

Craft time with Susie

Susie shows you how to make this yummy banana bread, complete with a surprise ingredient!

All photos Dropped Pencil

Susie's Banana Bread Surprise

A woman with long, curly brown hair, wearing a black top and a pink apron, is smiling and holding a round loaf of banana bread. The bread is covered in white frosting and has a decorative pattern on top. She is standing in a kitchen with wooden cabinets and a tiled backsplash.

Let me show you how to make a healthy, tasty treat in the kitchen – I call it **Susie's Banana Bread Surprise**. Actually, the recipe has two surprises in it, and I'll point them out to you as they come up. This recipe will make one loaf of banana bread, which is easy to cut into single-serving slices and share with a friend or two who needs some kindness!

Supplies. For this project, we'll need several tools you probably already have in your kitchen, including a baking loaf pan and an electric mixer. You'll want to make sure you have all the ingredients before getting started, including plain yogurt, bananas, ground flaxseed meal, and chocolate chips (one of our surprises). Use the two lists to make sure you have everything.

Kitchen list

Electric mixer	Table fork and spoon
3 different sized mixing bowls	Liquid measuring cup
Measuring cups	Oven mitts
Measuring spoons	Cooling rack
	4½ x 8½ bread loaf pan

Ingredients list

5 Tablespoons butter	¼ cup ground flaxseed meal
2 eggs	¾ teaspoon
3 small smashed bananas (they can be really ripe)	½ teaspoon salt
1/3 cup plain yogurt	½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ cup sugar	1/3 teaspoon allspice
½ cup brown sugar	Frosting
1½ cup flour (wheat, white, or some of each)	1/3 cup powdered sugar
	2½ tablespoons milk

Step 1: Mix the wet ingredients (first 4 items)

Before mixing anything, have a grownup set the oven to 350 degrees.

Get your large bowl and start with the butter. Take a stick of butter, and following the tablespoon markings on the edge of the butter, use a table knife to cut after the 5th tablespoon mark. Unwrap the butter and put it into the large mixing bowl, but save the wrapper because we're going to use it a bit later.

Next, take two eggs, crack them, and break them into the bowl. Be careful not to get shell parts into the bowl. If you do, pick them out with your fingers. Be sure to wash your hands with soap and warm water after this step.

Then comes the fun part! The bananas. You'll need $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups, which equals about three bananas. First, peel the bananas, then break them into two or three pieces each. Place them in the small bowl and mash it up with a fork. (A potato masher works great too!) Mash each of the four bananas one at a time and add them to the bowl with the butter and eggs.

Last of the wet ingredients, use your liquid measuring cup and add $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of plain or vanilla yogurt into this same bowl.



Use the tablespoon markings on the butter wrapper to measure 5 tablespoons.



After cracking the egg on the counter, find the dimple as shown, and press your fingers into it to break the eggshell open.



After peeling the bananas, break them apart into small pieces and place them in a bowl.



Use a table fork or a potato masher to squish the bananas up. Then add them to the wet ingredients bowl.



Use your liquid measuring cup to measure $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of yogurt. Then add it to the rest of your wet ingredients.

Step 2: Mixer time!

Hold your electric hand mixer so the beaters are in the ingredients before you turn on the switch. Start with the mixer on slow, and then advance to medium speed. Beat the wet items until they're all blended to a smooth mixture.



Always start and stop the mixer with the beaters inside the bowl.

Step 3: Add the sugar

Fill a ½ cup with white sugar, smoothing off the top with a table knife so it's flat. Dump it into the mixing bowl with the smooth batter.

Now fill the same ½ cup with brown sugar. Brown sugar is moist, so you'll need to pack it down tightly into the measuring cup with your hand to measure it properly. Add this to your batter.

Next get your mixer and mix the sugar in really well with the bananas, yogurt, eggs, and butter.



As shown here, use the back of a table knife to level the sugar even with the top of the measuring cup.



Brown sugar is moist, so you need to pack it into the measuring cup with your fingers.

Step 4: Mix the dry ingredients

Take your medium sized mixing bowl and start with a cup and a half of flour. Level this off with a knife (just like the sugar), then pour it into a new, clean bowl.

Flaxseed meal is a healthy food that will give our banana bread a little bit of a crunch. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of ground flaxseed meal and mix these two things together with a spoon.

Next, grab your measuring spoons, pick the $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon and measure out one spoon of baking soda. Use the $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon for both the salt and the cinnamon. Finally, find the $\frac{1}{3}$ teaspoon and use it to measure a spoonful of allspice.

Mix all the dry ingredients together with a spoon until you can't see anymore cinnamon separately.

Then pour the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients. Mix the ingredients enough for all of the batter to be wet (no dry lumps), but don't over mix it.



Flour needs to be spooned into the measuring cup with a spoon. Once the cup is full, use the table knife to level the flour, just like we did with the white sugar in the previous step.



Add a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of flaxseed meal to the dry ingredients bowl.



A little salt goes a long way, so measure the salt over another container, not the mixing bowl.



Cinnamon is one of those ingredients that it's ok to use a bit more than the recipe calls for. Susie used a heaping $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of cinnamon.



Step 5: Add a surprise and bake

Now it's time for one of the two surprises in our banana bread. This one is mini chocolate-chips. Measure 1/3 cup of mini chocolate chips (or a little more) and gently mix them into your batter with a spatula. Don't use your electric mixer for this step.



Measure 1/3 cup of mini chocolate chips and add them to the batter.

Step 6: Batter to the pan

Take that butter wrapper we saved earlier and wipe it (butter side down) all around the inside of the loaf pan. This will keep the banana bread from sticking to it.

Next, pour the batter into your greased loaf pan and make sure it sits level in the pan. Your oven should be hot by now, so have a grownup carefully open the oven door and slide the loaf pan in. Remind them to use oven mitts!

Bake your banana bread for 55 minutes.

While the bread is in the oven, you can wash all the dishes.



Carefully pour the bread batter into the pan. If you get some batter on the outside of the pan, be sure to wipe it off before putting the pan into the oven.

Step 7: Toothpick test

After the bread has been in the oven for 55 minutes, you need to make sure the bread is done in the middle (not gooey). Have a grownup removed the bread from the oven and place it on a cooling rack. Then gently poke a toothpick into the middle of the loaf. When you pull out the toothpick, check to see if it's clean. If it has some bread batter stuck to it, put the pan back in the oven for another 5 minutes, and then check it again.

Once the toothpick comes out clean, the bread passes the test and it is done. Leave the bread to cool for 10 to 15 minutes.



As shown by our first test, the toothpick didn't come out clean, so we put the bread back into the oven for another 5 minutes.

Step 8: Frosting surprise

While the bread is cooling on the rack, you can make this simple frosting. Place 1/3 cup of powdered sugar in a small bowl. Add 1 1/2 teaspoons of milk and stir with a fork until there are no lumps of sugar showing.



The simple frosting is our second surprise.



Make sure the milk and sugar are fully mixed with no dry lumps.

Step 9: Finishing the bread

When the banana bread has cooled for a bit, with one oven-mitted hand hold the loaf pan and with the other hand slip a table knife all around the inside edge of the pan to loosen the bread. Next, place mitts on both hands and tip the bread out of the pan onto a nice plate.

Use a spatula and gently layer the frosting over the top of the bread, letting some of it drip down the sides. That's called drizzling and looks very fancy!

Once the frosting is finished, your banana bread is ready to share. Enjoy!

A note to grownups

Ground Flaxseed Meal is full of nutrients and can be found in the baking supplies aisle of your grocery store.

Assembling all the tools and ingredients on the counter first will help your young baker not get overwhelmed with details.

Approximate time for project: 1½ - 2 hours

Supervision: This project requires supervision by a grownup and involves a heated oven and an electric hand mixer. Depending on your baker's age, it's probably best that a grownup handle the work in and around the oven. Using the mixer is a real highlight, so even if it's more age appropriate, hold your hand over your baker's hand holding the tool.



Use a table knife to carefully loosen the bread from the sides of the pan. Be sure to hold the pan with an oven mitt!



Use a spatula to apply the frosting to the top of the bread.



Our bread is finished! The drips down the side are good because they make it look fancy.