

## Gluten-Free Essentials Chocolate Mint Fudge Brownie Mix (Vegan, Gluten-Free)

With several cake and brownie mixes to choose from, I was pleasantly surprised when my ten-year old niece picked the Mint Fudge Brownie Mix to prepare. She loves to bake, but lucky for me, she had no idea what gluten-free meant. Though many children now live with Celiac Disease and gluten intolerance, my niece, to the best of our knowledge, doesn't have a problem with wheat. With no awareness that these brownies are "different"; she was the perfect taste tester.

I almost lost my niece's interest when she saw that the mix called for applesauce, but after convincing her that it wouldn't be detectable in the final product, she eagerly began measuring and mixing. As to be expected with any good mix, preparation was a snap. We needed only 2 eggs, 2/3 cup applesauce (we used unsweetened), and one stick of "butter" (we used Earth Balance Buttery Sticks).

After impatiently waiting for the half-hour baking time, cooling was not an option. We dove into the generously sized 9x13 inch pan of brownies within seconds of pulling them out. Though they were easier to remove ten minutes later, we were able to extract a few samples with little loss. My niece was elated; they were delicious! She quickly removed several from the pan to distribute to her sisters and the chocoholic adults who had suddenly appeared near the kitchen. Their timeliness could have been a coincidence, but somehow I think it was the wafting smell of fresh baked brownies.

I had been hesitant on the mint version for kids, but these brownies had a very mild mint flavor that just influenced the overall chocolate background. Unlike many dairy-free brownies, these were not intense with cocoa or dark chocolate flavor. They had the simple, sweet flavor and texture of everyone's favorite chocolate cake. The fact that these were gluten-free became completely irrelevant, as not a single person in our household noticed any difference between these and traditional brownies. It is true that I am the only one of the bunch, who currently eats wheat-free, and only the adults were dairy-free. But...it was wonderful to be able to share the same foods and indulgences with my family (and kids even!) without concern or even mention of my diet. As far as everyone was concerned, these were just great brownies!

### My Extra Notes and Tips:

- All mixes from Gluten-Free Essentials are touted as dairy-free, nut-free, soy-free, and obviously gluten-free. As noted below, this mix does contain soy lecithin, which is seldom a problem for soy allergies and intolerances.
- We polished off the whole pan as is, but these would make an awesome base to a brownie sundae topped with dairy-free vanilla or mint chip "ice cream." I also thought a nice drizzle of glaze could add a decorative and delicious dessert topping.
- These are most definitely cake-like brownie, so they are a bit more prone to crumbling than the dense and moist versions. It is best to let these cool for a half hour before slicing and removing...if possible.
- Ingredients: Sorghum flour, rice flour, sugar, chocolate chips (chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, soy lecithin, sugar, salt, vanilla, peppermint oil), salt, vanilla, cocoa powder, GF baking powder, guar gum.
- The people at Gluten-Free Essentials have successfully used various egg replacers with their mixes, so these brownies can be prepared egg-free and/or vegan.

Where to Purchase: All GF Essentials baking mixes can be purchased directly on the Gluten-Free Essentials Website.