

# Feeling Raw – Raw, vegan brownie bites



The Women (photo courtesy of Alex Berger)

This past week has been a rollercoaster. It started out wonderfully. The whole family on my mom's side met in Louisville, Ky for a mini family reunion to honor my grandmother on her 90th birthday. We are a crazy lot. I don't know how we did it, but the four of us; my brother, myself, my cousin, Ayelet and my cousin, Mike, managed to marry people who are just as nutty and just as entertaining as we are. Aside from nutty, ours is also a small lot. I'm not sure if it's the many potential cousins and auntie and uncles who might have been but who never were because of the Holocaust or because my grandmother, who is British and met my grandfather in England during the war, came over to settle in the States and, as a result, we weren't able to be as involved with my British family as we would have liked to have been. Whatever the reasons, as far as cousins go, I only have 2 first cousins but luckily, they are the bee's knees! They are like siblings

and I truly hope our children continue to have a similar close relationship. And as for grandma, well, she is sassy, tiny, hilarious and awesome. My grandmother has twin sisters, Doreen and June, who look exactly like the Gabor sisters and don't you think for one second that they don't know it either. As the story goes, my grandfather met one of my grandmother's sisters first and asked her out on a date. As was their habit, one would make a date and then if she decided she didn't really want to go out on that date, the other would step in (they are that identical). In the case of my grandfather, neither wanted to keep the date (I'm not sure why but it all worked out in the end) so my grandmother stepped in. And the rest, as they say, is history. It was often the case, in terms of marriages between American soldiers and a local girl abroad, that marriages happened quickly and without much planning. My grandpa submitted a request for a weekend leave so he could finally marry my grandmother. But the Army wasn't so in to giving a person advanced notice so Thursday or Friday, while my grandfather was stationed in France, he received the news that he was granted his leave for that very weekend and that very weekend only, so he hopped a train, made his way to England and they were married to very minimal fanfare that very weekend. Ahhhh . . . romance.





This is me and Dana, my cousin Mike's wife. We both lucked out when he found this one.



**90**

**IS THE NEW 86**

Picture courtesy of my cousin shown here, helping Grandma blow out her candles.

Anyway, all that is to say that it was a lovely weekend and was especially lovely to get away from the stress of work. I came back from the reunion feeling refreshed (not so much energized) but more prepared to get back into things at work. However, on Wednesday night, just as I was beginning to celebrate the fact that there have about 8 days left of the school year, I received word of the devastating loss of one of our students who had just graduated the week before. The circumstances surrounding the death are a bit hazy and quite frankly, I don't need to know them. All I needed to know was that I was needed on campus in a way I hadn't been needed before. The following day was the hardest of my professional career. I'm not trained in grief counseling. I'm not even trained in counseling. I'm a social worker with a concentration in community organizing so my on-the-job skills were tested every second of this past Thursday and Friday. I

came home on Thursday completely gutted. So much so that at 9 o'clock at night I made the decision to go get some comfort in the form of frozen yogurt. I went to one of those places that measures by the weight, you know, with all the topping options. I mean yes, I may have chosen the healthier flavor in that plain yogurt with all the active, live cultures, but I killed those cultures something fierce when I topped them with Reese's peanut butter cups and chocolate sauce. And let me tell you, as a personal chef to people with an eye on health (I added to my client list—got me a vegan!), I'm sure I should tell you, heck, you might want me to tell you, that after eating that gargantuan cup of frozen yogurt topped with Reese's cups and chocolate sauce that I didn't feel comforted or better but worse because of all that sugar, but I can't. I can't tell you that, dear reader, because I would be lying to you and I don't condone lying. Not one bit. That froyo was absolutely delicious and I felt completely fine afterwards.



The hubby capturing some wildflowers on the side of the road in Kentucky

I did however, decide the next day that I needed a healthier pick me up and I wanted to make a treat for my new client for this week's delivery so I decided on raw brownie bites. Guys, seriously, if you've skimmed this entire post up until this point, **PAY ATTENTION NOW**. The following is a recipe for what is, up to this point, one of my most favorite recipe developments yet. I started out following a recipe from the Simple Veganista and then abandoned it completely to go with my gut and apparently my gut was still hungry for the taste of comfort food but this time around, that comfort food would be healthy. So, grab your food processor and bookmark this page. I feel very strongly that you'll be glad that you did. (P.S. this is so easy and would be great as a healthy snack for kids. I'm excited to let Siona try it once we clear that 1 year mark).



Chopped dates and walnuts





All the ingredients in the processor

## **Raw Brownie Bites:**

### **Ingredients:**

10 – 12 dates, seeded and chopped

1/2 cup oats (I used gluten free)

1/4 – 1/2 cup walnuts

2 tbsp milled flaxseed

3 tbsp vegan cocoa powder

3/4 tbsp vanilla extract

1 – 2 tbsp organic maple syrup (depending upon your taste—start with 1 and if you make it again, up to 2 if it wasn't sweet enough for you)

\*\*Extra cocoa for rolling the bites in afterwards if want an extra chocolate punch.





The grind



Goodness





The final product

## The How:

Place all ingredients in a food processor. Process until well combined—to about the count of 30 or until the ingredients have a dough-like consistency. If you feel like it's a bit dry due to too many walnuts or oats, just add a bit of water, about 1 tbsp at a time, until you get that doughy consistency.



Once you've attained your desired consistency, roll into 1 inch balls. You can add fun little powder extras after rolling, like more cocoa or a combo of cocoa and cinnamon, if you want a little extra flavor. Keep refrigerated.



Close up to the goodies