

KITCHEN AFFAIRS

for the serious cook

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BANANA NUT BREAD

(Makes one 8- by 5 by 3-inch loaf)

Presented by Virginia Willis, author of "Bon Appetit, Y'all"

Quickbreads use baking powder or baking soda or both as leavening agents and therefore require no kneading or rising, as do traditional yeast breads. This quickbread recipe comes from my cousin-in-law Lisa, whose mama passed it on to her. It was originally baked in a loaf pan, as it is here, but I also like to bake it in a 9-inch cake pan. The temperature stays the same, but the cooking time will reduce to 30 to 45 minutes. It's great for breakfast, an afternoon snack, or topped with ice cream for a delicious dessert.

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus more for the pan
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon fine sea salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup sugar
2 large eggs, at room temperature
3 ripe bananas, mashed
1/2 cup chopped pecans

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Brush an 8- by 5- by 3-inch loaf pan with butter. In a bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, and baking soda. Set this aside.

To make the batter, in the bowl of a heavy-duty mixer fitted with the paddle, cream the 1/2 cup of butter and the sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, then the mashed bananas. Add the reserved dry ingredients and pecans and stir to combine. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan.

Bake until the cake is a rich, golden brown and it starts to pull away from the sides of the pan, 1 hour to 1 1/4 hours. Transfer to a rack to cool slightly, then invert the cake onto the rack. Serve warm or at room temperature. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

MEASURING DRY INGREDIENTS: Wet and dry measuring cups are not interchangeable. To measure a dry ingredient such as flour or sugar, scoop, level, and scrape; do not pack the ingredient into the cup. Scoop up, tap across the cup with the back of a knife or a straight-edge spatula to settle the ingredient, then level by scraping across the rim of the cup with a straight edge. You can't accomplish this with a liquid measuring cup, as the measure markings stop below the rim and it has a spout, so you can't level off. A dry measure will work for a wet ingredient, but it is more difficult to use, as dry measures do not normally have spouts for pouring.