

Banana Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting



There's nothing remotely Italian about Banana Cake (except banana is the same word in both Italian and English), but it's a long time family favorite. And it's not even my recipe. But every May, I make this cake for my kids' birthdays...twice. It's been their favorite cake since they were little and since their birthdays are 2 weeks apart, we seem to eat this glorious banana cake with fluffy cream cheese frosting for most of the month of May. The recipe comes from the original Silver Palate cookbook by Julee Rosso & Sheila Lukins and my old, well-loved copy seems to open by itself to page 299. So here is the recipe in its' entirety (including the walnuts which I've always omitted since the kids didn't like them).

Ingredients

1/2 lb. (2 sticks) sweet butter
1 c. sugar
2 eggs
1 c. mashed ripe bananas
1 3/4 c. unbleached all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. salt
2/3 tsp. baking soda
5 T. buttermilk
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Cream Cheese Frosting (see below)
1 1/2 - 2 medium size, firm but ripe, bananas, sliced
1 1/2 c. shelled chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour two 9-inch round cake pans. Cream butter and sugar together until light & fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add mashed bananas, mixing thoroughly. Sift dry ingredients and add to butter and egg mixture. Stir until flour has been incorporated completely. Add buttermilk and vanilla. Mix for 1 minute. Pour batter into prepared pans. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until cake tester inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool pans on rack for 10 minutes. Unmold and cool on rack for 2 hours. When

cooled, place one layer on a serving plate and frost with Cream Cheese Frosting. Arrange slices of banana over frosting; cover with second layer (upside down) and frost top and sides of cake. Cover sides of cake with chopped nuts, holding nuts in palm and pressing firmly to sides of cake.

Cream Cheese Frosting

8 oz. cream cheese, at room temperature

6 T. sweet butter, at room temperature

3 c. confectioners' sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

Cream together cream cheese and butter in a mixing bowl. Slowly sift in confectioners' sugar and continue beating until full incorporated. Mixture should be free of lumps. Stir in vanilla.