

BANANA CHOCOLATE WALNUT CAKE

SERVES 8

ACTIVE TIME: 30 MIN START TO FINISH: 2½ HR

A great way to use very ripe bananas, this easy-to-make cake incorporates everything you love about banana bread and adds a few more favorites—chocolate, walnuts, and cinnamon—for good measure. (It's also much more tender, with a light, moist crumb.)

- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened, plus 2 tablespoons, melted and cooled**
- 1 cup sugar, divided**
- 2 large eggs**
- 1¼ cups mashed very ripe bananas (about 3 medium)**
- ⅔ cup plain whole-milk yogurt**
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**
- 1 (3½- to 4-oz) bar 70%-cacao bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped**
- 1 cup walnuts (3 oz), toasted (see Tips, page 130), cooled, and coarsely chopped**
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon**

► Preheat oven to 375°F with rack in middle. Butter a 9-inch square cake pan.

► Stir together flour, baking soda, and salt. ► Beat together softened butter (1 stick) and ¾ cup sugar in a medium bowl with an electric mixer at medium speed until pale and fluffy, then beat in eggs 1 at a time until blended. Beat in bananas, yogurt, and vanilla (mixture will look curdled).

► With mixer at low speed, add flour mixture and mix until just incorporated.

► Toss together chocolate, nuts, cinnamon, melted butter, and remaining ¼ cup sugar in a small bowl. Spread half of banana batter in cake pan and sprinkle with half of chocolate mixture. Spread remaining batter evenly over filling and sprinkle remaining chocolate mixture on top.

► Bake until cake is golden and a wooden pick inserted in center of cake comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes. Cool cake in pan on a rack 30 minutes, then turn out onto rack and cool completely, right side up.

COOKS' NOTE: Cake can be made 2 days ahead and kept in an airtight container at room temperature.