

## Sourdough Rye Brownies

BY MICHELLE ESHKERI DECEMBER 2019 MODERN SOURDOUGH



Rye has an affinity with chocolate, evidenced by various bakeries across the world making incredibly delicious brownies and cookies using both these ingredients. The first time I came across the combination was in Claire Ptak's [Violet Bakery Cookbook](#) some years ago, which is the basis for this recipe and what struck me about using rye flour was the danger of failure was vastly reduced; it was a dislike of dry brownies that had more or less put me off making them at all. Rye is low in gluten so is more forgiving than the more commonly used wheat flour which can make brownies dry and tough especially if overbaked. If you ignore the peculiar color of egg fermenting with rye flour and proceed to the end you will find these brownies a fudgy, sweet and lightly fermented addition to your brownie repertoire and a good use of any spare rye starter—you could use old starter here too instead of making it according to the refreshment schedule below.

**YIELD:** Makes 12–16 brownies

## INGREDIENTS

### Stage 1: Refreshment

- 72g (2¾ oz) wholegrain rye flour
- 57g (2¼ oz) water
- 36g (1½ oz) rye or wheat starter (8–12 hours after last refreshment)

### Stage 2: First mix

- 194g (6¾ oz) wholegrain rye flour
- 250g (9 oz)/5 whole eggs, beaten
- 100g (3½ oz) sugar

### Stage 3: Final mix

- 195g (6¾ oz) unsalted butter
- 475g (1lb ½ oz) dark chocolate, at least 66% cocoa solids
- 77g (3 oz) sugar
- 265g (9¼ oz) dark brown sugar
- 70g (2¾ oz) good quality cocoa powder
- 5g (⅛ oz) vanilla extract

- 3g ( $\frac{1}{8}$  oz) baking soda
- 2g ( $\frac{1}{8}$  oz) sea salt, plus extra for sprinkling (optional)

## PREPARATION

Place all the stage 1 ingredients in a 300ml ( $\frac{1}{2}$  pint) jar or container with a lid, mix, cover and leave at warm room temperature for 4–6 hours.

Place the stage 2 ingredients plus 125g (4 oz) of the starter in a large bowl, stir well with a whisk, cover and leave in a warm place for 1–2 hours or more time if it suits you. It won't rise much but you should see some bubbles as evidence of fermentation on the surface of the mix.

In the hour before you plan to do the final mix and bake, melt the butter and chocolate in a small heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water. Set aside to cool for 30 minutes. Line a 25cm (10 in) square tin with baking parchment.

Preheat the oven to 160°C/325°F/gas mark 3.

Add the melted chocolate and butter plus the remaining stage 3 ingredients into the bowl with the batter. Whisk until well combined. Pour into the lined tin and smooth the top with the back of a spoon so it is evenly distributed.

Bake for 30-40 minutes until the top looks dry but it still has a slight wobble. It's difficult to overbake these. Sprinkle with additional sea salt, if liked, after they come out of the oven and leave to cool in the tin. When cool cut into squares to serve. The brownies can be stored in an airtight container for up to a week.