St. Boniface Christmas tree brownies

Prep 30 min **Cook** 28 min **Cool** 1 hr **Total** 1 hr 58 min **Makes** About 24 trees **Level** Easy

ADULT SUPERVISION REQUIRED

Cooking is for children and grown-ups together. An adult should supervise at all times and handle the oven, stovetop, knives, and anything hot. A grown-up cuts the brownies with a large sharp knife. Small hard candies are a choking hazard for children under 4, so give them trees with soft sprinkles only.

ALLERGY INFORMATION

Contains wheat (gluten), milk, and egg. The pretzels contain wheat. Sprinkles and candies vary and may contain milk, soy, or nuts, so check the labels. Always read ingredient labels, since brands vary, and ask about food allergies before you cook or share.

INGREDIENTS

Brownies

- 1 cup (225 g) butter, melted and slightly cooled
- 2 cups (400 g) sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- ⅔ cup (55 g) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 cup (125 g) all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt

To decorate

- ½ cup (115 g) butter, softened
- 2 cups (240 g) powdered sugar
- 1 to 2 tbsp milk
- Green gel food coloring
- Sprinkles, small candies, and star sprinkles
- 12 pretzel sticks, broken in half

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Line a 9×13-inch (23×33 cm) pan with parchment paper, leaving some hanging over the long sides.
2. Whisk the melted butter and sugar together. Whisk in the eggs one at a time, then the vanilla.
3. Add the cocoa, flour, baking powder, and salt and stir just until no dry flour shows. Spread the batter evenly in the pan.
4. Bake 25 to 30 minutes, until the edges are set and a toothpick in the center comes out with a few moist crumbs but no wet batter. Cool completely in the pan, about 1 hour; 30 minutes in the fridge after that makes neater cuts.
5. For the frosting, beat the softened butter until creamy, then beat in the powdered sugar and 1 tablespoon of milk until fluffy, adding more milk if it is too stiff. Tint it green and spoon it into a zip-top bag.
6. Lift the brownies out by the paper. A grown-up cuts them lengthwise into 3 long strips, then cuts each strip in a zigzag to make triangles about 2½ inches (6 cm) wide at the base.
7. Snip a small corner off the bag and pipe a zigzag of green branches on each tree. Add sprinkle ornaments and a star on top, then push half a pretzel stick into the wide end for a trunk.

LITTLE HELPERS CAN (WITH A GROWN-UP)

- Crack and whisk the eggs (and wash hands after)
- Pipe the green zigzag branches
- Hang sprinkle ornaments and put a star on top
- Push in the pretzel trunks

GOOD TO KNOW

- Bake the brownies a day ahead, wrap the cooled pan, and decorate on tree night. Decorated trees keep 3 days in a single layer in a covered container.
- The small pieces left at the ends of each strip are the bakers' share, or crumble them over ice cream.

A BLESSING BEFORE WE EAT

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen. Saint Boniface, pray for us, and help us point others to Jesus, the true tree of life.