

ULTIMATE BANANA BREAD



Chef Zach

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 cup unsalted butter, cut into chunks, plus more for pan

1 cup packed light brown sugar

2 heaped cups of mashed banana, 4 extra-large or 5 medium-large bananas

2 large eggs

1½ teaspoon vanilla extract

1 teaspoon fine sea or table salt

1½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon baking powder

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 tablespoons raw or turbinado sugar (on top)

a few gratings of fresh nutmeg (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Butter a 6-cup (9x5-inch) loaf pan (see note up top if yours is smaller) or coat it with a nonstick cooking spray and set aside.
3. Melt butter in a large bowl and whisk in brown sugar until smooth, then stir in mashed banana. Whisk in eggs and vanilla.
4. Sprinkle the surface of the batter evenly with salt, cinnamon, nutmeg (if using), baking soda, and baking powder, and whisk until the ingredients are fully dispersed in the batter, and then whisk 10 more times around the bowl because it's better to be overly cautious than to end up with unmixed pockets. Add flour and stir until combined.
5. Scrape batter into prepared loaf pan. It should come to just over 1/2-inch from the top rim.

SHOPPING LIST

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large eggs

vanilla extract

fine sea or table salt

ground cinnamon

fresh nutmeg (optional)

baking soda

baking powder

all-purpose flour

raw or turbinado sugar

6. Sprinkle the top of the batter with the raw sugar; it will seem like a lot but will bake up beautifully.
7. Bake banana bread for 55 to 65 minutes. It is done when a toothpick or skewer inserted into the bread is batter-free — be sure to check the upper third as well, near the rim of the pan; that's where I'd find the unbaked pockets of batter hanging out. The bread will get very dark but will not taste burnt.
8. Let cool in pan.

This banana bread is good on the first day but exceptional on the second and third, if you can bear to wait ;)

For Storage: Leave the banana bread in the pan, uncovered. Once cut, press a piece of foil against the cut side of the remaining loaf but leave the top uncovered — you worked hard for that crunchy top and should not sacrifice it to humidity!!!