Event Planning. Whether it's an opulent party for 500, or an intimate private dinner, he holds an industrywide reputation as a power event-builder with a unique, creative vision and flawless results. Marcia Selden Catering and Event Planning has been named "Best of the Gold Coast" of Fairfield County by Moffly Media for several years running, and was recently honored by The Knot as "The Best of Weddings."

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