Mema's Banana Bread

Make-ahead · Makes 1 loaf (9×5-inch)

Ken's note: TBD

A butter version of Mema's banana bread, with a little less sugar, plus walnuts and a chopped banana for texture. Mema made hers with shortening or margarine, 1 cup of sugar, 2 cups of flour, and no vanilla. Her tip: line the pan with foil big enough to wrap the loaf once it's baked. The same batter makes cupcakes (350°F, 15–18 minutes).

Ingredients

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp fine salt
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon (optional)
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- ¾ cup granulated sugar (or light brown sugar for a richer flavor)
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 overripe bananas, mashed (about 1½ cups), plus 1 ripe banana, chopped
- 1½ cups walnuts, coarsely chopped and lightly toasted

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease and flour a 9×5-inch loaf pan, or line it with parchment or foil. Whisk the flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon together.
2. Whisk the melted butter and sugar until creamy. Beat in the eggs and vanilla, then stir in the mashed bananas. Add the dry ingredients and fold just until no dry streaks remain; don't overmix. Fold in the walnuts and chopped banana.
3. Pour into the pan, smooth the top, and sprinkle a few walnuts over the top for crunch. Bake 50–60 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean or with a few moist crumbs. If the top browns too quickly, tent loosely with foil near the end.
4. Cool in the pan 10 minutes, then turn out onto a rack and cool completely before slicing.