

Salted Cacao Brownies

Brownies are one of my favorite desserts, both for their intense chocolate flavor and their ease of preparation. It's one of those things I'll never understand buying a mix for. You can usually mix them up in one bowl — well, this recipe you can, anyway.

But, even the best brownie recipes can use some improvement. And what better improvement than crunchy, caramelized cocoa beans and coarse sea salt?

This is an easy recipe. Melt your butter and chocolate, add the remaining ingredients and bake. It's the perfect decadent treat when you need to treat yourself, and while I don't advocating eating brownies all day everyday, I think most of us probably need a treat now more than ever.

So the next time you're feeling down, bake up these brownies. You can thank me later.

Salted Cacao Brownies

Makes 16

Prep time: 40 minutes

2 sticks (8 ounces) unsalted butter, cut into cubes
10 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
1 3/4 cups sugar
4 eggs
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1 1/4 cups flour
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1 bag Ava Jane's Kitchen Caramelized Cacao, chopped
Colima Sea Salt

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a 9x13 baking dish with parchment or spray with cooking spray.

Put the butter and chocolate in a microwave safe mixing bowl. Microwave until melted and smooth, stirring every 20-30 seconds.

Add the sugar and whisk until combined. Let cool for 5 minutes.

Add the eggs and vanilla and whisk until the batter is glossy and pulls away from the side of the bowl.

Fold the flour into the batter and stir until incorporated.

Pour the batter into your pan and smooth out with a spatula.

Sprinkle the chopped cacao over top and bake for 25-30 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Sprinkle with Colima Sea Salt

Let cool completely and cut into squares.