

Light Banana Bread



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Was there a way to make over this quick bread loaf with less fat?

Ingredients

Nonstick baking spray with flour (see note)

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (2 ounces) cake flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (5 $\frac{1}{4}$ ounces) sugar

3 very ripe, darkly speckled large bananas (about 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds), mashed well (about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups)

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup plain low-fat yogurt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
2 large eggs
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup walnuts, chopped (optional)

Method

1. If you don't have very ripe bananas on hand, try this trick for coaxing out the prized natural sugars in nearly ripe bananas. Before peeling and mashing the bananas, lay them on a baking sheet and pop them into the heated oven for 15 minutes. If you don't have nonstick baking spray with flour, butter the pan and dust with flour.
2. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Spray the bottom and sides of a 9 by 5-inch loaf pan with the nonstick baking spray. Mix the all-purpose flour, cake flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the sugar together in a medium bowl; set aside. In a separate bowl, mix the mashed bananas, yogurt, and vanilla together; set aside.
3. Beat the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar and butter together with an electric mixer on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
4. Reduce the mixer speed to low. Beat in half of the flour mixture until just incorporated, followed by one-third of the banana mixture, scraping down the bowl as needed. Add half of the remaining flour, followed by another one-third of the banana mixture. Repeat this process once more, being careful not to overmix the batter, which should look thick and chunky.
5. Scrape the batter into the prepared loaf pan and sprinkle the top evenly with the walnuts (if using). Bake until the loaf is golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with just a few crumbs attached, about 55 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through baking. Cool the bread in the pan for 10 minutes, then transfer the loaf to a wire rack. Serve warm or at room temperature. (The bread can be wrapped

with plastic wrap and stored at room temperature for up to 3 days.)

Notes

We tried going as low as we could with the butter in our light banana bread recipe, thinking that bananas, with their moisture, would help us achieve a more delicate crumb without having to add more fat. To achieve a delicate crumb, we used a combination of all-purpose flour and lower-protein cake flour. For moisture in our light banana bread recipe, we tried milk, buttermilk, low-fat sour cream, and low-fat yogurt. Low-fat yogurt let the banana flavor stand out best. Walnuts are a common addition to banana bread; we decided to make them optional, and recommend sprinkling them on top of the batter before baking, so they become toasted and more flavorful.

Source: Cook's Country (10 servings)