

In the Kitchen

Brownies for your waist line



I'd equate the taste to the low-fat substitute of any other of your favourite desserts: perhaps not as delicious, but definitely not as calorific.

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Senior InsideOut Editor

Ingredients: Brownies

1 (15 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed
1/2 cup agave syrup
1/2 cup self-rising flour
1/2 cup egg whites
1/4 unsweetened cocoa
2 tsp vanilla
1 tsp baking powder
6 tbsp semisweet mini chocolate chips

Ingredients: Icing

6 oz. fat-free cream cheese

1/4 cup agave syrup
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 tbsp semisweet mini chocolate chips, melted

Directions: Brownies

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Spray (don't grease) a baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.
3. In a processor, mix all brownie ingredients (except chips) together. If you don't have a food processor then get out the ol' muscle and manually mix.
4. Chop on high, until smooth.
5. Blend for another 20 seconds.

6. Add the chips and stir well. Spread onto baking dish.
7. Bake for 20 minutes, until toothpick comes out clean.
8. Let cool at room temperature. If you don't, cleanly spreading the icing will be almost impossible.

Directions: Icing

1. With a whisk attachment on an electric beater, blend all ingredients until light and fluffy. Again, if you don't have an electric beater then manually whisk.
2. Spread evenly over the top of the cooled brownies.
3. Using a spoon, swirl the 2 tbsp melted chocolate chips on top.
4. Allow it to set in the refrigerator for 20 minutes.

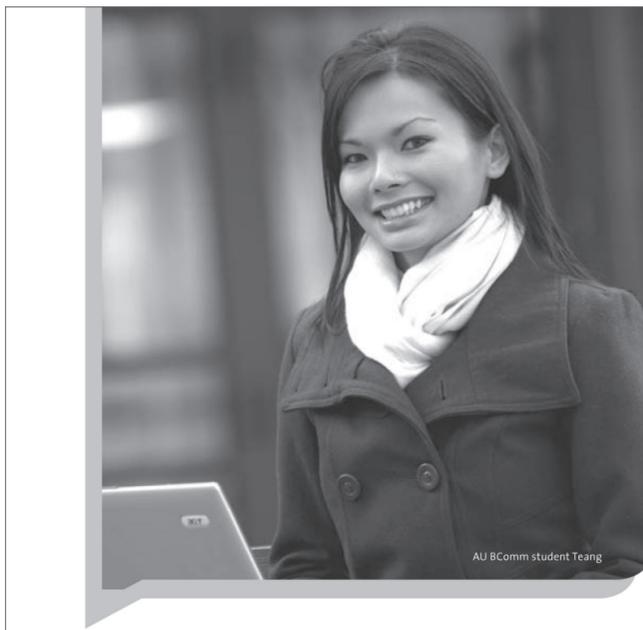
Nothing goes better with a glass of milk than a rich chocolate brownie. Of course, indulging in a dessert like this is perhaps not the best of choices for the calorie-conscious. So, how to enjoy a brownie without enduring its fat-inducing side effects? The answer: black beans. If you're a frequent viewer of Dr. Oz or simply a health fanatic, then this ingredient will come as no surprise to you. If not, then note that black beans are the secret ingredient in making the healthy brownie – yes, these words can go together.

Trust me; I too curled my lip at the initial thought of mixing a lunchtime/dinner food with a des-

sert. But allow me to describe what a black bean brownie tastes like: exactly like a regular brownie, but perhaps with a slightly drier texture and a less sugary taste. The point here is that you can't taste the black beans (hallelujah!). I'd equate the taste to the low-fat substitute of any other of your favourite foods and desserts: perhaps not as delicious, but definitely not as calorific. So make a batch for your friends but keep 'the secret ingredient' quiet and see if they notice any sign of it – chances are, they won't. Just tell them it's a low-fat, calorie-wise recipe because, well, that's exactly what it is.

This brownie recipe is made healthy by other ingredients as well. For example, agave syrup is used here as a replacement for corn syrup, which typically is very sugary. Another healthy substitute in this recipe is egg whites as an alternative to whole eggs, as egg yolks are typically high in cholesterol and fat. Though these ingredients may be a little more costly, it's without a doubt worth it, particularly if you're looking to lose or maintain weight while still enjoying a dessert favourite.

These brownies and no more time consuming than your typical recipe, unless of course you include premade boxed brownie recipes. Just don't shy away from what could be your new favourite dessert.



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You'll feel good about eating these scrumptious brownies.

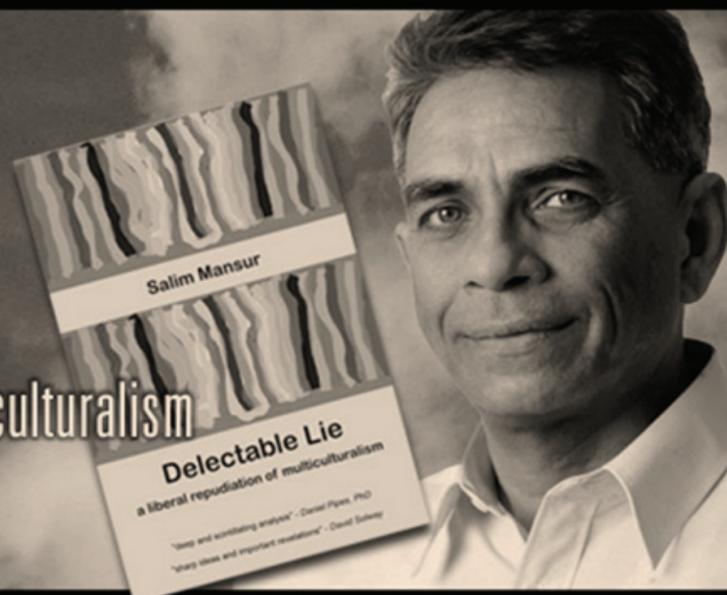
Well known journalist and author **Dr. Salim Mansur** will be discussing his new book on **Thursday, February 23, 2012 at 7:00PM** in the Hamilton Spectator Auditorium, 44 Frid Street, Hamilton. Sponsored by the International Free Press Society – Canada and The Never Again Group.

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Spice up your sex

Looking for some fun in the bedroom? Try these toys tonight

The author of this article, a SHEC Media columnist, wished to remain anonymous.

Is your relationship hitting that post-Valentine's Day slump? Looking for something to bring the spark back to your sex life? Sounds like you could be in the market for a sex toy. You've heard our advice on choosing your first sex toy, but in this very special edition of the SHEC column, we'll talk about choosing a toy for you and your partner.

Most of the types of toys mentioned in this article can be purchased at the Love Shop or the Stag Shop, both of which have several locations in Hamilton. But if you don't feel comfortable visiting these stores in person, there are many places to purchase toys online. Most ship in discreet packaging and will appear on your credit card as a vague entertainment charge, but be sure to check before you buy.

Vibrators. Vibrating cock rings are an excellent toy for a beginner to the world of partner sex toys. These toys usually have a stretchy ring that can be put around a penis, or strap-on with a vibrating attachment, designed to stimulate the clitoris. They are mostly used for vaginal or anal intercourse, but many include bullet vibrators that can be removed and used for other activities as well.

Vibrating panties and remote-controlled vibrators are a great way to experiment with voyeuristic tendencies.

These usually come with bullet vibrators, which are mostly used for external stimulation, but can be inserted into the vagina or anus. Typically, your partner can use the remote to control the vibration from up to 25 feet away.

Bondage. A relatively inexpensive place to start if you and your partner are interested in light bondage is with reusable bondage tape. This tape is made of PVC and only sticks to itself, so you don't have to worry about leaving sticky residue or catching anyone's hair. You can buy a 65-foot roll for about \$10 at most places that sell sex toys.

Another option for restraint is handcuffs, which can be used to bind your partner to a bed, chair or other piece of furniture. Most of these handcuffs have built-in safety releases, so you don't need to be concerned about losing the keys.

Remember, in any situation where you or your partner will be restrained, you must have a safe word. This should be any word you wouldn't otherwise say during sexual play (like "Mississippi"), and if either partner uses the word, sexual activity should stop immediately. It's especially important when experimenting with your partner to ensure that you are both 100 per cent comfortable with what's going on.

Anal Play. If you're looking to experiment with anal stimulation, fingers (and lots of lubrication) are a good place to start. But if you've tried and enjoyed this, butt plugs can be a good next step. Unlike vibrators or dildos, butt plugs have a flared end to make for easy retrieval - this is important for safety. They can be worn by either partner during oral or vaginal sex, and many people find this increases their pleasure. Since the anus doesn't self-lubricate, you should always use lubrication during anal play.

Maintenance. Once you've picked out your ideal toy, you should find out how to clean it. Unclean toys can harbour bacteria, spreading infection to places that you absolutely do not want infected. Waterproof toys can be washed with soap and water, or else a dilute bleach solution if they are shared with a partner whose STI status you don't know.

Most places where you can buy sex toys also sell antibacterial cleaners if your toy cannot be exposed to water. Be sure to use a fresh condom to cover the toy for each partner, as STIs can be spread by sharing toys.