

Lunch Lady Brownies That Taste Just Like the Classic School Cafeteria Treat

1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder



OVEN
350°F

TIME
25 to 30 min

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INGREDIENTS

For the brownies:

- 1 cup butter, melted
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

For the frosting:

- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3 cups powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven. Set your oven to 350°F and grease a 9x13-inch baking pan or line it with parchment paper.
2. Mix the brownie batter. In a large bowl, whisk together the melted butter and cocoa powder until smooth. Add the flour and sugar, then stir in the eggs and vanilla extract until fully combined.
3. Spread and bake. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and spread it evenly. Bake for about 25 to 30 minutes, or until the center is set and a toothpick comes out with a few moist crumbs.
4. Make the frosting. While the brownies are baking, mix the softened butter, milk, cocoa powder, powdered sugar, and vanilla until smooth and spreadable.
5. Frost while warm. Once the brownies come out of the oven, let them cool just slightly, then spread the frosting over the warm top. The heat helps the frosting glide on and settle into that classic shiny layer.
6. Cool and slice. Let the brownies cool completely before cutting into squares.

SWAPS & NOTES

You can use Dutch-process cocoa for a slightly deeper chocolate flavor, though regular unsweetened cocoa works beautifully and keeps that classic brownie taste.

If you want a little extra richness, add a pinch of salt to both the brownie batter and the frosting to sharpen the chocolate flavor.

These brownies are traditionally made in a sheet pan or 9x13-inch pan, which gives them that familiar lunchroom-style look.

For clean slices, let them cool fully before cutting, though I will admit they are hard to resist while still a little warm.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

The key to their soft, nostalgic texture is pulling them from the oven when they are just set.

A few moist crumbs on a toothpick are exactly what you want.

If you wait for a fully dry toothpick, the brownies can turn out more dry than tender.

The frosting is also part of what makes these special, so spread it while the brownies are still warm but not piping hot.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](#)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/lunch-lady-brownies-that-taste-just-like-the-classic-school-cafeteria-treat/>