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Almond brownies

By Susie Iventosch

Ingredients

- 3 1/2 ounces bittersweet chocolate
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 1" slice of almond paste (Odense makes one that can be found in the baking section of most markets and comes in a tooth paste shaped box)
- 1 cube unsalted butter
- dash of salt
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup unbleached flour
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds (optional)
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds, or pecans, coarsely chopped (optional)

Directions

Melt bittersweet chocolate, cocoa powder, butter and almond paste in medium-sized pot on low heat on stovetop and stir until well blended. Remove from heat. Add salt and sugar and stir until both are dissolved into chocolate-butter mixture. Add two eggs, one at a top, beating well after each - so that the egg and chocolate mixture form a spiral effect in pot. Add vanilla and flour and mix well. Stir in nuts at this time, if you wish to have nuts in the brownies.

Line metal 8x8 inch baking pan with buttered foil. Pour batter into prepared pan and sprinkle sliced almonds over top of batter. Bake in 350-degree oven for 18 minutes. Test with cake tester and if brownies still seem too wet, bake for one minute longer. If they seem just right, turn off oven and leave them in the oven for another minute. The brownies should be just slightly wet in the center when they are done baking.

Remove from oven and cool on rack. Cut into one-inch bite-sized brownies (36) or if you prefer a "big" bite of chocolate richness, cut slightly larger. Can be stored in freezer for several weeks.

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