



# TWO EASY 2 BAKE

## SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

Comfort food exists to make our lives a little less glum. What keeps us from having it is usually the fear of cooking, or the fear of our moms finding out there's another food delivery person standing at the door waiting to get paid, or both.

However, the ideologies most people have about cooking, especially baking, are actually quite exaggerated if not completely mythical. The following recipes are as easy as they are delicious, and hence today is the day I liberate you from the chains of mageirocophobia (Google it, you will not regret).

## CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE DOUGH BROWNIES

### Ingredients

#### For the brownies

- 100g butter
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 large eggs
- 3/4 cup cocoa powder
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- Few teaspoons of milk
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips/grated unsweetened chocolate

#### For the cookie dough layer

- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 and a half cups all-purpose flour (ask shopkeeper for *maida*)
- 1 cup chocolate chips

### Instructions

Melt the butter for the brownies in the microwave. For refrigerated butter, set the timer to one minute, but for butter closer to room temperature set it to 20-30 seconds. Do not overheat butter — your mother might not forgive you for stinking up her otherwise scented home. Beat in the sugar. Add vanilla essence and eggs one at a time. Once properly incorporated, set aside.

In a separate bowl, add in the flour, cocoa powder and

baking powder. Use a sieve to add the dry ingredients, and beat at regular intervals. Remember to cover your face before doing this step, unless you want a cost-free makeover which your local salon would normally charge you for.

Beat it all together till it reaches the consistency of paint (if it's denser, add half a tablespoon of milk to achieve desired consistency). Add in the chocolate chips/grated chocolate to satisfy the demons eagerly waiting to devour the offering you're about to make.

Transfer the mixture to a baking dish that has been lined with baking paper. Bake the batter for 30-35 minutes at 175



degrees Celsius in an electric oven or 40 minutes in a gas oven, inserting a knife every 5 minutes after the first 20 minutes have elapsed. A semi clean (moist crumbs on the sides, not a gooey mess) knife is what you're going for. Leave the dish to cool in the oven for half an hour after the oven has been turned off.

Take a separate bowl and combine the butter and both sugars (brown and granulated) in a mixing bowl and beat until light and fluffy. Next, add the cream, vanilla and salt,

and mix until they're fully combined. Scrape the sides of the bowl, then mix while gradually adding the flour, until it's fully incorporated into the mixture. Using a spatula, stir in the chocolate chips.

Spread the cookie dough evenly over the cooled brownies. Refrigerate until the dough is firm, this usually takes about an hour. Cut up pieces according to your heart's desire, you deserve it after all that hard work.

## EASY BAKED MAC N CHEESE

### Ingredients

- 500g elbow macaroni (half U-shaped, the macaroni themselves look nothing like elbows)
- 2 tablespoons flour (again, *maida* and NOT *atta*)
- 500g cheddar cheese
- 2 tablespoons cream cheese
- 2-3 cloves minced garlic (optional)
- 2 cups milk
- 1 and a half tablespoons butter
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Breadcrumbs (optional)

### Instructions

Preheat oven to 190 degrees Celsius (or for half an hour on medium heat in gas oven). Cook the macaroni *al dente* (a fancy term for semi-cooked) according to instructions in the package. Drain and set aside.

Combine the flour, 2 and a half cups of the grated cheese, salt and pepper in a prepared casserole (the kind of ceramic/glass dishes our mom only takes out when something needs to be heated in front of guests). Add the macaroni and toss the ingredients together.

In a separate mug, mix the milk, cream cheese and mustard. Pour the mixture over the macaroni. Infuse butter with garlic by heating them together in the microwave (optional, but only monsters would hate on the gift of garlic).

Bake for 45 minutes, covering it for the first 30 minutes with foil. Take out and add toasted breadcrumbs if desired. Honestly add anything you can think of: chicken cubes, beef bacon, pepperoni, it only goes up from here. Try these out, and I promise you, there will be no regrets. These classic, yet mouthwatering dishes are enough to serve at least six people (but no one would judge you for gulping them down all by yourself).