



Just Loafing

KATHY HARRISON SHARES A FAMILY FAVORITE

WAS WANDERING from room to room, stuck inside while waiting for the electrician who would arrive sometime in the afternoon. “Could you be more specific?” I asked the scheduler. “No. We’ll call you when he’s on the way.” The phone went dead.

There was plenty I could do. My drawers were a mess, my windows needed cleaning, and I had documents to complete for the accountant. Nothing appealed. I picked up a photo album that I was supposed to get digitized. I came across several pictures of my mom and dad seated at a table with the remains of the dinner we all had together on Friday nights. There were half empty glasses, various condiments, scattered crumbs, and the slices of bread left at my dad’s place at the table. My dad, Sam, had bread at every meal. On occasion, we’d all go to Kow Loon, a local Chinese restaurant. The first time we went, my dad ordered Egg Foo Young, a cup of coffee, and some bread and butter. I still remember the waiter’s rather stricken look. “We don’t have bread. Or butter.” I thought we’d all have to leave the restaurant.

On subsequent visits to Kow Loon, my mom produced a waxed paper bag with two slices of bread and a little plastic container of very soft

butter to spread on this bread which, believe me, was neither artisanal nor crusty. Like a postage stamp, it probably had a shelf life of Forever.


For breakfast, my dad had corn flakes and bananas. Every single day. And of course, toast. Smiling while I thumbed through those old pictures, I thought, why not make something in honor of my dad, whose memory fills me with love and gratitude. For Sam: sweet and crunchy banana bread. 



PHOTO: GIRMANTAS URBONAS

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Banana Bread

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 stick, unsalted butter, plus more for greasing the pan
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup packed dark brown sugar
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 2 heaping cups very ripe mashed bananas (about 4-5 bananas)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons turbinado sugar (Sugar in the Raw)
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts or pecans, optional

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 9 x 5-inch loaf pan and set aside.
2. Using a hand-held or stand mixer, cream the butter until light and fluffy. Add the sugar and continue to beat for 2-3 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Stir in the mashed bananas and vanilla, combining well.
3. Whisk the dry ingredients together and add to the banana mixture just until combined. Do not overmix. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and sprinkle the turbinado sugar and nuts, if using, over the top. Bake the banana bread for 55-60 minutes until a toothpick inserted into the bread comes out clean. Let cool in the pan, then turn out onto a rack. Serve bread warm or at room temperature. Enjoy for up to three days, if it lasts that long.