

IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN

Discoveries and Techniques from Our Favorite Room in the House » Edited by Todd Coleman



tender crumb studded with chopped pecans. Trying to improve on perfection, I increased the amount of buttermilk to create a fluffier version ⑥, but beyond that, I didn't mess with a good thing. —Ben Mims

MOM'S BANANA BREAD

SERVES 6-8

This exceptionally moist quick bread (pictured at bottom right in the photo) is based on a recipe from Judy Mims, the mother of SAVEUR's assistant kitchen director, Ben Mims.

Butter, for greasing pan

- 1 cup flour, plus more for pan
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup canola oil
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup buttermilk
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 egg plus 1 egg yolk
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup chopped pecans
- 3 very ripe bananas, mashed

Heat oven to 350°. Grease a 9" x 5" x 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ " loaf pan with butter and dust with flour; set pan aside. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, and salt; set aside. Whisk together sugar, oil, buttermilk, vanilla, egg, and egg yolk in a medium bowl until smooth. Pour wet ingredients over dry ingredients and whisk until just combined. Add pecans and mashed bananas and whisk gently to combine. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the middle of the loaf comes out clean; 60-65 minutes. Let cool for 30 minutes before slicing and serving.

WHO DOESN'T love banana bread? It's delicious, easy to make, and possibly the best use for overripe fruit ever invented. Inspired by Dan Koeppel's article about the uncertain fate of bananas ("Fruit of the Future," page 35), I recently went on a baking spree in the SAVEUR test kitchen and was reminded of just how adaptable this quick bread

is. For the first few batches, I decided to depart from the standard lineup of ingredients. In one version ①, I used raisins in addition to the customary nuts. In another, I used butter instead of oil, which resulted in a drier crumb ②; that banana bread tasted great warm with some strawberry jam. In yet another, I omitted the baking soda (which

causes bananas to darken), resulting in a blonder hue ③. I even made a loaf containing whole chunks of ripe, creamy banana ④. No version satisfied me more, though, than my very own mom's. Her recipe calls for oil, buttermilk (for a pleasant tanginess), and no fewer than three bananas. Mom's squat loaf ⑤ has a sugary crust and a dense,