

How to make the best banana bread no matter what

Baking has seemingly become everyone's favorite new activity during coronavirus lockdown, and banana bread is right up there in popularity with homemade sourdough starter (but far easier).

Basic as banana bread is, there are still several problems you may run into: unripe bananas, food allergies, special diets, a lack of eggs -- yet no obstacle need stop you. There's almost always a way to make a beautiful loaf whenever you want it, whatever your circumstances, as long as you have at least *one* semiripe banana. Here, we're covering seven common issues and how to surmount them for the best banana bread, no matter what.



In its classic form, this quick bread is quite simple, and depends mostly on three things: 1. fruit that's reached the ideal degree of super-sweet softness; 2. not overmixing the batter, which makes it gummy; and 3. baking for just the right amount of time. (Underbaking is another way to bring about a gummy texture, but overbaking dries things out, and moist banana bread is the only kind worth eating.)

That said, there's actually a lot of wiggle room -- and banana bread's inherent flexibility is no surprise when you know it became popular during the Great Depression, and endured through World War II-era rationing.

Here are seven things you might think would stop you, but shouldn't.

1. Your bananas aren't ripe enough

There are some tricks to ripen bananas more quickly but as with avocados, there isn't really a foolproof way. That said, if your bananas are at least partially ripe and you want to use them *right now*, **roast them!** Just place

your unpeeled bananas on a baking sheet lined with foil or parchment for easy clean-up and pop it into a 300-degree Fahrenheit oven for anywhere between 30 minutes and an hour. (Obvious but easy to overlook: Remove any stickers from the skins first.) The bananas are done when they've turned soft and black, and you can use them as soon as they're cool enough to peel.

The bananas should be at least slightly ripe before you bake them; green bananas just won't have converted enough sugar yet, and even though they will turn soft and black in the oven, they'll still taste like sadness.

Try Chowhound's roasted Nutella banana bread recipe.



2. You're one or two bananas short of a bunch

If you bake banana bread even just occasionally, you're probably already in the habit of stashing any on-the-verge-of-totally-blackening bananas in the freezer so you can turn them into baked gold later. (If not, start doing that immediately!) But if you want banana bread *now* and you're still short one or two perfectly overripe specimens, simply **make banana bread with just one banana** -- or, if you suspect that won't taste fruity enough for you, **make a mini loaf with your lone banana** (if you don't have a mini loaf pan, portion the batter into lined muffin pans):

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