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BEER BROWNIES

Another excellent contender for a Valentine's Day gift or dessert! While these are a tad more work than regular brownies, boiling beer on the stove until it reduces to a syrup is the best flavor enhancement possible for warm, chocolatey brownies. You'll use the beer syrup in the brownies and a little in the frosting too. Only use the optional unsweetened chocolate if you like fudgy brownies; omit it if you prefer more cake-y brownies.

Makes 2 generous servings

FOR THE BEER BROWNIES:

1 cup dark beer (I used coffee stout)
8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter
½ cup + 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
1 cup + 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped (optional)
1 large egg white
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
½ cup all-purpose flour

FOR THE FROSTING:

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1 cup powdered sugar

First, make the beer concentrate: Add the beer to a small saucepan and boil until it reduces to 1/3 cup. It will take about 20 minutes. Keep an eye on it to prevent it from boiling over.

Preheat the oven to 325°F and line a loaf pan with parchment paper. In a microwave-safe bowl, combine the butter, cocoa powder, sugar, and unsweetened chocolate (if using). Microwave at full power for 30 seconds. Stir, then microwave for another 30 seconds. Let the mixture cool for 1 minute.

Stir in 4 tablespoons of the beer concentrate, the egg white, vanilla, and salt.

Finally, mix in the flour and stir for 50 strokes to incorporate and activate the gluten in the flour.



Pour the mixture into the loaf pan and bake for 40 to 45 minutes. It's done when the surface is dry and an inserted toothpick has only moist crumbs sticking to it. Let cool.

Once the brownies are cool, make the frosting: beat together the softened butter and powdered sugar until combined. Beat in the remaining beer concentrate (1 tablespoon). Frost the brownies and serve.



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