

Brownies: Lulu Purnell

Brownies Lulu Purnell says brownies should be crispy on the outside and chewy on the inside. they're not a cake, they're not fudge and they're not a cookie, but something completely different.

About Lulu

Lulu Purnell started out baking goods for cafes when she was studying at university. After graduating and realising she wasn't suited to a desk job, she turned her passion for baking brownies into a full-time job.

Lulu now owns and runs I Heart Brownies, a Brisbane bakery that specialises in handcrafted, gluten-free brownies, with stores in inner-city Bowen Hills and the Brisbane CBD.

On the making of brownies, Lulu says, "With baking, it's mostly a science and you really do need to stick to the recipe or you're going to end up with something very weird. That said, there is also a little bit of freedom and if you can play with the way things are done you can end up with something really special. So it's worth enjoying it and having fun with it too."

Brownies: Lulu Purnell

Brownies

WHAT TO DO Brownies: Lulu Purnell

1. CHOOSING THE INGREDIENTS

A lot of people have their favourite brownie recipe they swear by, which might be their friend's nan's cousin's grandmother's; they love it and that's fantastic. But your basic brownie recipe will have common ingredients, which are

cocoa, flour—whether it be gluten-free or not—eggs, butter, chocolate and sugar.

We always use real butter, unless it's our dairy-free brownie in which case we use coconut oil. We always use free-range eggs because they taste a lot better, and a regular white caster sugar, which is great for baking. You can always go down that healthier route and use coconut sugar but the end product is going to taste more molassessey, but that's great, too. **SAVE PRINT**We always use couverture dark chocolate because brownie recipes, generally, contain a lot of sugar, and the dark bittersweet chocolate doesn't add that extra sugary element to it. And then we always use a Belgian dark chocolate cocoa.

So what you want is that really dark, rich, cocoa flavour with your dark bittersweet chocolate, balanced with the super sweetness of the sugar, and all held together with that creaminess that come from the base and the fillings.

It's important to maintain the quality of ingredients you would if you were going to bake at home for your family and friends. At the end of the day, the customer is going to taste the product, and they'll know whether it's made of quality ingredients or not—there's really no way around it.

2. MIXING THE EGGS, SUGAR AND BUTTER

Gently break up your eggs, and then mix through your sugar until it's just combined.

Generally, when you're mixing eggs and sugar you get a really light and aerated mixture; with our brownies, we don't want that, we just want to combine them.

If you over mix the sugar and eggs you'll end up with a puffy meringuey top, and if that's what you want that's great—a lot of brownies are like that—but it's not what we do.

To maintain our heart shape we want the brownie to be flat, so

we don't want bubbles. The mixing's done when it's just combined—about three seconds.

Then add your melted butter until it's just mixed.



3. FOLDING THROUGH THE DRY INGREDIENTS

We tip the egg mixture into cocoa flour and chocolate chips, which we've already combined.

We don't melt our chocolate chips so we get chunky chocolate chips in the brownies at the end. Not all of the chocolate chips will stay formed so you'll have some that will melt into the mixture and others that won't melt so much, so you end up with a combination in the brownie.

We fold it through just until you can't see any dry powder in the mix.



4. RESTING AND SPRAYING

We use silicon moulds so we don't have to line them; they're lovely to use time and time again.

Once the moulds are filled we rest them in the fridge overnight and then bake them when the mixture is still cold. That way, the brownies don't rise as quickly.

Also, if you're looking for a flatter top—a less ugly bubbly top—you can spray the brownies with a little bit of water just before you bake them.



5. BAKING

We bake on a low heat around 160°C for around 25 minutes.



6. PREPARING THE FILLING

Our salted caramel brownie is the most popular brownie that we have. We have to limit the amount that we can sell every day, and usually they're sold out before lunchtime, but you can use any filling you like.

There are a lot of recipes for salted caramel and when most people think of caramel sauce they think, oh my God, I've got to get a candy thermometer and I've got to watch it with my life and if I let it go over then it's going to be ruined. Forget all of that.

Go back to absolute basics and just throw your ingredients together; it results in a phenomenal product and it only takes a few minutes.

You're melting butter in a pan with brown sugar until all of your butter is melted and then you're just combining those two, cooking them for a couple of minutes to let that caramelize.

Then you whisk in your thickened cream. When that's combined, you leave it on the heat for about five minutes and then you add a little bit of salt, and that's it!

Brownies: Lulu Purnell

If you like super salty sauce then add a little bit more salt. If you don't want any salt, don't add any—it'll still be great.

We make about two litres at a time and we'll make it every day so everything is really fresh.



7. FILLING THE BROWNIES

If you were going to fill a product like a doughnut you'd use some sort of syringe method. You can't do that with brownies because they're so dense inside; as soon as you try to pipe something into it, it just spits it right back out. If we could do it the syringe way we could make millions of them, but we're forced to comply with the limitations of the brownie and that's what's keeping them more handmade, which is kind of really nice; not everything can be mechanised.

We want the brownie to be a little bit warm still. As soon as

the chocolate sets it's really hard to dig into them. We wet the knife to make sure it doesn't stick and cut a chunk out of the middle to fill it with sauce—get a nice big amount in there.

When the sauce is cold it's quite stiff and difficult to work with so keep it at room temperature.



8. FINISHING THE BROWNIE

After we fill the brownie with sauce, we invert the chunk that we cut out and place it back in so the top part is now on the inside and the bottom part is on the top. Having the soft side on top allows us to do plastic surgery on the brownie so you can't tell that anything's happened. Brownies: Lulu Purnell we just smooth it over with a knife to recreate that flat surface and then dust over the top.





LuLu's (Life Changing) Salty Cara Sauce

WHAT YOU NEED

50g butter
150g brown sugar
200ml thickened cream
pinch of salt

WHAT TO DO

* best to use a heavy based pan

1. Melt butter and sugar together in a saucepan and let bubble for a few minutes to caramelise.
2. Whisk in cream until fully combined.
3. Add salt.
4. Let simmer for 5-10 minutes until it is a deep golden colour.
5. Remove from heat and serve (or eat directly from the pot with a spoon). Can be refrigerated for up to two weeks.

SAVE
PRINT