



Candy Cap "Fudge" Filled Brownie Bars

1 cup boiling water
1/4 ounce dried candy cap mushrooms (about 1/2 cup)
8 ounces pitted dried dates, coarse chop
1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted
4 ounces dark chocolate chips
1-1/2 cups granulated sugar
3 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
1-1/2 cups all purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 Tablespoon unsweetened cocoa
1/4 cup mini semi-sweet chocolate chips

Candy Cap Fudge Filling:

1/4 teaspoon salt
About 6 Tablespoons mushroom liquid
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1 teaspoon ground dried candy cap mushrooms, optional

In a small bowl, pour boiling water over candy cap mushrooms; set aside for 15 to 20 minutes. Remove tender mushrooms from liquid, press excess liquid from mushroom; cut off any hard parts; set aside softened mushrooms.

Strain mushroom liquid, pour over chopped dates; set aside for about 15 minutes..

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line 8 inch square baking dish or pan with foil or parchment; spray with oil to grease pan and sides. Set aside

Place butter and dark chocolate chips in microwave safe bowl; cook on high heat in microwave for 45 seconds to 1 minute. Stir to melt chocolate chips and mixture is smooth. Place in mixing bowl, mix in sugar and eggs, beating in one at a time. Add vanilla.

Combine flour, baking powder, salt and unsweetened cocoa. Stir in combined flour to form thick batter. Evenly spread half of batter into prepared pan. Stir mini chocolate chips into remaining chocolate batter. Set batter aside. Place pan in preheated 350 degree F oven; bake for 15 minutes. Remove from oven; set aside to cool.

Meanwhile prepare filling. Remove dates from liquid; set aside liquid. Place dates In food processor or high powered blender, process dates, salt, reserved softened candy cap mushrooms and 2 Tablespoons rehydrated mushroom liquid. Continue processing and adding about 4 more Tablespoons liquid until mixture is creamy. Set aside.

Drop teaspoons of filling over baked crust' spread over brownie crust. Drop spoonfuls of remaining brownie batter over the top; Swirl and spread brownie mixture over filling with back of spoon. Sprinkle chopped pecans and if desired ground candy cap mushrooms over the entire top. Return to oven; bake for 25 minutes. Cool in pan for 30 minutes. Place in refrigerator to chill for easier cutting.

To serve: Lift foil-lined bars from pan; remove foil. Cut with sharp knife into 16 bars. Serve chilled or room temperature for dessert.

Yield: 16 brownie bars

Recipe Inspired by: Thrift Way Crave September/October 2017

Cook's Note: If you only want a light touch of maple in your recipe, use 1/8 ounce candy cap dried mushrooms. Rehydrate your dried mushrooms according to the package directions. I used 1 cup of boiling water for 1/4 ounce candy cap dried mushrooms. Save leftover liquid to flavor other recipes. To grind mushrooms: I used a small coffee grinder and ground 12 dried candy cap mushrooms, which produced 1 Tablespoon ground mushrooms. Remember to thoroughly clean out the grinder or it will flavor your coffee too.

About this Recipe: You will not believe how delicious these brownie bars are! They are filled with different types of chocolate and the dates combine with the maple flavored candy cap mushrooms to create a soft, fall-flavored filling. We like to serve them chilled. They are very rich and highly addictive.