

## Shortcuts: Baking Dairy-Free, Egg-Free Brownies from a Mix

From scratch is (almost) always better, but sometimes baking from a mix offers a nice break and a quick dessert when you just don't feel like the hassle. So when Kathy at WNY Food Allergy Connection was kind enough to email her tested recipe for making egg-free, dairy-free brownies from a mix, I thought it suitable to dedicate a post to brownie mixes for special diets and include her recipe.

For starters, what mixes can you buy? Many brands contain milk in the ingredients, so reading labels is essential (that includes double checking the brands I list here, just in case the ingredients or processes have changed!). If you want to go dairy-free, egg-free, and most other allergens-free without the concern of a special recipe, I recommend giving Cherrybrook Kitchen a whirl. Cherrybrook runs a dairy, egg, and nut-free kitchen, and they offer both a regular and gluten-free mix. However, if you want to pick a more mainstream brand off the shelves at your local grocer, you do have a few options ...

Keep in mind, if you are dealing with a severe or life-threatening food allergies, mainstream brands can be more hazardous since they are often dealing with greater quantities of products and more layers of communication in terms of processes. So, always check on ingredients and processes prior to consumption.

Some of the easiest to find brands that offer varieties without milk and egg ingredients include Duncan Hines (seek out selections such as the Premium Chewy Fudge, Premium Dark Chocolate Fudge, and Chocolate Lover's Double Fudge), Arrowhead Mills, Manischewitz, and Dr. Oetker (including the Added Touch brand). For more brand options, including gluten-free, see our product lists.

Most brownie mixes such as those above, call for oil, eggs, and water in preparation, allowing them to remain dairy/milk-free, but causing a problem for vegans or those who cannot eat eggs (or who simply don't have any eggs on hand!). Kathy's egg-free remedy uses a store-bought egg replacer from Ener-G. A little goes a long way with Ener-G, so once you get your hands on a good supply, you can expect many batches of baked goods ahead. It can be found in natural food stores, some mainstream grocers, and if all else fails, it is available worldwide online. For a mix option without a store-bought egg replacer, trial the tip following this recipe.

### Milk- and Egg-Free Brownie Mix Adaption

- 1 box of brownie mix (13x9 size), (This recipe was tested several times with Duncan Hines brownie mix)
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup oil
- 1/4 cup water + 4 heaping teaspoons Ener-G egg replacer, mixed together

Preheat oven to 350°F and grease an 8x12-inch or 9x13-inch pan.

In a medium bowl, stir ingredients together. Pour into greased pan, spread evenly.

Bake for 25-35 minutes (test after 25 minutes), until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool and cut into squares. Freezes well.

NOTE: There are 3 big keys for this recipe to work ...

- The proportions & Ener-G's box says use 1 ½ t of ener-g + 2 T water. That's not enough, boost it to 2 heaping teaspoons ener-g.
- Mix the ener-g & water before adding to the mix or it will not work. Bake quickly after mixing or it won't work as well.
- The brownie mix says use ½ cup oil & ¼ cup of water. That will not work, it will come out flat, greasy, and chewy (not a good kind of chewy). After experimenting with quantities, I found the opposite proportions work best.

No Ener-G on hand? This works quite well for cake mixes, and I have heard rumor it also works well for brownie mixes. Replace everything (eggs, oil, and water) with 1 15-ounce can of pumpkine puree for a lower fat and vegan brownie. The brownies may need a slightly longer cooking time, but they should come out nice and fudgy.