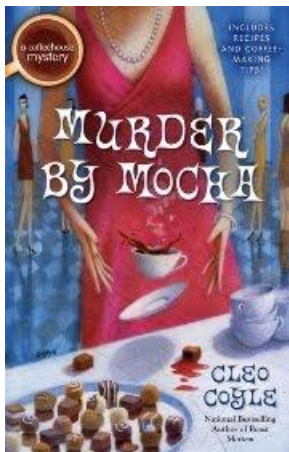


Cleo Coyle's Chocolate-Hazelnut Microwave Fudge

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by Alice Alfonsi who writes **The
Coffeehouse Mysteries** as Cleo Coyle
with her husband, Marc Cerasini

“Oh, chocolate fudge I’ll eat. What I can’t
swallow is fudging, as in fudging statistics,
fudging results, fudging the truth.
Mathematicians call it a fudge factor—
putting an extra calculation into an
equation just so it will work out as
expected. It’s what we law enforcement
types call a scam.”

~ *Detective Mike Quinn, **Murder by
Mocha: A Coffeehouse Mystery***



Scamming does indeed play a role in the plotline of my latest culinary mystery, but there is no fudging in this fudge recipe. The claim that you can make it in a microwave is true, and the results are delicious.

Microwave fudge is nothing new, of course. You will find renditions of it all over the Net. This (crunchless) chocolate-hazelnut version is simply my own take on the ingredients, ratios, and process. Why do I say crunchless? Because the light note of hazelnut in this treat

comes not from actual nuts but Nutella, thus the fudge stays smooth, creamy, and dreamy!



Nutella is a delicious spread that blends chocolate and hazelnuts. If you’ve never bought it, look for it in your grocery where peanut butter is sold.

Ingredients:

1 (14 ounce) can of sweetened condensed milk
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 (12 ounce) package good quality semisweet chocolate chips
1/4 teaspoon Kosher salt
1-1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
1/2 cup Nutella chocolate-hazelnut spread (room temperature)

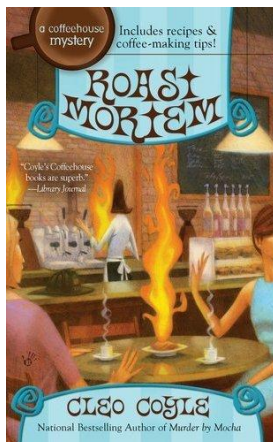
Step 1 – Prep pan: Crisscross the bottom of an 8 x 8 square pan with two sheets of parchment paper. The parchment sheets should be long enough to extend, like handles, over the edges of the pan.

Step 2 – Melt with microwave: Place the milk into a microwave safe bowl. Cut the butter into the milk. Pour in the chocolate chips, and microwave it all for 30 seconds. **ONLY 30 seconds.** Remove and stir. Nuke it for another 30 and remove to stir again. This should be enough time to melt the chocolate and butter. If not, continue microwaving and stirring in 20 second increments until everything is melted.

CLEO NOTE: Do not simply microwave this mixture for 2 solid minutes without stirring. You run the risk of scorching the chocolate and ruining the fudge. Once chocolate is burned, there's no saving it. Be sure to melt it slowly, in increments.

Step 3 – Finish the fudge: Into the melted mixture, sprinkle the salt and measure in the vanilla and Nutella. Cleo note: Nutella should never be cooked in a microwave (this advice is also written on its label). High heat alters the texture and flavor, which is why I'm careful how I use it in recipes. What I want you to do is simply *stir the Nutella into the melted mixture that comes out of the microwave*. Stir from the bottom, lifting and folding to blend everything well.

Step 4 – Chill and cut: Now pour the chocolate mixture into your lined pan. Using a rubber spatula or back of a spoon, smooth the top, leveling it off. Chill the pan in the refrigerator until firm—this will take approximately 3 hours. Remove and cut into small squares. To store, place fudge in an airtight container and keep in the refrigerator, and, of course...



Eat with joy! ~ Cleo Coyle

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