

The holiday season is right around the corner. Thanksgiving will be here before you know it. This means...battling with a giant turkey, last minute trips to the grocery store for those “must-have” ingredients, and most importantly, time spent with loved ones. We hope your Thanksgiving holiday is filled with joy and gratitude for our many blessings.

Believe it or not, in addition to buying and selling stocks, drafting financial plans and advising clients, I also have learned a little about cooking over the years. One of the ways I learned was by watching a show on public television called “America’s Test Kitchen”. I like to use recipes that have been tested, are easy to follow and give you a consistently good result.

Below is a recipe for the Ultimate Banana Bread from the people at “America’s Test Kitchen”. Pay particular attention to steps #2 & #3 because that is how you can get five bananas in this recipe (instead of three) without making your banana bread soggy. This is what gives it that extra banana flavor for a great holiday morning breakfast.



- 1 ¾ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- 6 large very ripe (i.e. heavily speckled or black) bananas - peeled
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
- 2 large eggs
- ¾ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons granulated sugar
- OPTIONAL: ½ cup walnuts, toasted and coarsely chopped

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1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Spray 8½ by 4½-inch loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray. Whisk flour, baking soda, and salt together in large bowl.
2. Place 5 bananas in microwave-safe bowl; cover with plastic wrap and cut several steam vents in plastic with paring knife. Microwave on high power until bananas are soft and have released liquid, about 5 minutes. Transfer bananas to fine-mesh strainer placed over medium bowl and allow to drain, stirring occasionally, 15 minutes (you should have ½ to ¾ cup liquid).
3. Transfer liquid to medium saucepan and cook over medium-high heat until reduced to ¼ cup, about 5 minutes. Remove pan from heat, stir reduced liquid into bananas, and mash with potato masher until fairly smooth. Whisk in butter, eggs, brown sugar, and vanilla.
4. Pour banana mixture into flour mixture and stir until just combined with some streaks of flour remaining. Gently fold in walnuts, if desired. Scrape batter into prepared pan. Slice remaining banana diagonally into ¼-inch-thick slices. Shingle banana slices on top of either side of loaf, leaving 1½-inch-wide space down center to ensure even rise. Sprinkle granulated sugar evenly over loaf.
5. Bake until toothpick inserted in center of loaf comes out clean, 55 to 75 minutes. Cool bread in pan on wire rack 15 minutes, then remove loaf from pan and continue to cool on wire rack. Serve warm or at room temperature.

If you decide to give this recipe a try, please let me know if you like it.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Derrick

[1] America's Test Kitchen July 2010

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