

Rocky Road Brownies

Rocky Road—chocolate with marshmallow and nuts—has been a favorite ice cream flavor for years. Here it is in brownie form. Caramel isn't a traditional Rocky Road element but does give these some extra pizzazz.

Yield: 24 2-inch brownies

Baking temperature: 350°F

1 batch Fudge Brownie batter (recipe follows)

1 cup (5 ounces) roasted salted whole almonds, coarsely chopped, divided

2 cups (3 1/2 ounces) miniature marshmallows

Caramel for drizzling, optional

Prepare the brownie batter as directed above, folding 3/4 cup of the chopped almonds into the batter along with the 1 1/2 cups of the chocolate chips.

Bake the brownies in a preheated 350°F oven for 25 minutes. Remove from the oven, sprinkle tops evenly with marshmallows and the remaining 1/2 cup chocolate chips and 1/4 cup chopped almonds, and return to the oven for 5 to 7 minutes, until the marshmallows have softened, but aren't beginning to brown. Remove the bars from the oven and cool overnight before cutting and serving. Drizzle with melted caramel for a dressier brownie.

Fudge Brownies

These brownies walk the line between too fudgy, and perfectly moist. The balanced flavor, achieved by using both unsweetened cocoa and semisweet chocolate chips, earned us lots of “brownie points” with our taste-testers.

Yield: 24 2-inch square brownies

Baking temperature: 350°F

1 cup (2 sticks, 227g) unsalted butter

2 cups (14 ounces/400g) sugar

3/4 cup (2 1/4 ounces/64g) Dutch-process cocoa

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon espresso powder (optional)
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
4 large eggs, cold from the refrigerator
1 1/2 cups (6 3/8 ounces/180g) unbleached all-purpose flour
2 cups (12 ounces/340g) semisweet chocolate chips

In a medium-sized microwave-safe bowl, or in a 3-quart saucepan set over low heat, melt the butter, then add the sugar and stir to combine. Stir over the heat for 2 minutes or return to the microwave for 1 minute, stirring well afterward. Melting the sugar this way gives the coveted shiny papery brownie top a head start.

Stir in the cocoa, salt, baking powder, espresso powder, and vanilla. Cool the mixture until you can comfortably test it with your finger; it should feel like comfortably hot bath water. Whisk in the eggs, one at a time, stirring well after each. You'll see the batter begin to emulsify and become glossier with each egg. Add the flour and chips, again stirring until smooth. Scrape the bottom of the bowl to ensure all the flour is incorporated, then pour the batter into a lightly greased metal 9" x 13" pan.

Bake the brownies for 30 minutes, until a paring knife poked into the center reveals wet crumbs, but not raw batter. The brownies should feel set on the edges and in the center. Remove from the oven and cool on a rack before cutting and serving.

