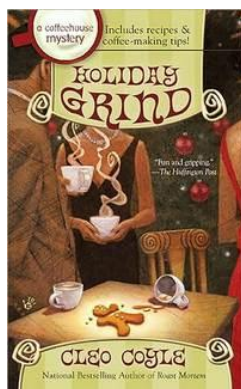


Cleo Coyle's Supremely Easy Candy Cane Brownies

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who writes the Coffeehouse Mysteries as
Cleo Coyle with her husband, Marc Cerasini



*The holidays are murder, but the food might just make up for it. These peppermint-frosted brownies are festive fun and one of the most popular recipes from **Holiday Grind**, my 8th Coffeehouse Mystery and the first with a holiday theme. Once you've matched wits with coffeehouse manager Clare Cosi and solved Santa's slaying, you'll find an appendix of recipes for holiday treats, a glossary of coffeehouse terms, and instructions for making your own specialty coffee drinks at home. Be sure to look for my newest holiday-themed mystery, **Holiday Buzz**, releasing in December with (you guessed it) more holiday recipes to die for.*

*Read with joy!
~ Cleo Coyle, author of
the Coffeehouse Mysteries*

For the Brownies:

Ingredients

- 1 package of basic brownie mix (**without** chocolate chips added)
- 1 cup finely chopped pecans (*chop first, then measure*)
- 1 cup good quality semi-sweet chocolate chips

Directions: Line a 9 x 13 pan with parchment paper, allowing extra paper to hang over the sides to act as handles. (See my photo.) Prepare the brownie batter according to package directions. Fold the pecans and chocolate chips into the batter. Bake according to the package directions.

Cool, frost with Candy Cane Frosting (recipe follows), and cut. As you can see in my photos, I like to cut these brownies into bite-size pieces and use mini-muffin paper liners to serve them. I also finish them with a final sprinkling of crushed candy canes.



Cleo Coyle's Candy Cane Frosting

Makes 1¾ cups frosting—enough for a thin frosting on a 9 × 13-inch pan of brownies, also fun to use on birthday cakes and cupcakes. For a thicker frosting, simply double the recipe.

Ingredients

4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) butter, softened to room temp.
1 – 2 tablespoons milk
1½ cups powdered sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon peppermint extract
or 1 tablespoon peppermint schnapps
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely crushed candy canes (**See my note below)



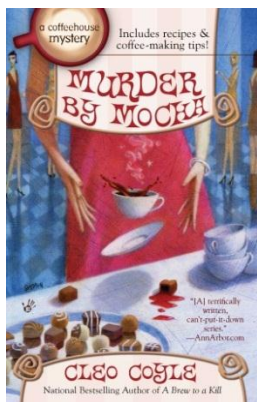
Directions: Using an electric mixer, beat the butter until light and fluffy. Add the milk, sugar, and peppermint extract. Blend until the sugar is fully dissolved (about 1 minute). Add the crushed candy canes and beat until the frosting is light, fluffy, and turns a pretty shade of pink (about 1 minute more). If the frosting is too stiff, add a bit more milk. Frost your brownies (or cookies, cake, or cupcakes). For a pretty finish, rough chop a few more candy canes and sprinkle on the newly frosted treats.



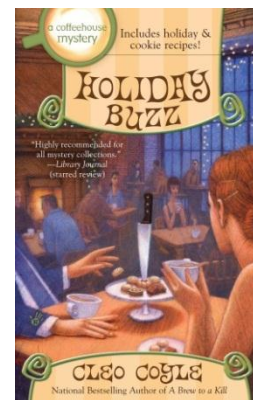
****NOTE:** To make finely crushed candy canes, simply place your store-bought candy canes in a plastic storage bag and bang away with a rolling pin or ladle. (An instant holiday stress reliever, too.) For a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, you'll need about 10 small or 3 large candy canes.

Eat with joy!
~ Cleo Coyle

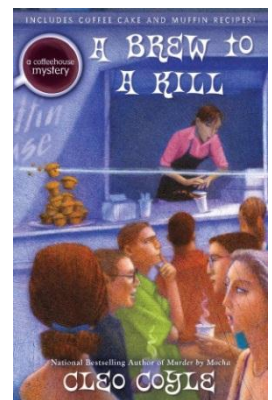
Cleo's [Coffeehouse Mysteries](http://www.CoffeehouseMystery.com) are national bestselling culinary mysteries, set in a landmark Greenwich Village coffeehouse. Each includes the added bonus of recipes. To learn more or download more free recipes, visit Cleo's online coffeehouse at www.CoffeehouseMystery.com



Murder by Mocha



Holiday Buzz



A Brew to a Kill