Golden Crown Banana Nut Bread

Servings: 12

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Start to Finish Time: 2 hours 40 minutes

Moist banana bread bursting with rich browned butter, sweet ripe bananas, and toasted walnuts, finished with an irresistible golden, caramelized walnut crown.

1 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped, divided

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup light brown sugar

1/4 cup granulated sugar

2 large eggs, room temperature

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, for browning

1/4 cup avocado oil

4 each bananas, very ripe (measure 1-1/2 cups, mashed)

1/4 cup Greek yogurt, plain

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon Watkins Butter Extract

CARMELIZED WALNUT CROWN:

2 tablespoons walnuts, toasted (reserved)

1 tablespoon turbinado sugar (raw cane sugar)

1 teaspoon unsalted butter, melted

1 pinch sea salt



PREP:

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Lightly grease a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan and line it with parchment paper, allowing the paper to extend over the long sides for easy removal.

1. TOAST THE WALNUTS (12 minutes):

Spread the walnuts on a baking sheet in a single layer.Toast for 6–8 minutes, stirring once, until fragrant and golden.

Remove from the oven and let cool completely. Reserve 2 tablespoons for the walnut crown.

2. BROWN THE BUTTER (10 minutes):

Place the 1/4 cup unsalted butter in a small, light-colored saucepan over medium heat. Cook, swirling or stirring frequently, until the butter foams and the solids turn golden brown, approximately 3–5 minutes.

Immediately transfer the browned butter, including the flavorful brown bits, to a heatproof bowl to stop the cooking. Allow to cool until just warm. ***Chef ETL Tip: Watch carefully during the final minute. The difference between beautifully browned butter and burned butter is only a few seconds.***

3. COMBINE THE DRY INGREDIENTS (while butter browns):

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt until evenly distributed. Set aside.

4. COMBINE THE SUGARS AND WET INGREDIENTS (5 minutes):

In a large mixing bowl, combine the brown sugar, granulated sugar, and eggs.

Beat with an electric mixer on medium-high speed for approximately 2 minutes, until slightly lighter and creamy.Slowly add the cooled browned butter and avocado oil, mixing until combined.

Add the mashed bananas, Greek yogurt, vanilla extract, and Watkins Butter Extract. Mix on low speed just until evenly combined.

5. INCORPORATE THE DRY INGREDIENTS (5 minutes):

Using a silicone spatula, gently fold the flour mixture into the banana mixture in two additions. Mix only until no dry flour remains. Do not overmix.

Gently fold in the toasted walnuts, excluding the reserved 2 tablespoons. Transfer the batter to the prepared loaf pan and smooth the surface.

6. PREPARE THE CARAMELIZED WALNUT CROWN (5 minutes):

In a small bowl, combine the reserved toasted walnuts, turbinado sugar, melted butter, and a small pinch of flaky sea salt. Mix until the walnuts are lightly coated.

Sprinkle evenly over the top of the banana bread batter. Press very lightly so the topping adheres.

7. BAKE (1 hour, 10 minutes):

Place the loaf pan on the center rack of the preheated oven. Bake for 60–70 minutes, checking after 60 minutes.

The bread is ready when: The top is deeply golden brown; a toothpick inserted into the center comes out without wet batte; The center feels set rather than wet or jiggly. *(If the walnut topping begins browning too quickly, loosely tent the loaf with aluminum foil).*

8. COOL AND SERVE (30 minutes):

Allow the bread to cool in the pan for 15 minutes.

Carefully lift the loaf out using the parchment paper and transfer it to a wire rack. Cool completely before slicing for the cleanest texture. For the best flavor, serve at room temperature.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 374 Calories; 23g Fat, (54.4% calories from fat); 7g Protein; 37g Carbohydrate; 3g Dietary Fiber; 42mg Cholesterol; 373mg Sodium; 17g Total Sugars; trace Vitamin D; 39mg Calcium; 2mg Iron; 298mg, Potassium; 124mg Phosphorus.

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CHEF ETL'S RECIPE NOTES:

* The bananas: Use very ripe bananas with heavily spotted or mostly dark skins. Measure exactly 1 1/2 cups after mashing.

* The browned butter: Brown the measured 1/4 cup of butter. Some moisture will evaporate during browning; use all the browned butter and brown milk solids without adding replacement liquid.

* The butter extract: Watkins Butter Extract should enhance the butter flavor without becoming dominant. We are starting with 1/2 teaspoon and can adjust after testing.

* The walnut crown: This is our signature finishing touch. The combination of crunchy toasted walnuts, caramelized sugar, and a hint of salt is designed to provide contrast to the soft banana bread.

STORAGE: Wrap tightly and refrigerate for up to 5 days, or freeze for up to 2 months. Bring to room temperature before serving.

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