

## Banana-Hazelnut Upside-Down Cake

Recipe 136 of 365

I'm a sucker for one-layer cakes; something about a multiple-layer cake seems high maintenance, but looking at a recipe for a simple cake like this says "effort taken" without saying "project undertaken." If you're toasting the hazelnuts\*, do that first, so that the nuts have time to cool while you make the rest of the cake.

Serve this with a little rum-spiked fresh whipped cream to bring out the light rum flavor in the cake.

TIME: 20 minutes, plus baking

MAKES: 8 servings

Vegetable oil spray  
1/4 packed cup brown sugar  
3 bananas, peeled and sliced into 3/4" rounds  
2 large eggs  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup sour cream  
1/4 cup hazelnut, walnut, or vegetable oil  
2 tablespoons dark rum (optional)  
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 cup hazelnuts, very finely chopped\*

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Grease a 9" cake pan with the vegetable oil spray. (I used a nonstick cake pan here, and the cake lifted out beautifully.) Sprinkle the brown sugar evenly over the bottom of the pan, and arrange as many banana slices as you can, one flat side down, in the bottom of the pan, leaving about 1/4 inch between the bananas and the edge of the pan so the batter can go all the way to the edge of the pan. Set aside.

In a large bowl, whisk the eggs and sugar until blended. Add the sour cream, oil, and rum, and mix again until combined. Set aside.

In another bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, and hazelnuts. Add the dry mixture to the wet ingredients, and stir until all the flour has been incorporated. Pour half the batter over the bananas, and use a spatula to spread the batter evenly over the bananas and into the sides of the pan. Add the remaining batter and smooth the top.

Bake for 35 to 40 minutes on the bottom rack, or until the cake is puffed, golden, and beginning to crack. Carefully invert the cake onto a serving platter, and serve warm.

*\*Toasting the hazelnuts will give them (and thus your cake) extra flavor: roast hazelnuts for about 5 minutes in a preheated 350-degree oven, or until the skins darken and begin to lift off the nuts themselves. Transfer them to an old kitchen towel. Fold half of the towel over the nuts, and use the towel to rub the loose skins off (you don't have to be militant about getting ALL the skins off) before allowing the nuts to cool and chopping them finely by hand or in a food processor. Note that chopping warm nuts in a food processor may result in hazelnut butter.*