

Culinary Outlook

Brownies are a sweet Valentine treat

FOOD



AILEEN CLAIRE

With Valentine's Day on the horizon, chocoholics have another excuse to indulge in their favorite passion. Not that too many of them hesitate to enjoy their favorite flavor. Despite the continued rash of dieting, Americans are still hooked on chocolate.



HEAVENLY chocolate chunk brownies may bring out the devil in some dieters this Valentine's Day.

According to a recent Gallup survey, chocolate is America's favorite flavor, rated ahead of any other by a 3-to-1 ratio. Men should note this tip for Valentine giving: Women are eating the most chocolate, at least 28 percent more than men. The Gallup study also reveals that the more money Americans make, the more chocolate they eat.

Although Americans are eating a large share of the chocolate pie — about 11 pounds per capita, per year — the Swiss still pull in ahead, consuming about 22 pounds per person annually.

This chocolate craze has even led to a national magazine, The Chocolatier, and a National Chocolate Week (March 12). Chocolate can be found atop fruits, nuts and hard candies. Americans can sip chocolate liqueurs and chocolate coffees. But at least one chocolate recipe failed despite our

passion for the sweet stuff — chocolate-covered grasshoppers. For those of us who like to take our chocolate in a more traditional form, this Chocolate Chunk Brownie recipe from Chocolatier magazine is doubly decadent.

CHOCOLATE CHUNK BROWNIES

- 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon double acting baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 ounce semisweet chocolate, finely chopped
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 9 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into tablespoons

- 1/4 cup light corn syrup
- 1/4 cup water
- 3 large eggs, chilled
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cups coarsely chopped walnut halves, divided
- 9 ounces milk chocolate, cut into 1/4-inch chunks, divided

Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 325 degrees. Line a 13-by-9 1/2 inch baking pan with a double thickness of aluminum foil so that the foil extends 2 inches beyond the two short ends of the pan. Fold the overhang down along the sides of the pan. Butter the foil-lined pan.

In a medium bowl, stir together the flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Place the semisweet chocolate in a large bowl.

In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar, butter, corn syrup and water. Cook over medium heat, stirring

constantly with a wooden spoon, until the butter melts, the sugar is dissolved and the mixture comes to a boil.

Remove the pan from the heat, and pour the hot syrup over the chocolate in large bowl. Let the mixture stand for 1 to 2 minutes, to melt the chocolate. Whisk until smooth.

One at a time, whisk in the eggs, blending until smooth. Whisk in the vanilla and the flour mixture, mixing until batter is smooth. Using a rubber spatula, fold in 1 cup of the walnuts and 6 ounces of the milk chocolate chunks.

Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, and spread it evenly with a spatula. Sprinkle the remaining 1/2 cup of walnuts and 3 ounces of chocolate chunks over the top of the batter. Bake the brownies for 40 to 50 minutes, or until a cake tester or toothpick inserted into the center of the brownies comes out with a few moist crumbs clinging to it. Cool the brownies in the pan set on a wire rack.

When the brownies are completely cool, cover the pan of brownies with plastic wrap, and let the brownies set at room temperature for at least 6 hours. Invert the brownies onto a large plate or cutting board. Remove the pan, and carefully peel off the foil. Invert again onto a smooth cutting surface, and cut into 24 bars. Store the brownies at room temperature in an airtight container for up to five days. This kitchen-tested recipe makes 24 brownies.

SUPER WINGS WITH CREOLE TOPPERS

- 2 packages (7 wings each) oven roasted chicken wings; or, 2 packages (6 pieces each) oven roasted drumsticks

Creole Toppers (see below)
Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In shallow baking pan arrange chicken wings in single layer. Brush Creole Topper on to wings. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until heated through. This kitchen-tested recipe makes 14 wings.

Creole Toppers — Top wings with one or more of the following combinations:

- 1/2 cup apricot preserves mixed with 1/4 cup Dijon-style mustard and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 cup barbecue sauce mixed with 1/4 cup beer and 1/4 teaspoon hot pepper sauce
- 1/4 cup ketchup mixed with 1/4 teaspoon black pepper, 1/4 teaspoon white pepper and a dash of ground red pepper

Enjoy zesty tomatoes all year long

By Aileen Claire
NEA Food Editor

Like so many food products new to Americans, dried tomatoes have made their way from trendy gourmet shops and expensive restaurants into home kitchens.

Dried tomatoes actually had a humble beginning. They were a part of the Mediterranean diet for centuries, as farmers laid vine-ripened tomatoes in the sun to dry during the summer's peak season for use in winter months.

For Ronald and Ruth Waltenspiel of Healdsburg, Calif., the growing interest in dried tomato products saved them from disaster when the demand for the organic dried fruits and nuts that they were producing dropped significantly in the early 1980s. The market for the dried tomatoes they now produce has tripled, as cooks learn how to use them.

Dried tomatoes can now be found in major supermarket chains, and their price has dropped significantly. The prices are one-half to one-third the cost of imported products. For example, a jar of U.S. marinated dried tomatoes ranges from \$4 to \$6, and halves purchased in bulk or in 3-ounce packages for \$2.50 to \$3. If the dehydrated fruit still sounds pricey, remember: It takes 17 pounds of fresh tomatoes to make one pound of dried tomatoes.

Its intense, sweet flavor makes the dried tomato a special treat during winter months when fresh tomatoes may not be as flavorful as their summer counterparts.

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 1 cup (1 1/2 ounces) dried tomato halves
- 1 cup milk
- 3 tablespoons chopped parsley
- salt and pepper, to taste

Cut stem end from squash and halve, lengthwise. Place in shallow baking pan. Add 1/4 inch water. Bake in 400-degree oven until fork-tender, 45 to 60 minutes.

Meanwhile, in 3-quart saucepan, cook onion in oil over medium heat until limp, about 5 minutes. Add water and tomatoes. Bring to boiling; simmer 5 minutes.

Discard squash seeds. Scoop squash pulp into container of electric blender or food processor. Add contents of saucepan. Blend until smooth. Return to saucepan. Mix in milk and parsley. Simmer 3 minutes. Thin with a little additional water, if desired. Season with salt and pepper. Serve hot. This kitchen-tested recipe makes 4 to 6 servings (about 6 cups).

Optional garnish: Soak 10 or 12 dried tomato halves in boiling water 2 minutes; drain. Whisk 1/4 cup sour cream with 1 tablespoon milk. Top of each soup serving with sour cream mixture and 2 or 3 tomatoes.

To microwave squash: Cut stem end from squash and halve, lengthwise. Place cut sides down in shallow microwave dish; add 1/4 inch water. Cover with plastic wrap. Microwave on high power 12 to 14 minutes until fork-tender, turning once.

SALAD KABOBS

- 1 jar (8 ounces) marinated dried tomatoes
- 1 pound (3 medium) new potatoes, cooked just until tender, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1/2 pound medium shrimp, cooked and shelled
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon chopped, fresh basil or 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 2 cups bite-size raw vegetable pieces (red bell pepper, celery, cucumber, mushrooms)
- lettuce leaves

Drain oil from tomatoes into large bowl; set aside tomatoes. Add potatoes, shrimp, garlic and basil to oil; mix to coat. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour.

To assemble, alternately thread tomatoes, potatoes, shrimp and raw vegetable pieces onto 12, 6-inch bamboo skewers, dividing equally. Line six individual plates with lettuce. Arrange two skewers on each plate. Drizzle with remaining oil mixture. This kitchen-tested recipe makes 6 servings.

GOLDEN DRIED TOMATO SOUP

- 1 butternut squash (about 2 pounds)
- 1 medium onion, sliced



DISTRIBUTORS

BEACHWEAR HAS NOW ARRIVED!

873-0500

71 Main St. S., Georgetown

Try these tasty tomato treats

FRESH TOMATO AND MUSHROOM SAUCE

- 1 pound tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1/2 cup dry white wine or wine vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon paprika

Use tomatoes held at room temperature until fully ripe. Dice tomatoes; there should be about 2 cups; set aside. In a medium saucepan, heat oil. Add onion and garlic; saute until onion is transparent, about 5 minutes. Stir in mushrooms, wine, salt, Italian seasoning and reserved tomatoes; simmer, covered, stirring frequently until tomatoes and mushrooms are softened, about 4 minutes.

Combine water, cornstarch and paprika in cup; stir into saucepan. Cook and stir until clear and slightly thick-

ened, about 1 minute. Pour cornstarch mixture into tomatoes. Serve sauce over freshly cooked and drained pasta. This kitchen-tested

CINNAMON BAKED TOMATOES

- 6 small (about 1 1/2 pounds) Florida tomatoes
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup soft bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine, melted
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 pinch ground black pepper

Use tomatoes held at room temperature until fully ripe. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut a thin slice from the stem end of each tomato. Place tomatoes, cut-side up, in a greased, shallow baking pan. Sprinkle

cut surface of each tomato with salt.

Combine bread crumbs, butter, cinnamon and black pepper. Sprinkle mixture evenly on each tomato. Bake until tomatoes are tender and crumbs are golden, 10 to 12 minutes.

Note: If desired, cut tomatoes into 1-inch thick slices; place in a baking pan. Double crumb mixture and sprinkle over tomatoes. Bake for 5 to 8 minutes. This kitchen-tested recipe makes 6 servings.

J. V. Clothing
Men's • Ladies' • Children's
ALTERATIONS & REPAIRS
877-1598

Elizabeth's Fashions
Bridal Boutique
77 Main Street South
Downtown Georgetown
873-1470

Delacour's
For All Your Fine China,
Silver, Crystal & Giftware
227 MAIN ST. MILTON
878-0050

CRITERION CARPET & RUG CO. LTD. SAVINGS ALL YEAR LONG!
SALES—SERVICE INSTALLATIONS
CARPET—VINYL TILE
126 GUELPH ST. Georgetown, Ont. L7G 4A5
(416) 877-1012 (416) 484-4780

ASK KATHY:

KATHY HAJAS
Diet Center Counselor

Dear KATHY
I've been dieting faithfully for two weeks without losing an ounce. What could be the problem?

Reply:
If you have been dieting for some time, it is likely that you are experiencing a plateau. Plateaus amount to a period of adjustment that your body makes to its new weight. Plateaus are very discouraging to people who don't understand them, but this discouragement isn't usually warranted, since plateaus are usually followed by brisk weight loss. One way to avoid discouragement is to measure yourself. You will often find that you are continuing to lose inches throughout the plateau. Watching the inches melt away is as satisfying as watching the pounds go.

At Diet Center we teach dieters the significance of plateaus and what they mean. Regular measuring is done throughout the plateau period to show dieters that they are continuing to lose inches even though they still weigh the same. If you have become discouraged during plateaus before and possibly quit dieting, call Diet Center today for a free consultation and let us show you how plateaus can be milestones on the pathway to success.

HOW TO WEIGH THE LOSING GAME
DIET CENTER
Personal Consultation By Appointment
Business Number 877-2900
Home Number 853-0780
98 Mill St. Downtown Georgetown
VISA

MY GENERATION
"Fashions For The Young At Heart"
115 MAIN ST. S., GEORGETOWN
Across From Knox Church 873-2851