

K's Kitchen: Adult-style brownies

By Kathryn Reed

A few years ago I went on a Port and brownie binge. So much so that it was a long time before I would consume either one, let alone having them together.

Dec. 8 is National Brownie Day. And, really, who doesn't love brownies? They don't have to be made from scratch to be good. Plenty of box brands turn into edible delights.



At Latcham Vineyards in Fair Play tastings are done in an old barn, with cheese and chocolate creations at the far corner. Port is the secret ingredient in Margaret Latcham's brownies.

Port comes from Oporto, Portugal, and unless it's from there, it must be called a port-style wine. However, Ports can be made with grapes other than Port. Ports have more sugar and alcohol content compared to an average bottle of wine.

Paul Bush, winemaker and owner of Madrona Vineyards in Camino, uses about seven Portuguese varietals to come up with his creation.

Vaughn Jodar of Jodar Vineyards uses the uppermost rows of Cabernet Sauvignon grapes for his Port.

I made three pans of brownies. In the process of trying to keep all things equal, I didn't. I only have two 9 x 13 pans, so the third batch in the 8 x 13 pan was thicker. Then I forgot to toss the additional chocolate chips into one batch. I didn't use a frosting because too much chocolate gives me a

migraine.

I had about a half dozen people sample all three brownies. All but one liked the extra chocolate – but that person isn't a chocoholic. The other batches were equally well liked. So, I can't say the port makes a huge difference in the brownies, but it did make a difference when Sue and I tasted the three brownies with the three ports.

Sue voted for the Jodar Black Bear 2003 Port.

I like the Latcham 2003 Select Port because it isn't as sweet and didn't taste like a typical Port.

But we both emphatically say "no" to the question: Is there a Port you wouldn't drink or a brownie you wouldn't eat?

The other Port I cooked with was the Granite Springs 2003 Petite Sirah Estate Port. The Latchams also own this winery.

The following is Margaret's recipe and all the personal comments are hers.

Margaret's Pass the Port Brownies

2 sticks butter

8 ounces semi-sweet chocolate chips (or coarsely chopped semi-sweet chocolate)

4 large eggs

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ C granulated sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ C Latcham Select Port or Granite Springs Petite Sirah Port

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking powder

1 C all-purpose flour

$\frac{1}{4}$ C unsweetened cocoa powder

1 C additional semi-sweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and lightly flour two 13 by 9 baking pans. Place the butter and chocolate chips in the top of a double-boiler over hot water. Stir the mixture until the butter and chocolate are completely melted and smooth. Remove the butter and chocolate from the top of the double boiler and allow this mixture to cool.

In the large mixing bowl, beat together the eggs and sugar until well blended, then blend in the port and cooled chocolate mixture. Blend in the flour, salt, baking soda and cocoa, mixing until all the ingredients are well incorporated. Fold in the additional cup of chocolate chips if desired.

Pour batter into the two prepared pans and bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until a knife inserted into the center of the pans comes out with a few moist crumbs clinging to it. While the brownies are cooling on racks, cover each pan with foil. This will enable the brownies to continue to steam a bit while cooling and ensure their moistness!

Frosting and toppings: Chocolate butter cream frosting, top with chopped nuts, chocolate chips, peanut butter cups, crushed Oreos, or candy bars and drizzle with chocolate syrup! Our motto with the brownies is "More is better – don't hold back!" Of course, any good red wine such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Barbera, or Petite Sirah is also an excellent substitute for the port in the brownie recipe. Also liqueurs, such as Frangelico, Amaretto, Crème de Cacao, and Kahlua, as well as rum and bourbon are excellent additions to the brownie recipe! This recipe is a work in progress and should be fun – a pleasure to make and even more fun to eat!!

(This recipe makes 2 batches of brownies.)