



# Culinary Corner

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## FEATURE



Bobby Cochran/CW photos

When you crave a simple piece of cake to go with coffee for dessert or a snack, Penny Eisenberg's dairy-free pound cake will fit the bill.

## Sweet yet dairy-free desserts

Holiday dinners don't end on sour note for those with dairy-restricted diets

by guest writer **Penny Eisenberg**  
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*I met Penny Eisenberg years ago, when I owned and operated a kitchen shop and cooking school in Charlotte. Eisenberg regularly attended cooking classes, but several allergies, including an intolerance for dairy and lactose products, made it difficult for her to enjoy most of the recipes we prepared. She spent much of her time reworking recipes from class and finding dairy-free substitutions for commonly used items such as milk, butter and sour cream.*

*All of her work in the kitchen led to cookbooks. She has published "Light Jewish Holiday Desserts" and "Passover Desserts," both collections of classic Jewish desserts she has pared down to tasty reduced-fat versions. Almost half of the recipes in each book are dairy-free.*

*Eisenberg's third cookbook, "Amazing Dairy-Free Desserts," includes 58 recipes – all of them dairy-free. Find two recipes from her book, one for sour "creem" pound cake and one for brownies, on the following pages.*

*Buy the book and meet Eisenberg at a book signing at the new Barnes & Noble at Carolina Place, near the food court, Sunday, Dec. 10, at 2 p.m. For more information or to order any of Penny's books, visit [www.pennyisenberg.com](http://www.pennyisenberg.com).*

– Heidi Billotto

### Dairy do's and don'ts

'Tis the season when people are drawn to the kitchen to make and share holiday treats – typically rich, dairy-laden cakes, cookies, pastries and candy. However, for those who cannot eat dairy due to lactose intolerance, dairy-allergies or other dairy restrictions, the season can be stressful.

Dairy foods contain cow's milk or any component of cow's milk. Even though eggs are found in the dairy section of the supermarket, they are not dairy foods. Goat and sheep's milk, though not technically dairy, also contain lactose, so many people who are allergic to cow's milk also are allergic to this milk. Besides foods that contain obvious dairy such as butter, milk, cheese, sour cream or cream, many foods contain hidden dairy derivatives. Hidden sources of dairy might be in flavorings or dairy components such as casein or lactose or have complicated names such as caseinate. In addition, many foods may be processed on equipment also used to process dairy products, making them just as troublesome to someone with dairy allergies.

Even most margarine, chocolate and whipped toppings contain dairy derivatives. To help find hidden sources of dairy, look for a kosher "K" symbol on the packaging, often with the word "pareve" or "parve" next to the symbol. If there is a "D" next to the symbol, the product contains dairy elements, something those with dairy allergies will want to avoid. A kosher-*pareve* symbol won't be a 100 percent guarantee that the product is dairy-free, but

it's a good place to start.

Soy milk and soy creamer are available in almost all supermarkets. Health food stores, specialty chocolate stores and gourmet food stores also carry dairy-free products. A more specific list of substitutions appears in the recipes that follow.

### Sour Creem Pound Cake

- 1/2 cup Tofutti Better than Sour Cream, room temperature
- 3 Tbsp. water, room temperature
- 3/4 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups sifted cake flour, spooned into measuring cups
- 1-1/3 cups sugar
- 1/8 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1-1/4 sticks (10 Tbsp.) unsalted nondairy margarine, softened until pliable and cut into tablespoon-size pieces
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 large egg yolk, room temperature

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees with a rack in the lower third of the oven. Grease and flour a 5-by-9-inch glass loaf pan. Whisk the sour cream substitute, water and vanilla together in a bowl and reserve. Place the flour, sugar, baking soda and salt in a large bowl. Beat with an electric mixer on low for a minute or two to blend.

Add margarine and three-quarters of the Tofutti



South Charlotte resident Penny Eisenberg is the author of three low-fat dessert cookbooks, all with many dairy-free recipes.

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These classic-tasting brownies are made without leavening and mixed in an unorthodox way, but the result is a fudgy, dense burst of chocolate brownie bliss.

mixture to the flour mixture. Beat on low, until blended. Increase the speed to medium; beat for two minutes, until smooth and aerated.

Whisk eggs and egg yolk into remaining Tofutti mixture. Add to the batter in three additions, beating on medium-low after each. Scrape down the bowl and beat until blended.

Spoon the batter into the pan. Tap the pans sharply on the counter to remove any air pockets, and shake to level the top. Bake 55-65 minutes or until a cake tester inserted at an angle, just off center, comes out barely clean. (Note: The center of the pound cake will have a lengthwise strip that will appear undercooked – do not insert the tester here.) Let the cake cool in the pan. To unmold,

run a knife around the pan's perimeter and then invert the pan. Turn the cake right side up onto a serving platter.

The pound cake may be stored at room temperature for up to three days, wrapped tightly in aluminum foil. For longer storage, freeze the whole cake, wrapped tightly in foil, for up to three months. Wrap individual slices in plastic wrap and then place the

slices in a plastic bag. Defrost 3/8-inch thick slices for 10 seconds in the microwave, or thaw the entire loaf, still wrapped, overnight at room temperature. Serves 10-12.

Serve topped with dairy-free "ice cream" and hot fudge, or strawberries and "whipped cream." Recipes for dairy-free ice cream, hot fudge and whipped cream can all be found in "Amazing Dairy-free Desserts."

## Fudgy Chewy Brownies

- 1 stick (8 Tbsp.) unsalted, nondairy margarine
- 4 oz. nondairy unsweetened chocolate, finely chopped
- 4 large eggs, room temperature

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## WHERE TO FIND DAIRY-FREE INGREDIENTS IN CHARLOTTE

### Tofutti Better than Sour Cream

Earthfare  
Gleiberman's Kosher Mart  
Home Economist  
Lowe's Foods

### Unsweetened dairy-free chocolate

Hershey's unsweetened – Lowe's Foods  
ScharffenBerger – Reid's Fine Foods and Sur La Table

### Dairy-free margarine (use full-fat stick margarine)

Fleischmann's unsalted – most supermarkets  
Mother's unsalted – Gleiberman's Kosher Mart



Many hard-to-find, dairy-free products such as these are available at the locations listed at left.

## Dessert

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- 2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup all-purpose flour, fluffed, scooped and leveled into measuring cups
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 2-4 Tbsp. unsweetened Dutch-processed cocoa powder, added to taste
- 1-1/2 cups coarsely chopped walnuts

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees with a rack in the middle of the oven. Line a 9-by-12-inch metal baking pan with aluminum foil, leaving three inches of overhang at each short end. Grease and flour pan.

Microwave the margarine until melted, about one minute. Add chopped chocolate, and microwave for one minute on medium power. Stir and microwave for 15-30 seconds more to melt completely. Cool.

Place eggs in a large mixer bowl. Using a balloon whisk attachment (if available),

gradually beat in the sugar. Continue to beat on medium-high until mixture is fluffy and lightened in color (about five minutes). Beat in vanilla; fold in melted chocolate.

Sift together flour, salt and cocoa powder. Fold flour mixture into batter in two or three additions until just incorporated. Gently stir in the nuts. Pour batter into prepared pan. Shake the pan lightly to level the batter. Bake for 26 to 30 minutes, until a tester comes out almost completely clean and the top looks dull. Cool, then loosen the long edges, lifting the cake out of the pan using the foil. Cut the cake into 24 two-inch brownies.

For absolute perfection, eat these brownies within two days. To freeze for up to three months, wrap each brownie individually and then place in a plastic bag. Defrost the brownies, in their wrapping, at room temperature for several hours or overnight. □