

BOURBON CHOCOLATE BANANA POUND CAKE

I started off using the basic pound cake recipe in the Cook's Illustrated New Best Recipes cookbook, then came the banana, the chocolate... the booze. The result is something that is at its core, a pound cake. It's heavy in the way that pound cakes are, with a dense, spongy base. It's vanilla-y, with a hint of banana and sharp layers of bourbon-laced chocolate swirled throughout. It's not too sweet, not too banana-y, not too chocolaty... it's not too anything. It's pretty much just right. In my book anyway.

Ingredients.

2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
1 1/3 cup granulated sugar
3 whole eggs and 3 egg yolks, at room temperature
1/2 cup mashed banana = 1 very large (or two smaller) overripe banana
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2 teaspoons bourbon or whiskey (plus more for the chocolate sauce)
1/2 teaspoon fine salt
2 cups cake flour, sifted

For the chocolate sauce:

2/3 cup chocolate chips
1/4 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons corn syrup
2 tablespoons bourbon or whisky

Directions.

With water in a small double boiler (or pot of water and metal mixing bowl)* simmering, mix together the chocolate chips, 1/4 cup heavy cream, and corn syrup until melted and combine. Turn the heat off (alcohol is flammable) before mixing in the bourbon! Set aside.

Preheat your oven to 325°F. Grease and line a loaf pan with parchment paper.

In your stand mixer, beat your butter for a couple minutes, until it's shiny and smooth. Then add in the sugar and whip on high until it resembles frosting, about five minutes.

While the butter and sugar cream, whisk together your eggs, egg yolks, vanilla, and bourbon. Reduce the mixer to medium low speed and slowly drizzle the egg mixture in, stopping once to scrape down the sides. Once the egg mixture is incorporated, add the banana. Finally add the salt, and a half cup at a time, add it the flour. Remove the bowl from the mixer and, using a spatula, gently fold the batter together to make sure everything is incorporated. Now you can assemble your cake.

First scoop in a layer of batter, followed by a layer of chocolate, then another layer of batter, a layer of chocolate, a layer of batter, another of chocolate, and, finally, the rest of the batter. It's okay if you have chocolate left over, I usually do and it's perfect on ice

cream. Then, using a spoon, make three lines (the long way) down the top of the cake: one on the left, one center, and one on the right. Then take a sharp knife or skewer and, starting in on corner, work your way down the pan, swirling the chocolate into the batter.

Pop the cake into the oven, on the center rack, for 1 1/4 - 1 1/2 hours, until a skewer comes out mostly clean. Remove from the oven and let the cake cook, in the pan, for about ten minutes before removing it. Let it rest another ten minutes before serving it. It great warm, at room temperature, and my favorite thing about pound cake is that it is a totally acceptable breakfast item.

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