

The Healthiest, Easiest Chocolate Fudge Brownies EVER! VEGAN option! Sarah Roberts

Why I Make This: I am a *huge* chocolate fan. But I also like to keep things healthy and easy. I have played around in the kitchen long enough, and it's time to share! Here's the deal: Unless you decide to add a cup or so of chocolate chips, these Brownies won't have that quintessential ooey-goey factor. And they aren't super sweet. BUT! If you top them with the ganache I recommend, they sweeten up perfectly and they taste AMAZING. Plus, they'll leave you FEELING amazing. Win-win. Please make them, enjoy them and feed them to your family soon (and then thank me later)! Oh, and they've been kid- and teen-approved! Thanks, Kyler, Livia and Oliver! xo

INGREDIENTS

Brownies:

1 cup unsweetened organic applesauce (I like [Eden](#) brand)

1/2 cup runny almond butter (warm it up if it's not runny--runnier makes it easier to mix).

See Note 1.

¼ cup - 2/3 cup raw cacao powder (more = darker, richer; you can use cocoa powder if you don't have raw cacao powder)

¼ teaspoon Himalayan salt

2 tablespoons pure maple syrup (optional)

½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract (optional, **see Note 2**)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and grease a 9 inch square cake pan or standard loaf pan with coconut oil or butter.

2. Add the applesauce and nut butter to a mixing bowl and stir well. Then, add the cacao powder, salt, maple syrup and vanilla (if using) and mix until fully incorporated.

Transfer brownie batter to the pan and bake for 20-30 minutes at 350°F, or until a skewer comes out clean. Place pan on a wire rack to cool and allow the brownies to **cool in the pan completely**. Once cooled, refrigerate for several hours (or overnight)—this step makes ALL the difference, so plan ahead!

Once chilled, top with the ganache and cut into squares.

Note 1: I have not tried this recipe with any other nut/seed butter, but perhaps you can substitute the almond butter for cashew butter, organic peanut butter, sunflower seed butter or even tahini. Note that the flavour will change, depending on your nut/seed butter. If you do try adapting it, let me know how it turns out!

Note 2: I prefer real vanilla to an extract. To use, scrape the seeds directly from the pod. Use about ¼ of a pod for this recipe.

Note 3: You can use coconut oil for greasing the pan as well as in the ganache to keep this recipe vegan.

Heavenly Chocolate Ganache

Sarah Roberts

Why I Make This: Playing around in the kitchen to develop a healthier chocolate pudding recipe, I came up with this ganache that paired perfectly with the less-sweet brownies. I think you'll agree, this ganache takes them to a whole new level! Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS

¼ cup raw cacao powder (or cocoa powder)
2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
1/8 teaspoon Himalayan Salt
¾ cup milk (**See Note**)
2 teaspoons grass fed butter (or coconut oil to keep it vegan)

Note: I have also made this recipe vegan by substituting the milk for plain or vanilla almond milk and the butter for coconut oil. I suggest lessening the amount of almond milk to 1/2 cup, as it doesn't thicken up as much as cow's milk.

INSTRUCTIONS

In a small pot and using a whisk, over medium-high heat, add the cacao powder, salt and maple syrup. Stir gently and then add in the milk slowly, combining as you go, and bring to a boil for about 3 minutes, stirring constantly to avoid burning (be patient!). Remove from the heat and add in the butter, stirring to combine. Cool, and then spread onto fully cooled brownies.