

Banana Peel Cake With Brown Sugar Frosting

For one, two-layer cake:

Peels from 2 very ripe bananas, stem and very bottom discarded (see note)

½ cup unsalted butter, softened, plus more for buttering the pans

1½ cups granulated sugar

2 large eggs, separated

½ cup buttermilk

1⅓ cups cake flour, (gluten-free if needed), plus more flour for flouring the pans

1 tsp baking soda

¼ tsp baking powder

½ tsp fine-grain sea salt

For the frosting:

½ cup unsalted butter

1 cup packed light or dark brown sugar

¼ cup milk, 2 percent or higher

1¾ to 2 cups powdered sugar, sifted

Preheat oven to 350° F. Cut the banana peels into 1-inch pieces and place them in a small saucepan with 1 cup water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove pan from the heat and allow the mixture to cool slightly, then drain the banana peels, reserving a cup of the cooking water.

Butter and flour the sides of two 8-inch round cake pans and line the bottoms with parchment paper. Butter and flour the pans again to coat the paper.

Transfer the peels and the cup of cooking water to a tall, narrow container and purée with an immersion blender or a mini food processor until completely smooth.

Cream together the butter and sugar in a large bowl using an electric mixer or a wooden spoon until pale and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the egg yolks one at a time, mixing until incorporated, and scraping down the sides of the bowl after each addition. Mix in the banana peel mixture, then stir in the buttermilk until well combined.

In a medium-size bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Add the dry ingredients with the butter mixture and stir gently, just until combined.

Put the egg whites in another bowl (make sure it's dry) and whisk until soft peaks form, either by hand or with the whisk attachment on an electric mixer. If using an electric mixer, start slowly and gradually increase speed to medium-high.



photo by Penny De Los Santos

You're done when you pull out the whisk or beater and a soft peak is formed, but immediately collapses. Gently fold the egg whites into the batter and divide the batter evenly between the two prepared pans.

Bake, rotating the pans halfway through, until the tops are golden and a toothpick inserted into the center of each cake pulls out with dry crumbs rather than wet batter, about 25 minutes. Let the cakes cool completely in the pans.

When the cakes are cool, make the frosting. Melt butter in a medium saucepan over low heat. Stir in brown sugar and cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Stir in the milk, raise the heat to medium-high and cook, stirring constantly until the mixture boils. Remove from the heat and let cool until lukewarm. Gradually whisk in one cup of the powdered sugar, beating until smooth. Add the remainder of it if the frosting is too loose. Use the frosting immediately as it will begin to thicken and stiffen as it sits.

To remove the cake from the pans, invert one cake pan on a serving plate, lift off the pan and peel off the parchment. Repeat for the second cake pan. Put one layer of the cake on a serving platter and spread about one third of the frosting evenly over the top. Set the other layer on top, and spread the remaining frosting over the top and sides.

Note: Banana peels contain some of the same proteins found in latex and could cause an allergic reaction. Those same proteins might also make your immersion blender feel slightly gummy to the touch. Rub the surface down with cooking oil before washing it.

Excerpted from Cooking With Scraps: Turn Your Peels, Cores, Rinds, and Stems into Delicious Meals by Lindsay-Jean Hard.