

CULINARY SOS

Huckleberry's banana poppy seed loaf

By Noelle Carter
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Dear SOS: Yesterday was my fourth time to Huckleberry. I am addicted to their daily flatbread. However, I tried the banana poppy seed bread, and I found it quite extraordinary. It's not too sweet.

- Helen Chiu Westchester

Dear Helen: We loved the combination of bananas, poppy seeds and dates in this rich, moist recipe.



Slice the loaves and serve the slices on their own (or with a little cream cheese, as the bakery recommends), or give them as gifts. They make a beautiful presentation garnished with caramelized sliced bananas and a sprinkling of powdered sugar.

Banana poppy seed loaf

Total time: 1 1/2 hours

Servings: 2 loaves (about 8 servings each)

Note: Adapted from Huckleberry Bakery & Cafe in Santa Monica. This recipe requires 2 small (8 1/2 - by-4 1/2 - by 2 1/2 -inch) metal or glass loaf pans.

3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter, plus extra for greasing the pans

1 1/2 cups (6.4 ounces) flour

1 1/2 cups (6.75 ounces) whole wheat flour

1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda

1 1/2 teaspoons poppy seeds

3/4 cup sugar plus 1 teaspoon, divided

3/8 teaspoon salt

3 eggs

5 very ripe bananas, plus 1 1/2 fresh bananas, divided

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

1 cup yogurt

3/4 cup coarsely chopped dates

1 to 2 tablespoons powdered sugar

1. *Heat the oven* to 375 degrees. Grease and line the bottoms of 2 (8 1/2 - by 4 1/2 - by 2 1/2 -inch) loaf pans with parchment paper.
2. *In a medium bowl*, whisk together the flour, wheat flour, baking powder, baking soda and poppy seeds. Set aside.
3. *In the bowl* of a stand mixer, or in a large bowl using an electric mixer, cream together the butter, three-fourths cup sugar and salt until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, until incorporated.
4. *In a medium bowl*, mash the very ripe bananas. With the mixer running, add the mashed bananas and vanilla to the butter mixture until incorporated. With the mixer on the lowest speed, add the dry ingredients just until incorporated. Gently fold in the yogurt and dates. Divide the batter evenly between the 2 pans.
5. *Slice the remaining* 1 1/2 bananas crosswise into one-eighth inch slices. Top the batter in each pan with the banana slices, arranged in rows. Sprinkle the remaining teaspoon of sugar evenly over the sliced bananas, then place in the center of the oven (leave a few inches between the loaf pans).
6. *Bake until a toothpick* inserted comes out clean, about 1 hour, rotating halfway through for even baking. Check the pans after 20 to 30 minutes and periodically after that to see that they do not darken too quickly; if they do, lightly cover the tops with aluminum foil and continue to bake.
7. *Cool the pans* and unmold the loaves. Sift the powdered sugar evenly over the 2 loaves. Cut the loaves into 1-inch slices and serve.

Each of 16 servings: 286 calories; 6 grams protein; 45 grams carbohydrates; 4 grams fiber; 10 grams fat; 6 grams saturated fat; 63 mg. cholesterol; 244 mg. sodium.

<http://www.latimes.com/features/food/la-fo-sos19-2009aug19,0,3976936.story>