



#8 Banana Bread Two Ways



Banana bread is a perfect way of recycling a bunch of overripe bananas. The softer, stickier and less appetising bananas, the better the bread. This is practically two recipes in one and some of the ingredients can be either skipped or easily substituted i.e. light brown or dark brown sugar for caster sugar. Vegetable oil can be replaced with another flavourless oil such as canola or sunflower oil or with tahini. You can skip oats and vanilla extract for a plainer version. As for the spices, I love cinnamon and cloves but you can go for any combo you like. Add some chopped chocolate, nuts or seeds for a richer taste. In other words, it's a bit of a pick and mix type of affair.

DIRECTIONS

1. Grease the loaf tin and line it with baking paper. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan/gas mark 4. In a medium bowl combine all the dry ingredients: the flour, bicarbonate of soda, salt, sugar, spices and oats, if using.
2. Put the bananas in a separate medium bowl and mash them with a fork or a potato masher into a slightly lumpy mixture. Add the eggs, milk, oil or tahini and vanilla extract. Whisk by hand for about half a minute. Don't aim for a beautifully smooth texture here, you want a not attractive looking mixture with some lumps.
3. With a spatula gently fold in the dry ingredients and stir until just combined.
4. Transfer to the loaf tin and smooth out with a spatula. Bake for 55 minutes until well risen, brown on top and the sides come away from the tin. If you're unsure if it's cooked through, stick a skewer or a toothpick in the middle of the bread. If it comes out clean, the loaf is ready. If not, bake for another 5 minutes and check again. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS

Makes one loaf, about 15 slices (one litre loaf tin, about 24cm x 13cm)

- 200g plain flour
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 heaped teaspoon cinnamon and 2 pinches of cloves (or mixed spice, ginger etc.)
- 75g caster sugar
- 75g light brown sugar or dark brown sugar)
- 70ml vegetable oil (or sunflower or canola oil) or 70g tahini
- 70ml milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 medium very ripe bananas (about 350g), peeled
- 60g rolled oats + 2 extra tablespoons for sprinkling (for the oat version)
- 1 heaped tablespoon of sesame seeds for sprinkling (for the tahini version)
- Optional: 60g dark/milk chocolate, finely chopped or 60g nuts/seeds of your choice



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