

04.09.2021:  
THIRD CULTURE BAKERY



**Third Culture Sam Butarbutar, Co-Founder & Owner**

Culinary artist and third culture kid Sam Butarbutar oversees an expanding empire of bakeries + matcha cafes, but he started his baking career at his mother's knee in Jakarta, Indonesia, where he learned to cook and bake in between temporary relocations to New York City before ultimately landing in California, when he enrolled at UC Berkeley to study toxicology.

As a third culture kid - children who spend their formative years in places that are not their parents' homeland - Sam left college and began his baking career as a way to create community and connection, baking from home and selling his French-inspired pastries at local markets and bake sales. Sam soon became known fondly as the Mochi Muffin Man to his now-husband, Wenter Shyu, who he met at a baker's brunch gathering of independent East Bay bakers in 2016. The two began their partnership in business and in life by opening Third Culture Bakery in Berkeley in the spring of 2017, an ode to their identities as members of a "third culture" and connection to the incredible flavors and foods they were raised on.

Using flavors such as chewy mochi, tropical fruits and herbs in modern and fresh combinations ensures each pastry and drink is created as an homage to their Third Culture heritage. Third Culture Bakery continues today as a thriving bakery honoring and showcasing the flavors, memories and histories of Sam and Wenter as third culture kids who have created a place known for inclusion, inspiration and acceptance.

**Third Culture Co-Founder & Owner, Wenter Shyu**

In just a few short years Wenter Shyu, co-founder and -owner of Third Culture Bakery, has gone from fashion creator to restaurateur directing the growth of an expanding family of bakeries and matcha cafes. Born in Taiwan, transplanted to Los Angeles and landing at San Francisco's Academy of Art to study fashion design and visual merchandising, Wenter found himself drawn to the beauty and simplicity of

baking after a cross-country backpacking trip through Asia where he fell in love with the country's pastries and matcha beverages.

Wenter returned to San Francisco with a drive to transform his life and a passion to build a catering company, starting by providing nearby businesses, farmers markets and festivals with artisanal cupcakes that reflected his visual style and artistic flair. In 2016 Wenter connected with his now husband, Sam Butarbutar, at a baker's brunch of independent East Bay bakers and owners, the two bonding together over their shared love of pastries and identities as "third culture kids" - children who spend their formative years in places that are not their parents' homeland and form a "third culture" of their own - and embarked on their partnership in business and in life by opening Third Culture Bakery in Berkeley, CA in the spring of 2017. The original Berkeley location was followed by expansions to Colorado, each site offering the wildly popular pastries and drinks that showcase chewy mochi, tropical fruits and herbs in modern and fresh combinations in an homage to their shared third culture heritage.

Third Culture Bakery is the realization of Wenter & Sam's goals: intentionally designed to be a place of safety, unconditional understanding and love hand in hand with craveable pastries and drinks as a reflection of their own journeys of acceptance and love.

- **What inspired you to open a bakery?**
  - *Our partnership was born in Berkeley, where our story started and grew from a two-person wholesale business to a thriving bakery and café that's evolved to become a place known for inclusion, inspiration and acceptance. Oh, and for insanely delicious baked goods like the Original Mochi Muffin®, layered cold-brew drinks and artful matcha offerings. We began our partnership in business and in life by opening Third Culture Bakery in the spring of 2017, an ode to our identities as members of a "third culture" and connection to the incredible flavors and foods we were raised on in Indonesia and Taiwan.*
- **What keeps you going?**
  - *At Third Culture, we lead with heart, kindness and integrity, which are at the center of every decision and recipe created. We want our business to continue to be a symbol of our principles, welcoming each customer through the door as a part of our family by spreading love one Mochi Muffin® at a time.*
- **What challenges have you overcome as a baker?**
  - *As an Asian and LGBTQ-owned business, we developed the inspirational quote, "Speak your truth, even if your voice shakes," following a response from a customer who complained about the rainbow sticker we place on our pastry boxes. We decided we wanted to use our platform to amplify our voices and empower others through the reputation we've created known for diversity, inclusion and acceptance.*
- **What advice would you give someone considering a baking career?**
  - *My first piece of advice to someone considering a baking career is to volunteer/intern at a bakery they admire. Figure out who head baker/store owner is, and ask them directly if you can help out. BE PERSISTENT. Doors will eventually open. When I first started, I had zero professional experience and was turned down a dozen times before someone finally agreed to hire me.*
  - *My second piece of advice is to be humble and keep an open mind. You won't get to do the glamorous parts of baking immediately, and will most likely help with menial tasks and cleaning up but mastering these tasks are the foundation of being a skilled and efficient baker and should not be overlooked. My advice for anyone looking to start their own business is to GO FOR IT. Don't get bogged down on trying to figure out your branding, business structures, taxes, logo, etc. Start baking and start sampling out your creations. The most critical thing is to see how people react to your product(s). Get it out to as many people as you can and gather as*

*much feedback as you can. Don't be afraid to change and pivot from your original idea. Each step of the way, our bakery has rolled out more refined iterations of our logo, branding, and even products. Once you nail this down, then you can start to think about the business side of your baking. Hire help or ask friends, don't do everything yourself. It's worth paying for a good accountant, lawyer, and website designer because then you can dedicate even more time to what you enjoy the most - creating your products!*

- **What does 2021 hold for you?**
  - *After recently celebrating Third Culture's fourth anniversary in Berkeley, we look forward to continuing to grow our business and mission reaching new customers by offering nationwide shipping in addition to opening two new matcha cafés in Denver's bustling RiNo neighborhood and Berkeley's East Bay neighborhood.*

## **DARK CHOCOLATE MOCHI BROWNIE**

*What I love the most about a perfect brownie is its satisfying bite & chewiness. The use of mochi rice flour in this recipe takes it even further. This mochi brownie is chewy, fudgy, and chocolatey and, it's naturally gluten-free! What's not to love? The better the chocolate you use, the tastier the brownie will be - so don't skimp on quality chocolate! – Sam Butarbutar, Third Culture Bakery Co-founder & Owner*

**YIELD:** 1x pan of brownie

### **EQUIPMENTS:**

1x square cake pan  
1x medium sized pot  
1x brush for greasing pan  
1x whisk  
1x rubber spatula  
1x toothpick/metal skewer  
1x stand mixer + mixing bowl

### **INGREDIENTS:**

#### For Brownies:

50 grams Natural Cocoa Powder (\*not Dutch)  
350 grams whole milk  
270 grams Bittersweet chocolate chips  
3 whole eggs, at room temperature  
105 grams melted butter  
2 tsp vanilla extract  
270 grams mochiko rice flour (\*not regular rice flour & not glutinous rice flour)  
360 grams cane sugar  
5 grams baking powder  
4 grams kosher salt

A handful of cacao nibs for sprinkling  
A handful of Flaky sea salt for sprinkling  
Melted butter for greasing pan

### **PROCESS**

Make brownie batter:

1. Preheat oven to 300F (if using convection oven) or 350F (if using non-convection oven)
2. In a pot, place cocoa powder and whole milk. Cook over medium high heat, and continually whisk to get rid of lumps. Mixture has to reach boil in order to cook away the “raw” taste of the cacao powder. Once it boils, take it off the heat and add all the chocolate chips. Whisk until melted & smooth. Then add eggs, butter, and vanilla until evenly combined.
3. Then, in the same pot, add all the dry ingredients into the chocolate mixture and stir until combined.
4. Generously grease the baking pan with melted butter. Pour batter directly in the pan. Sprinkle with cacao nibs and flaky sea salt.
5. Bake in the preheated oven for 40-50 minutes. To check whether it's done, insert a toothpick or metal skewer into the center of the brownie. The toothpick should be moist and be (mostly) clean. If the toothpick comes out liquidy, then return it to the oven for 5 more minutes.
6. Let it completely cool before cutting.