

# Best Cocoa Brownies

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Recipe source: [Smitten Kitchen](#) originally from Alice Medrich's [Bittersweet](#) cookbook



## **INGREDIENTS:**

- 10 tablespoons (140 grams) unsalted butter
- 1 1/4 cups (250 grams) granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons (65 grams, may vary by brands) unsweetened cocoa powder (natural or Dutch-process)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt (or a heaping 1/4 teaspoon flaky salt, as I used)
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs, cold
- 1/2 cup (65 grams) all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup (75 grams) walnut or pecan pieces (optional)

## **DIRECTIONS:**

- Position a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat the oven to 325°F.
- Line the bottom and sides of an 8×8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper or foil, leaving an overhang on two opposite sides.
- Combine the butter, sugar, cocoa, and salt in a medium heatproof bowl and melt them together in the microwave. Use short 20-second bursts, then stir, and heat again until butter is melted.
- Set the bowl aside briefly until the mixture is only warm, not hot. It looks fairly gritty at this point, but don't worry — it smooths out once the eggs and flour are added.
- Stir in the vanilla with a wooden spoon.
- Add the eggs one at a time, stirring vigorously after each one.
- When the batter looks thick, shiny, and well blended, add the flour and stir until you cannot see it any longer, then beat vigorously for 40 strokes with the wooden spoon or a rubber spatula.
- Stir in the nuts, if using.
- Spread evenly in the lined pan.

- Bake until a toothpick plunged into the center emerges slightly moist with batter, about 30 minutes. (Smitten Kitchen says: put them in the fridge or freezer for a while; it helps firm them up to cut with clean lines.)
- Lift up the ends of the parchment or foil liner, and transfer the brownies to a cutting board. Cut into 16 or 25 squares.
- Make ahead note: Brownies will freeze well and keep for two months. Freeze as a full block; do not cut into pieces. Wrap brownie block in plastic wrap (two layers), then aluminum foil. Place the whole thing in a freezer storage bag.