

# The best chewy brownies with mixed nuts on top

By Susie Iventosch



Photos Susie Iventosch

Back in our April 10 issue, we featured Toasted Pecan Maple Blondies and, in that column, I mentioned that the brownies from Sprouts Farmers Market are tough to beat. Well, I think we finally have! And who doesn't love a good brownie? We think the best brownies are the classic chewy "box-type" brownies that everyone loves, only these are homemade, which makes them even better! We love the combination of toasted nuts on top, and dark chocolate chips in the center for an extra dose of chocolate. They are super easy to make and quick to bake so you won't have to wait too long for a delicious bite of chocolate nirvana!

If you don't like nuts, no worries, just don't use them, and if you love nuts, you can always add more chopped nuts to the batter. We love this combination of pistachios, almonds, walnuts, pecans, and cashews because it looks and tastes so great, but we also love our brownies with just toasted pecans on top, too. Whichever combination of nuts you pick; just remember they are always better when pre-toasted in a 350 F oven for about 5-7 minutes.

The key to baking these brownies is to slightly underbake them. Once they look almost set in the center, we take them out of the oven and let them finish baking from the residual heat.

This offers a nice crispy edge for those who love edges (like me), but the centers are dense and moist and so delicious.

We use a superior quality Dutch process cocoa powder for most things we bake with cocoa powder and this recipe is no different. To make Dutch process cocoa powder, the cocoa beans are washed with an alkaline solution to neutralize the natural acidity found in cocoa beans. It results in a smoother flavor and a darker color. The smell, texture and taste of the Dutch process cocoa powder is our favorite. Some people prefer the more acidic cocoa powders, but the brownies will be delicious either way you choose.

We prefer to bake our brownies in a metal pan lined with foil, but lately, we have been baking them in our glass 8-inch pan, also lined with foil and they've turned out beautifully. So, no need to stress if you don't have an 8-inch square metal pan. Just be sure to lower the temperature by about 10-15 degrees if you use a glass pan.

These brownies hold up well when stored in an airtight container in

the refrigerator. They stay super-moist and can be enjoyed for a week or

two. If you want to store them longer, I suggest wrapping them in plastic

wrap and freezing them in an airtight container in the freezer.

## The Best Chewy Brownies with Mixed Nuts on Top

### INGREDIENTS

- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2/3 cup Dutch processed unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tbsp. cornstarch
- 1/2 cup dark chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup walnuts pieces
- 1/4 cup pecan pieces
- 1/4 cup slivered almonds
- 1/4 cup pistachios
- 1/4 cup cashews

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350F. Line an 8-inch metal baking pan with foil. Spray the foil and any exposed sides of the pan with cooking spray.

Line a baking sheet with foil and lay the nuts out on the foil. Bake in the oven for about 5-7 minutes to toast the nuts. Remove from oven and toss all of them together in a small bowl. Set aside.

Mix flour, salt, baking soda, and cornstarch in a small bowl. Set aside.

Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Add sugar and stir until it is well-blended with the butter. Remove from stove. Add eggs, one at a time, blending well after each with a fork or wooden spoon. Add oil and vanilla and mix well. Stir in cocoa powder and mix well. Add flour mixture and mix well. Stir in chocolate chips.

Spread the batter into the prepared pan and cover with the toasted nuts. Gently press the mixed nuts ever so slightly into the batter with your fingers or a spatula.

Bake in 350F oven for 25-30 minutes. Even if they are still soft, remove from oven as they will continue to cook from the heat of the pan. Cool completely before cutting into 2-inch squares. Store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator.



Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com). If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

## In Memory

### Sheryl (Sheri) Lynn Grant Woodruff

September 7, 1944 ~ February 7, 2024



Sheri Woodruff died fighting her fight in her own bed at home after a long illness. She was born to Dorothy Jeanne (Cooper) Grant Davis and Lester Martin Grant in Oakland, California. Her parents received a surprise gift of two girls on September 7, 1944; Sheri, the elder by six minutes, and her identical twin, Sandra Lee (Sandi). Another sister, Leslie, rounded out the family 3.5 years later.

She attended Daniel Webster Elementary School, and Frick Junior High School in Oakland and moved to the Walnut Creek/Lafayette area upon her parents separation, where she attended Acalanes High School in Lafayette. Sheri was very active during high school in dance, cheerleading and choir including performing in the school musicals.

She and her sister Sandi performed a memorable duet in the musical "Oklahoma".

After high school graduation, Sheri attended Diablo Valley College while working in the offices of UC Berkeley during the height of the free speech movement. Most importantly, during this time she met her husband-to-be, Barry H. Woodruff.

Sheri and Barry celebrated their wedding on Treasure Island, San Francisco, on February 14, 1965. They "honeymooned" with a long drive back to Florida and Texas for Barry's Navy Flight Training. Thereafter they headed to a base in Maine until Barry was deployed to Viet Nam. Sheri, pregnant with their son, Grant, headed back to Lafayette and family while Barry was in Viet Nam. When Barry's deployment ended they returned to Connecticut with their new family. Grant attended school in Newtown while Sheri and Barry experienced the ups and downs of the airline industry.

The years brought many changes in where they resided and when they celebrated holidays, but there was one constant. That constant was Sheri's absolute commitment and support for Barry and his chosen profession of flying. It was this love for him that enabled him to weather the vagaries of the industry and pursue his dreams, and the family to flourish. They ultimately returned to California and settled in Burton Valley where Sheri became an active participant in the Lafayette Community. She volunteered for years in Grant's schools. She was also an active participant and leader in Book Club. Sheri was an avid reader with a particular interest and wealth of knowledge in American History and politics. She had a bold sense of humor which she frequently displayed with her Book Club group often arriving dressed appropriate to the book being discussed. During this time, she also worked in a Walnut Creek book store, gathering many books and friends along the way.

Following her tenure at the bookstore, Sheri began a long and meaningful career at Lafayette City Parks, Trails and Recreation. She was the first to respond to all manner of public inquiries both reasonable and unreasonable, which she handled with aplomb. Her wry sense of humor was legendary amongst her friends. After she retired, she continued to support the Community Center as a member of the Community Center Foundation for over nineteen years. Support included flipping pancakes at the Bunny Brunch, donating and wrapping gift baskets at the Santa's Bag Boutique and attending meetings that were filled not only with business, but also with laughs and camaraderie. She was always generous to her friends and family with time and help if they were in need.

Sheri is survived by her husband, Barry H. Woodruff; son, Grant C. Woodruff (Kiran) and four grandchildren (Drew, Alexandria, Harlow and Jasper), sister Sandi Armistead (John) and Leslie Waldie, niece Brooke Raimondo, nephews David Armistead (Sherry) and William Armistead (Audra), eight grand nephews and nieces and a multitude of devoted friends.

## In Memory

### Lionel Winton Sorenson, Jr., M.D.

June 6, 1927 - July 18, 2024



Lionel "Lee" Winton Sorenson, Jr., M.D., was the only son of Dr. Lionel Winton Sorenson, M.D., and Charlotte Edmunds. Known as "Junior" growing up, Lee spent his early years in Sandy, Utah, where his father served as the town's only physician and surgeon from 1933 to 1939.

At 10 years old, Junior spoke at the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City because they thought he was 12. To this day, the home on 32 East Main Street in Sandy remains a historical site. At the age of 12, the family moved to Corcoran, California, seeking warm weather to heal his mother from rheumatic heart disease. Unfortunately, Charlotte passed away in 1940.

Lee was active in Scouting as a boy and attended Corcoran High School for three years with his class of 44 students, leaving after his junior year for Fresno State. Lee was a star runner, participating in Fresno State's track team, known as "one of the best all-civilian teams in the country." After serving in the Navy as World War II concluded, Lee enrolled in the University of California Medical School's joint Berkeley-San Francisco program. He fell in love with ophthalmology during his medical training, completing a residency at UCSF and Santa Clara in 1956. After working in Berkeley as a private ophthalmologist for a few years, he partnered with Owen Dickson in 1956 and worked uninterrupted until March 17, 2020, when the office closed due to the worldwide pandemic. His nearly 70 years as a practicing physician belongs in the record books.

Lee's real love was always his wife and family. In 1948, during his time at the University of California, Berkeley, Lee met Ann Fornoff at the LDS Church in Berkeley. Once Ann saw the sparkle in his eye, it was instant love. Their first date, the Cal-Northwestern Rose Bowl game (13-14 loss in the last one minute), set up a lifelong love of Cal Football. They married in 1950 in the Logan Temple. Together, Ann and Lee raised five sons: John, Bob, Dan, Bruce, and Andy. Lee and Ann pursued many activities, including tennis, golf, running, water skiing, and all sorts of exercise. Lee competed in dozens of races, including the 1980 Boston Marathon. He was also an avid golfer and golf practitioner, chipping and putting every day and regularly competing at the local club for a few dollars. Famously, he would also remind you that he played with the best domino players in the world. He loved to play Boggle with all visitors and did not mind coming up short, despite some made up words. Lee served as the Sunday School President for 20 years and was known for sharing an eclectic inspirational quote prior to each class, and he sang off key in the Ward Choir for 40 years. The Sorenson home always featured music, with Lee on the guitar, Ann on the piano, and songs from the 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s shared with groups of all sorts in sing-a-long format.

Lee was known by all he met as a man of perfect integrity, genuine modesty, and absolute kindness. He was kind to everyone—patients, neighbors, grandchildren, golfers, runners, and guests. The sparkle in his eye and his cute smile never lapsed.

Lee is survived by his wife, Ann, and sons John Alan Sorenson (Miriam Smith), Robert Lynn Sorenson (Stephanie Sorenson), Bruce Fornoff Sorenson (Connie Sorenson (1958-2016); Catherine Soso), Daniel Scott Sorenson (Roberta Sorenson), and Andrew Lee Sorenson (Riki Sorenson); 21 grandchildren (Rebecca, Sarah, Stephen (d), Becca, Scott, Karen, Chris, Sandy, Krystina, Suzie, Julie, Laura, Sophie, Brenda, Skip, Kristen, Joey, Jacob, Zach, Kacey, Michael); and 31 great-grandchildren (Michael, Matthew, Grace, William, Sophie, Annemarie, Casen, Lily, Eliza, Clara, Natalie, Heidi, Wendy, Frank, Mary Lou, Harvey, Ginger, Kailee, Koen, Stanislaus, Ellie, Norm, Daphne, Donna, Eli, Georgia (d), Arik, Lionel, Isla, Gus). Another is on the way (that we know of).

Memorial Services will be held on Saturday, Aug. 3, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 3776 Via Granada, Moraga, California. Those wishing to visit with family may arrive at 9 AM. In lieu of flowers, please take your kids out for ice cream.

## Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 200 words) to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com), and include "Celebrations or Remembrances" in the subject line.