

Sarah's Chocolate Mint Brownie Bars

Makes: 16 brownies

For the Brownies:

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
4 ounces unsweetened chocolate, coarsely chopped
1 1/4 cups granulated sugar
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
2 large eggs, at room temperature
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Line a 9-inch square baking pan with foil, leaving about an inch of overhang on the sides for easy removal. Grease the foil with softened butter or cooking spray.

Fill a saucepan with about 1 inch of water and bring it to a simmer over medium-low heat. Place a heatproof bowl over the pan so it covers the top completely. Add the chocolate and butter to the bowl and melt, stirring often, until fully melted. Remove from the heat and whisk in the sugar and vanilla extract until incorporated.

Add the eggs, one at a time, whisking vigorously after each addition. Continue whisking until the batter becomes smooth, glossy and slightly thickened, about 1 minute per egg. This step helps create the brownies' shiny, crackly top. Stir in the flour and salt until well combined.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan and use an offset spatula to spread it evenly across the surface.

Bake in the center of the oven until a toothpick inserted in the middle of the brownies comes out with just a few crumbs, about 20 to 25 minutes. The edges will start to pull away from the pan when the brownies are done. Remove from the oven and place on a wire rack to cool completely.

For the Mint Buttercream Filling:

4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) salted butter, softened
2 cups powdered sugar
1/2 teaspoon pure peppermint extract
3 tablespoons heavy cream
Green food coloring (optional, just a smidge)

Note: If using unsalted butter, add 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt to the buttercream to balance the sweetness.

In a large mixing bowl, use a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment or a hand mixer to beat the butter on medium speed for 1 minute.

Add the powdered sugar, peppermint extract and heavy cream. Beat at low speed for 30 seconds, then increase to medium speed and beat for 2 minutes, until smooth and spreadable.

Once the brownies are completely cool, spread the frosting over the top in an even layer. Cover the pan with foil or plastic wrap and refrigerate until the frosting is cool and firm, at least 30 minutes or overnight.

For the Chocolate Glaze:

1 cup semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped (or good-quality chocolate chips)
3 tablespoons butter, salted or unsalted

Place a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water so it fully covers the pan. Add the chocolate and butter to the bowl and stir gently until completely melted. Remove from the heat and stir until the glaze is smooth and shiny.

Let the glaze cool slightly for about 3 to 5 minutes before spreading so it is still fluid but not hot.

Spread the glaze over the mint buttercream in a smooth, even layer. Chill the brownies in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes until the chocolate is dry, dull and set before slicing.

To Slice:

Lift the sides of the foil to remove the brownies from the pan and transfer them to a cutting board.

For clean, bakery-style squares, chill the brownies until firm, about 1 hour.

Using a long, sharp knife dipped in hot water and wiped dry, cut the brownies in one straight motion (avoid sawing), wiping the blade clean between cuts.

For 16 brownies, cut the pan into 4 strips, rotate the pan, then cut 4 strips in the opposite direction to create even squares.

To Store:

The brownies can be refrigerated in an airtight container for 4 to 5 days or frozen for up to 2 months. Serve at room temperature.