

Chocolate Lavender Brownies

1 teaspoon dried culinary 'Provence' lavender buds
3 cups sugar
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons unsweetened Dutch-process Cocoa powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon instant espresso powder or instant coffee powder
 $\frac{3}{4}$ pound (3 sticks) unsalted butter
4 large eggs
2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans (optional)

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Butter a 9" x 13" baking dish.

Place the lavender in a spice (or coffee) grinder with 1 tablespoon of the sugar. Pulse until the lavender is finely ground. Transfer to a large bowl. Add the flour, cocoa, salt, espresso or coffee powder, and the remaining sugar. Mix well.

Place the butter in a medium microwave-safe bowl and microwave on High power for 1 minute at a time until melted. Let cool for a few minutes. Whisk in the eggs and vanilla.

Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and pour in the butter mixture. Using a wooden spoon, mix until just combined. Stir in the nuts (if using). Pour into the prepared pan and smooth the top. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out mostly clean.