

Go nuts with Toasted Pecan Maple Blondies

By Susie Iventosch



Toasted Pecan Maple Blondies Photos Susie Iventosch

When it comes to sweets, there are few I don't like, but brownies are one of my favorites. If they have nuts, even better! If you haven't tried the brownies from Sprouts Farmers Market bakery section, they are delicious and hard to beat. We often buy one or two when we shop there. But a few weeks ago, I was craving the caramel flavor of a blondie with pecans.

Sometimes blondies can be very dry and crumbly, so I added an extra topping on top of the blondie batter, so that these have a double layer of brown sugar and maple goodness! The topping keeps the

blondies nice and moist, but with a delicious sugary top. The other key to keeping blondies moist is to be sure not to over-bake them.

These Toasted Pecan & Maple Blondies are chewy, dense bars with a sweet, rich, and nutty flavor. They have the warm, caramel-like taste of maple syrup combined with the deep sweetness of brown sugar, and the texture is soft and moist like a brownie but with a hint of butterscotch.

Overall, they have a delightful combination of sweetness and depth — perfect for indulging in a comforting treat any time of the day.

Toasted Pecan Maple Brownies

(Makes 16 two-inch blondies)

INGREDIENTS

Blondie Batter

- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 3/4 cup light brown sugar, packed
- 1 large egg
- 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp. maple syrup
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup dark chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup toasted pecans, (or walnuts, or a combination) coarsely chopped

Maple Pecan Topping Mixture

- 1 oz. butter, softened to room temp (equals 2 tbsp.)
- 1/2 cup light brown sugar
- 1 tbsp. pure maple syrup
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup toasted walnuts or pecans (or a combination, coarsely chopped)

DIRECTIONS

Blondie Batter

Preheat oven to 350°. Line an 8x8 inch baking pan with foil or parchment paper, leaving some length on either end to help remove the blondies once cooked. Be sure to tuck the paper/foil into the corners of the pan. Spray parchment or foil with cooking spray. Set aside. (This makes it easier to remove the blondies from the pan.)

Place the pecans (and walnuts if using both) on a separate baking sheet, lined with foil, and bake for about 5-7 minutes, or until the nuts begin to have a nice aroma and turn slightly brown. Keep your eye on them so they don't burn. Remove from oven to cool.

Blend flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. In a separate, larger bowl, blend butter and brown sugar until combined. Whisk in egg, vanilla, and maple syrup. Blend well.

Gently fold dries into egg mixture. Stir in chocolate chips. Spread batter into the bottom of the prepared baking pan.

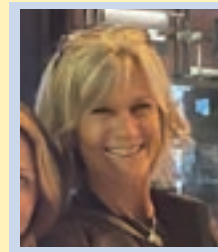
Maple Pecan Topping

With a fork or wooden spoon, blend softened butter and brown sugar until blended. Stir in vanilla, maple syrup, and toasted chopped nuts to combine well.

Using an offset spatula, evenly spread a thin layer of this mixture over the blondie batter.

Bake for 22-24 minutes in preheated oven until golden brown and the top is not jiggly. Remove from oven and cool to room temp.

Remove blondies from the pan and cut into 2-inch squares. Store in an airtight container until ready to serve.



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

Marguerite's Theorem: A multidimensional love story

By Sophie Braccini

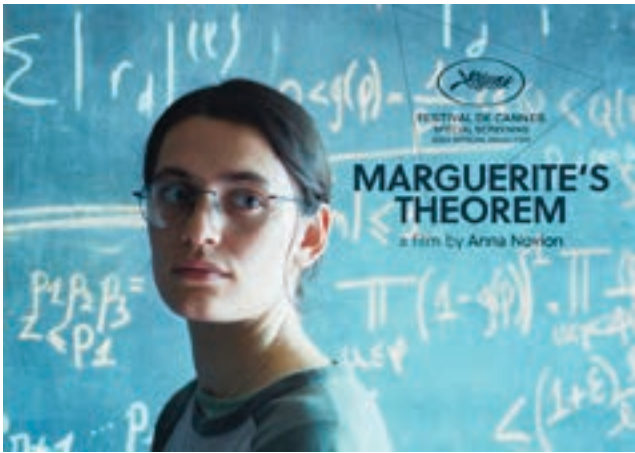


Photo provided

In this lovely film from France, the International Film Showcase brings you a story of passion and courage. A young woman - remarkably gifted, quite introverted, fiercely focused and determined, but closed off from her emotions. Facing unforeseen challenges that she will ultimately overcome, she opens up like a flower bud in Spring to new dimensions of life, empowering her creativity as a result. This beautiful movie opens in Orinda on April 12 and will run for at least a week.

Marguerite is a math prodigy working on her PhD. She is serious, fixated, and passionate about her research. For

three years, she has worked on an undemonstrated theorem or conjecture, exploring a new avenue to crack this impossible nut. Under the supervision of a busy advisor, she is in the final stages of drafting her thesis, but during a preliminary presentation of her findings to a group of professors and students, a new comer spots a critical weakness. Her whole reasoning collapses, undermining three years of work and the prospect of completing her PhD. Confronted with her thesis advisor's aloofness and disinterest, she resigns and jumps head first in a new life, away from the confines of academia and into the realm of the or-

inary. At first, the clueless and extremely introverted woman looks like she might have difficulty adapting to her new predicament; but Marguerite is ultimately smart and fearless. She starts thriving in her new life, but will her life passion for theoretical math catch up with her?

Marguerite Theorem is also a love story; Marguerite's break from her powerful but narrow path, at first looking rash and pointless, opens more than one door to her. The movie is ultimately about courage and taking risks, trusting one's instincts, and unapologetic integrity.

The math backdrop of the story is in fact entirely accurate and interesting. Ariane Mézard, a female French mathematician, worked with director Anna Novion on all the math aspects of the movie. The Goldbach conjecture in question in the movie is real, and Mézard is in fact working on it. According to her, she is on a promising path to advance toward its resolution. While the math presented in the movie is beyond complex, it is never an annoyance.

What one feels is the quest, the resolve, and what it takes to dedicate one's life to solving theoretical math mysteries. One feels how it can engulf a life, with the joys and miseries that ensue. It is also a marvelously creative process that requires boldness and grit. Marguerite embodies these qualities, adding humor and sensitivity as the movie progresses.

The movie also depicts the ruthless world of academia. Of note is Jean-Pierre Darroussin as Marguerite's advisor, a marvelous French actor known for depicting much sweeter characters, who gives a chilling rendition of a big shot pre-occupied mostly by his career, mindlessly crushing whoever or whatever in his way. French-Swiss actress Ella Rumpf gives her intensity and strength to Marguerite, the young mathematician fighting in a highly competitive and mostly male world.

The movie is brought to Orinda Theater by the local non-profit, International Film Showcase. Tickets at www.orindamovies.com/

Round about

... continued from Page A1

The modifications included installing "sharks teeth" striping yield lines at entrances, "Yield to Pedestrian" signs at the free right turn onto the eastbound highway 24 crosswalk, a new RRFB on the east and west crossings on Olympic Boulevard, and alterations to green backed shared bike lanes at a number of roundabout locations.

In response to the most recent input from the public, staff explored the ramifications of installing a chicane instead of dropping a lane on southbound Pleasant Hill Road. A chicane configuration consists of single lanes leading into a roundabout for each direction of travel and includes no free right lanes. Due to space limitations at the Lafayette roundabout, this would

allow for a single lane shift of 12 feet and lane reduction to 6 feet in width. This lane shift would be toward the center median, and could result in vehicles crossing over the median and entering oncoming traffic. He said staff believes based on the science that a chicane could create additional hazards.

The staff also examined matters related to speed bumps and speed tables (humps) and held multiple conversations on the topic with Fire Chief Bachman at Contra Costa Fire. Initially opposed to speed bumps in the project because it could impede fire trucks travel, Bachman came to support bumps if placed farther from the roundabout. Luttrupp said such placement would obscure signage and add "visual clutter" and therefore, moving back

and adding more speed bumps was not recommended.

Lastly, a suggestion that informational and wayfinding signs be consolidated resulted in a re-design that provides clear information in a more compact way, according to Luttrupp. Also, a new RRFB sign will be added with council's approval to the east leg of the roundabout and a replacement for the RRFB west leg with upgrades has been ordered and will be installed at the same time.

Council member Susan Candell asked about additional changes and how they might impact timelines for the project. Luttrupp said the project was ready to go out for bids immediately upon approval and addressed the possibility of future amendments. He said, "Nothing that we're doing now precludes us

from doing that. The only thing that we're doing now that would be somewhat costly to undue would be the lane drop." He emphasized that no issues had arisen due to the lane drop; projecting that it would be unlikely to be changed to a chicane or reinstated as a second lane in future.

Sign consolidation and other adjustments, council member John McCormick said, were a notable and positive improvement to "de-cluttering" the roundabout.

Council accepted staff's recommendation to complete design plans, send out a call for project construction bids that include the current modifications, and voted unanimously to approve moving forward with the project.



All-Women Company Serving East Bay Residents for Over 20 Years

COMPLETE MOVE & COORDINATION SPECIALISTS

★ CALL FOR A FREE CONSULTATION ★

FULL PACKING & UNPACKING SERVICES

PACKING SERVICE INCLUDES:
plan, sort, pack, label and help with what to keep, toss, donate, consign

UNPACKING SERVICE INCLUDES:
placing furniture, setting up kitchen, organizing closets, cupboards and drawers

Insured, Bonded, and Green

Nominated by SCORE for Outstanding Woman-Owned Small Business

925.330.1988
hello@carefreemoves.net
www.carefreemoves.net



WALNUT CREEK DERMATOLOGY
Healthier Skin Lies Within



Paige Radell, M.D.

www.walnutcreekderm.com

925-391-9439

Pediatric and Adult Patients. Same day appointments available.