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Banana Muffins

Makes 6 jumbo muffins, or 12 standard muffins

Banana quick breads are often heavy and dense. To make our muffins light and fluffy, we use a little less banana than most recipes and add crème fraîche. It's also important not to overmix the batter, to keep the muffins light. The walnut streusel gives them a nutty flavor and crunch.

You'll need a 6-cup jumbo muffin pan [or a 12-cup standard muffin pan] and muffin papers.

1-1/4 cup + 1 tablespoon cake flour – (168 grams)
3/4 teaspoon baking soda – (3.6 grams)
1/2 teaspoon baking powder – (2.4 grams)
1-1/2 teaspoons kosher salt – (4.4 grams)
4.2 ounces unsalted butter, at room temperature – (120 grams)
3/4 cup brown sugar (lightly packed) – (144 grams)
1/4 cup + 1 tablespoon eggs – (80 grams) [2 extra large eggs less 1 tablespoon]
1-1/8 teaspoons vanilla paste – (7 grams)
1 tablespoon + 2 teaspoons crème fraîche – (24 grams)
1 cup (2 large) mashed bananas – (256 grams)
1-1/3 cups Walnut Streusel Topping – (180 grams) (recipe follows)

For the Batter:

Sift the cake flour, baking soda, and baking powder into a medium bowl. Add the salt and whisk together.

Place the butter in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, turn to medium-low speed, and cream the butter, warming the bowl as needed until it has the consistency of mayonnaise. Add the sugar and mix for 1 to 2 minutes, until fluffy. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl, add the eggs and vanilla paste, and mix for 15 to 30 seconds on low speed, until just combined.

Add the dry ingredients in 2 additions, mixing on low speed for 15 seconds after each, or until just combined. Scrape the bottom of the bowl to incorporate any dry ingredients that have settled there. Add the crème fraîche and banana and mix on low speed for about 30 seconds, until just combined. Transfer the batter to a covered container and refrigerate overnight, or for up to 36 hours.

To Bake the Muffins:

Preheat the oven to 425°F (standard). Line the muffin pan with the muffin papers and spray the papers with nonstick spray.

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Spoon the batter evenly into the papers, stopping 1/2-inch from the top (133 grams each for jumbo, or 66 grams for standard). Sprinkle 30 grams/3 tablespoons of the streusel on top of each muffin.

Place the pan in the oven, lower the oven temperature to 325°F, and bake for 35 to 38 minutes [or, 24 to 27 minutes for standard size], until the muffins are golden brown and a skewer inserted in the center comes out clean. Set the pan on a cooling rack and cool completely.

The muffins are best the day they are baked, but they can be wrapped individually in a few layers of plastic wrap or stored in a single layer in a covered container at room temperature for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 1 week.

Walnut Streusel Topping

Makes 400 grams/3 cups

[Note: this recipe makes twice the quantity needed for these muffins, but is easily halved].

- 1/2 cup + 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour – (100 grams)
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar – (100 grams)
- 3/4 cup walnuts, very finely chopped – (100 grams)
- 1/8 teaspoon Kosher salt – (0.4 grams)
- 3/5 ounces cold, unsalted butter, cut into 1/4-inch pieces – (100 grams)

Combine all of the ingredients except the butter in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment and mix on the lowest setting. Toss in the butter and mix on low speed for about 1 minute, or until the butter is incorporated, with no large chunks remaining.

Transfer the streusel to a covered container or a resealable plastic bag. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or up to 2 days, or freeze for up to 1 month. Use the streusel while it is cold.