

Banana Bread

Roast the bananas to concentrate them. Brown the butter for nutty Maillard depth. Trust the bicarbonate of soda — it neutralises the fruit's acid and browns the crust.

Yield: **2 loaves** (23x13 cm) Active: **25 min** Total: **2 hr** (incl. roast + cool) Oven: **175°C** (350°F) Done: **95°C** internal

WHERE IT WAS BORN

1930s United States. The Depression made a black banana too precious to bin; cheap new bicarbonate of soda made a *quick bread* possible. First printed in Pillsbury's *Balanced Recipes*, 1933.

EATEN, AUTHENTICALLY

A home loaf, sliced thick with butter or toasted — best on days two and three. Spread the length of US, then Caribbean and UK home kitchens.

HOW IT'S USED NOW

A cafe and galley staple worldwide; the same batter bakes into muffins (below). Note: today's *Caevendish* replaced the lost *Gros Michel*.

INGREDIENTS

WEIGHT (LB/OZ) · CUPS / VOLUME IN RIGHT COLUMN

DRY

| | | |
|--|-------------|---------|
| Plain flour (<i>spoon & level</i>) | 1 lb 0.9 oz | 3¾ cups |
| Bicarbonate of soda (<i>fresh</i>) | 0.42 oz | 2½ tsp |
| Fine sea salt | 0.28 oz | 1½ tsp |
| Cinnamon (<i>optional</i>) | 0.14 oz | 2 tsp |

BROWN BUTTER, SUGAR & MISO

| | | |
|--|---------|---------|
| Unsalted butter (~200g <i>browned</i>) | 8.1 oz | 1 cup |
| Light brown sugar | 10.6 oz | 1¾ cups |
| Caster sugar | 3.5 oz | ½ cup |
| White (shiro) miso (<i>white only</i>) | 2.1 oz | 4 tbsp |

WET & BANANA

| | | |
|---|--------------|-------|
| Large eggs (<i>room temp</i>) | x4 | |
| Vanilla extract (<i>real</i>) | 0.71 oz | 4 tsp |
| Greek yoghurt (<i>full-fat</i>) | 4.2 oz | ½ cup |
| Very ripe bananas (<i>→~680g roasted</i>) | 1 lb 15.7 oz | ~8 |

THE RATIO — FLOUR = 100%

Flour 100 · banana 142 · sugar 83 · fat 42 · egg 42 · soda 2.5. Banana outweighs the flour — concentrate it by roasting and the crumb stays tender, not gummy.

Kit: 2 × 23x13 cm (9x5") loaf tins · light-coloured saucepan · scale · instant-read probe · parchment slings.

METHOD

- Roast the bananas whole.** 150°C (300°F), unpeeled, on a lined tray, until skins are **black** and flesh jammy, 25–30 min. Cool, peel, discard pooled liquid — ~680g flesh.
 - Drives off ~25% of the banana's water + caramelises sugars → concentrated flavour, no gummy crumb.* — Stella Parks, Serious Eats 2017
- Fold, divide, bake.** Whisk dry; fold into the wet (below) in two goes to **just combined** — flour streaks fine. Into 2 lined tins. **175°C (350°F), 50–60 min**, tent at 45 min if dark.
 - Soda hits the banana's acid and releases gas at once — get it to the oven; overmixing tightens the crumb.* — McGee 2004

Brown butter, sugars & wet

- Melt 230g butter in a *light* pan, swirling, until milk solids turn golden-brown + smell of hazelnut, 6–8 min. Off heat at once; scrape every fleck out. — *Maillard*, McGee 2004
- Whisk in** 300g brown sugar, 100g caster, 60g white miso while warm, 2 min. *Miso glutamates amplify sweetness — undetectable at this dose.* — *ChefSteps* 2018
- Beat in 4 eggs one at a time, then 20g vanilla + 120g yoghurt.
- Mash the roasted banana roughly (lumps welcome) and stir through. Now fold in the dry mix.

Done: Centre **95°C** (203°F); skewer with moist crumbs, not wet batter. Top domed, cracked, deep golden — colour alone lies, trust the probe.

Serve: cool in tin 15 min, lift out, cool 30 min before slicing. Best on days two and three. Freeze sliced, never the raw batter.

ONE BATTER, TWO BAKES — BANANA MUFFINS

The same batter is ~24 muffins. Line a tray, fill each well **two-thirds**; bake **175°C (350°F), 22–25 min** to the same 95°C centre. Demerara on top for a crackled lid. *More surface per gram = faster browning, more edges.*

ELEVATION

TIER 1 — NO EXTRA TIME

- Espresso powder** — 1 tsp in the dry mix, deepens banana
- Dark brown sugar** — swap 1:1, more molasses
- Sour cream for yoghurt** — richer, denser

TIER 2 — WORTH IT

- Tahini swirl** — 3 tbsp dragged across the top
- Miso-BB glaze** — 2 tbsp BB + 1 tbsp miso + icing sugar
- Caribbean turn** — rum raisins, lime zest, allspice

TIER 3 — RESTAURANT

- Brown-butter streusel** — rubbed crumbs, scattered on top
- Brûléed slice** — sugar + torch, to order
- Banana powder** — freeze-dried, over warm slices

TROUBLESHOOT

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Dense, tough | Overmixed or too much flour. Fold to just-combined; weigh flour. |
| Gummy band | Banana water. Roast it; pour off pooled liquid before mashing. |
| Sunken middle | Under-baked or too wet. Bake to a true 95°C internal. |
| Pale & sour | Too little soda or oven cool. Weigh soda; verify 175°C. |
| Soapy, metallic | Too much soda. Measure it — banana acid neutralises only so much. |
| Sticks to tin | No sling. Parchment with overhang lifts clean. |

CHARTER PREP & STORAGE

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| The make-ahead | Roast banana in bulk; the loaf is then a 25-min job. |
| Roasted banana | Mash warm, 340g bags, freeze flat 3 mo. Thaw overnight, fridge. |
| Dry mix | Airtight, RT, 1 mo. Brown butter: fridge 2 wk, re-melt. |
| Baked, sliced | Wrap/seal, freeze 3 mo. Toast from frozen or 10 min / 150°C. |
| Hold | Wrapped at RT — better on days 2–3 than day one. |
| Never | Freeze the raw batter — soda dies; the loaf sits flat. |