

Peace Offering

By Hannah Kaminsky, *My Sweet Vegan* - Feeling for all the world as if I had just swallowed a ton of bricks, the dread of leaving for school grew only more powerful as the hours passed, my days in a comfortable home numbered and quickly slipping away. There wasn't a thing I could say to express my jumbled emotions, no matter how I tried to talk through it, ignore it, or try to keep my mind off it; I'm simply no good at keeping anxiety at bay. Laying awake in bed, pondering what on earth might make my mind at ease, there was only one answer that kept coming back, echoing through the depths of that tired brain, but I was desperate enough to try anything.

Early the next morning, before the first light had even filtered in through my bed room window, the oven was already cranking away at full speed. Yes, baking does calm me down, and even better, I could make a treat for my new roommate and perhaps bribe a few new friends to think of me kindly. Still reeling a bit from my last baking venture, successfully signing off on a full half-dozen new recipes, there would be no fancy-pants decorating or masterful creations here, but instead something that I myself might find comforting if dropped in an unfamiliar place with only odd eatables around. Subtracting as many ingredients that might be offensive as possible, I arrived at the perfect recipe that needed only to be veganized: Dorie Greenspan's Korova Cookies, also known as Peace Cookies. Considering how I planned to use them as a crutch to be accepted by my dorm mates, I could only hope that they might become Peace Offering Cookies as well.

...And can I tell you? I think I made a lot of new friends already. Korova Cookies

Adapted from Dorie Greenspan's Paris Sweets 1 1/4 Cups All-Purpose Flour

1/3 cup Cocoa Powder

1/2 Teaspoon Baking Soda

1/2 Cup + 3 Tablespoons Margarine

2/3 Cup Dark Brown Sugar

1/4 Cup Granulated Sugar

1/2 Teaspoon Salt

1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract

5 Ounces Bittersweet Chocolate, Chopped

Begin by beating the margarine in your stand mixer just to soften it up a bit, and then cream in both sugars, salt, and vanilla, mixing until creamy and fully combined. In a separate bowl, mix together the flour, cocoa, and baking powder, and slowly sift these dry ingredients into the mixer. Stir on a low speed until just combined, and toss in the chocolate chunks. Again, mix very little in order to simply distribute the chocolate, but manipulate the dough as little as possible. It should still seem rather dry and crumbly.

Divide the dough into two lumps, press them together gently to form two logs, and wrap them up in plastic wrap. Place them in the fridge to chill for at least one hour.

Once thoroughly chilled, go ahead preheat your oven to 325 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silpats. Slice the cookie logs into 1/4 inch rounds- Don't worry if you mush them into strange oval shapes, as you can easily reform them with your hands after placing them on the prepared baking sheets. Be sure to give the cookies plenty of room to breathe, since it should be no problem fitting them all on both sheets with lots of space between each. Bake them for 12 - 14 minutes, and although they will not look completely done, they will no longer be so shiny on top and appear to have firmed around the edges. Leave the cookies on the sheet to cool so that they can finish cooking and solidifying. This will leave you with a delightfully soft and chewy cookie!

[Supposedly makes about 36 cookies, but I only got 18.] Hannah Kaminsky writes for Go Dairy Free and the Bittersweet Blog. Her new dessert cookbook, *My Sweet Vegan*, is now available.