

CHERRY CHOCOLATE BLONDIES, WITH TOASTED WALNUTS

INGREDIENTS

1 cup butter (2 sticks) softened to room temperature
3/4 cup brown sugar
3/4 cup white sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 eggs
2 1/4 cup all purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 1/4 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 cup dried cherries
3 tablespoons rum
1 cup chopped walnuts, toasted

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350F. Make a foil sling for your 13 x 9 inch pan. Spray with nonstick cooking spray. Place cherries in a small bowl with the rum and set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, cream together both sugars and butter. Add eggs and vanilla, and continue to mix. In another large mixing bowl, mix together flour, salt, and baking soda. Add creamed mixture and blend well. Add chocolate chips and toasted walnuts. Drain any remaining rum from the cherries (most will likely be absorbed to make the cherries plumper) and add to the bowl. Mix in final ingredients by hand.

Spread cookie batter in the pan and bake for 30-35 minutes (until just golden brown). They will look soft in middle and if you desire and more cake like bar, bake 5 to 10 minutes longer. Transfer pan to wire rack and cool 30 minutes.

Using foil overhang, lift blondies from pan. Return blondies to wire rack and let cool completely, about 1 hour more. Cut into 2-inch squares and serve.