

Chewy Tahini Blondies

I've made these so many times, so you won't have to. On the surface this seems like a dead-simple recipe, but it took quite a bit of tinkering to nail. Tahini has a complex molecular structure made up of lots of tiny carbohydrate molecules that cling to liquid for dear life, seizing up the way chocolate does if you add liquid to it at the wrong time. But if you play your carbs right and add the tahini last, after all of the other ingredients, it stirs in smoothly and bakes up into these sexy little squares that get better as they sit around. To make these non-dairy, swap in a neutral-flavored olive oil or vegetable oil instead of the butter.

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted and cooled, or ½ cup olive oil or vegetable oil, plus more for buttering the pan
1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
¾ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon ground cardamom (or more to taste if you really like this flavor)
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons lightly toasted black sesame seeds
2 tablespoons lightly toasted white sesame seeds
1 ¼ cups lightly packed light brown sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
½ cup pure tahini paste

Makes 16 squares

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter an 8-inch square baking pan, then line the pan with 2 crisscrossing strips of parchment paper, buttering between each layer and leaving a 2-inch overhang on all sides. Butter the top and sides of the parchment.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, cardamom, salt, pepper, and the black and white sesame seeds. In another medium bowl, whisk together the brown sugar, ½ cup melted butter, eggs, and vanilla until smooth. Fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until just incorporated, then fold in the tahini until smooth. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake until golden on the outside and the center doesn't jiggle but is still soft, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove from the oven, cool in the pan, and cut into 16 equal squares.

From SABABA by ADEENA SUSSMAN, published by AVERY, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House, LLC. Copyright © 2019 by ADEENA SUSSMAN

