

# Salt and Serenity

## Banana Crunch Cake with Brown Butter Cream Cheese Frosting

The inspiration for this cake came from [Sally's Baking Addiction blog](#). I adapted it by baking it into a statuesque three-layer cake with a brown butter cream cheese frosting and a thin layer of crunch between each layer.

You could also bake it in a 9x13 inch baking pan, frost it and serve it as a humble snacking cake. You will only need to make half a recipe of the frosting for this. Don't skip browning the butter for the frosting. It's outstanding.

Makes one six-inch three-layer cake. Serves 8-10.

### **Cake:**

345 grams (about 1½ cups) mashed ripe bananas (from about 3 large bananas)  
375g (3 cups) all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
½ teaspoon Diamond Crystal Kosher salt  
170g (¾ cup) unsalted butter, removed from fridge about 30 minutes before baking  
198 grams (1 cup) granulated sugar  
100 grams (½ cup) packed light brown sugar  
3 large eggs, at room temperature  
2 teaspoons vanilla bean paste or pure vanilla extract  
338 grams (1½ cups) buttermilk, at room temperature

### **Frosting:**

340 grams (1½ cups) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature  
452 grams (2 packages) full-fat brick cream cheese, softened to room temperature  
720 grams (6 cups) confectioners' sugar needed  
1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste or pure vanilla extract  
¼ teaspoon Diamond Crystal Kosher salt

### **Crunch:**

50 grams (3 cookies) Digestive cookies  
30 grams (¼ cup) walnut halves  
2 Tablespoons malted milk powder or Ovaltine  
1 Tablespoon granulated sugar  
1/8 teaspoon Diamond Crystal Kosher salt  
30 grams (2 Tablespoons) melted butter

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease 3 six-inch round cake pans.

2. Make the cake: Mash the bananas with a fork or potato masher. A few lumps are fine. Set mashed bananas aside.
3. Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt together. Set aside.
4. Using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter on high speed until smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Add both sugars and beat on high speed for 2 minutes until creamed together. Scrape down the sides and up the bottom of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed. Add the eggs and the vanilla. Beat on medium-high speed until combined, then beat in the mashed bananas. Scrape down the sides and up the bottom of the bowl as needed.
5. With the mixer on low speed, add the dry ingredients in three additions alternating with the buttermilk and mixing each addition just until incorporated. Do not overmix. The batter will be slightly thick. A few lumps are OK.
6. Divide the batter equally into the prepared pans. I like to use my kitchen scale to get them the same weight. Bake for 25-30 minutes. Baking times vary, depending on your oven, so keep an eye on yours. The cake is done when a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. If you find the top of the cake is browning too quickly in the oven, loosely cover it with aluminum foil.
7. Remove the cake from the oven and set on a wire rack. Allow to cool completely. Trim the tops of the cakes so that they are completely level.
8. While the cake is baking and cooling, **make the frosting:** Heat butter in a heavy-bottomed and preferably light-colored saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until melted. Continue cooking, stirring with a rubber spatula frequently, until foaming subsides, and butter starts to smell nutty and milk solids are a deep golden brown, about 5-6 minutes. To check the color of the butter, spoon some butter onto a heatproof white bowl or plate. When ready, pour the butter into a heatproof bowl, scraping the milk solids off the bottom of the pan. Chill butter in fridge until solid.
9. In a large bowl using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the cream cheese and chilled brown butter together on high speed until smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes. Slowly, on low speed, add icing sugar. Once all the icing sugar is incorporated, switch to high speed and beat for 2-3 minutes. Add salt and vanilla and mix for an additional 30 seconds.
10. **Make Crunch Layer:** Place cookies, walnuts, malted milk powder, sugar and salt in a Ziploc bag. Use a rolling pin and roll over the bag until you have coarse

crumbs. Mix crumbs with melted butter. Spread out on a parchment lined baking sheet and bake at 350°F for 7-9 minutes. Let cool completely.

11. Assemble Cake: Place cardboard cake circle on revolving cake stand. Put a dollop of buttercream on the cardboard circle. Top with first layer of cake, bottom side down. Cover with a ¼-inch thick layer of buttercream. Sprinkle a thin even layer of crunch over the buttercream. Repeat until all 3 layers are stacked.
12. Cover sides and top of cake with a very thin layer of buttercream. This is your "crumb" layer. Some cake may peek through, that's ok. Chill cake for 30 minutes. Spread a thick layer of buttercream on sides and top of cake. Using the clean edge of your offset spatula or a wide plastic cake smoother, smooth the sides and top of the cake.
13. If desired, you can put any leftover buttercream into a piping bag with a star tip and pipe a border around the top and bottom of the cake.