

Introduction

Banana bread cinnamon rolls are a whimsical twist on the traditional cinnamon roll, combining the sweet, rich flavors of banana bread with the gooey, comforting texture of cinnamon rolls. This recipe takes advantage of ripe bananas, transforming their natural sweetness into delightful rolls that are perfect for breakfast or a dessert treat. Topped with a creamy cream cheese icing, these rolls are indulgent yet incredibly easy to make, with every bite reminiscent of warm banana bread fresh from the oven. Whether you are enjoying them on a leisurely weekend morning or serving them at a brunch gathering, these banana bread cinnamon rolls are sure to impress.

Detailed Ingredients

- 1 cup warm milk (110°F)
- 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
- 2 medium bananas, mashed
- 1 large egg (room temperature)
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, cubed
- ¾ cup light or dark brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 banana, sliced
- 4 ounces cream cheese (softened)
- 2 cups powdered sugar (sifted)
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Prep Time

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time, Total Time, Yield

Cook Time: 33 minutes

Total Time: 2 hours

Yield: 12 rolls

Detailed Directions and Instructions

Prepare the Dough:

Begin by warming the milk to about 110°F, which is the ideal temperature for activating the yeast. Sprinkle the active dry yeast over the surface of the milk and let it rest for 10 minutes until it becomes frothy. This foamy action is crucial because it indicates that the yeast is alive and ready to help your dough rise.

In a large mixing bowl, combine 4 cups of all-purpose flour, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of granulated sugar, and 1 teaspoon of salt. Mix these dry ingredients well. Next, take 6 tablespoons of unsalted butter, cut into small cubes, and rub it into the flour mixture using your fingertips until you achieve a crumbly texture resembling pea-sized crumbs. This step creates a tender dough by incorporating the fat into the flour.

Mix Wet Ingredients:

In a separate bowl, combine the warm milk mixture, the mashed bananas, and the room temperature large egg. Whisk these ingredients together until smooth and fully incorporated. Gradually introduce this wet mixture into the dry ingredients, mixing until a cohesive dough starts to form. Turn the mixture out onto a floured surface and knead the dough for 5-7 minutes. As you knead, the dough should become smooth and elastic, signaling that gluten development is taking place.

Rise the Dough:

Preheat your oven to 200°F, and after it reaches the desired temperature, turn it off. Grease a clean bowl with nonstick spray and place your dough in it. Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap to create a warm, draft-free environment, allowing the dough to rise. Place it in the warm oven (with the door slightly ajar) and let it rise for 1 hour or until it has doubled in size. This rising process is essential as it enhances the dough's flavor and texture.

Prepare the Filling:

While the dough is rising, you can prepare the cinnamon-sugar filling. In a medium bowl, beat the softened butter until it is smooth and creamy. Gradually add the $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of brown sugar and 2 teaspoons of ground cinnamon, mixing until well combined. This rich filling will provide a delicious contrast to the soft rolls, ensuring a burst of flavor in every bite.

Assemble the Rolls:

Once the dough has risen, turn it out onto a lightly floured surface. Roll it out into a large rectangle, approximately 12×18 inches in size. Spread the cinnamon-sugar filling evenly over the surface of the dough, leaving a small border around the edges. To enhance the flavor, place banana slices across the filling. This addition adds another layer of banana goodness within the rolls. Carefully roll the dough tightly into a log, starting from the long edge of the rectangle and pinching the seams to seal it.

Slice and Second Rise:

Using a serrated knife, slice the rolled dough into 12 equal pieces. Arrange these rolls in a greased 9×13-inch baking pan, leaving a little space between each roll for further expansion. Cover the pan with a clean kitchen towel and let the rolls rise for an additional 20 minutes. This second rise helps the rolls become fluffy and light.

Bake the Rolls:

Preheat your oven to 375°F. Once preheated, place the rolls in the oven and bake for 28-33 minutes, or until they are golden brown on top and smell heavenly. Keep an eye on them towards the end, as oven temperatures can vary, and you want to avoid over-baking.

Make the Icing:

While the rolls are baking, you can prepare the cream cheese icing. In a mixing bowl, beat together the softened cream cheese and butter until the mixture is smooth and creamy. Gradually add in the sifted powdered sugar, mixing until fully combined. Lastly, add 1 teaspoon of pure vanilla extract for added flavor and mix until smooth and luscious.

Frost and Serve:

Once the rolls are out of the oven and still warm, spread the cream cheese icing generously over the top of each roll. The warmth from the rolls will slightly melt the icing, creating a deliciously gooey topping. Serve these banana bread cinnamon rolls immediately for the best experience and enjoy the delightful fusion of flavors and textures.

Notes

For the best results, use very ripe bananas, as their natural sweetness and moisture contribute significantly to the flavor and texture of the rolls. You may also replace some of

the all-purpose flour with whole wheat flour for a healthier option. If you have leftover rolls, store them in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days or in the refrigerator for longer freshness. Reheat gently before serving for the best taste.

Cooking Techniques

Kneading: This technique develops gluten in the dough, creating a chewy and airy texture in the final product. Knead until the dough is smooth and elastic.

Rising: Allowing the dough to rise in a warm environment encourages fermentation from the yeast, which creates a delicate texture and enhances flavor.

Rolling: When rolling out the dough, strive for an even thickness to ensure consistent baking. Use a light touch to avoid deflating the dough.

Icing: When making the cream cheese icing, beat until well combined for a smooth texture, ensuring easy spreading over the rolls.

FAQ

Can I make these rolls ahead of time?

Absolutely! You can prepare the dough and assemble the rolls the night before, store them in the refrigerator, and let them rise for about 30 minutes before baking in the morning.

What should I serve with these rolls?

These banana bread cinnamon rolls are delicious by themselves, but they pair well with a side of fresh fruit or a steaming cup of coffee or tea.

Can I freeze these cinnamon rolls?

Yes, you can freeze the baked, frosted rolls. Allow them to cool completely, wrap them tightly in plastic wrap, or store them in an airtight container. They can last in the freezer for up to 3 months. Reheat them in the oven or microwave before serving.

Can I use different fillings?

You can easily customize the filling by adding ingredients like chocolate chips, nuts, or even swapping the cinnamon for cardamom.

Conclusion

Banana bread cinnamon rolls are a delightful and unique treat that everyone will enjoy. With their soft, fluffy texture and luscious cream cheese icing, these rolls offer an irresistible combination of flavors that celebrate the beloved banana. Making them at home can be a gratifying experience, allowing you to savor each step of the process—all while filling your kitchen with the enticing aroma of baked goods. Give this recipe a try, and you may just create a new family favorite!

More Recipes Suggestions and Combinations

Choco-Banana Cinnamon Rolls

Add chocolate chips to the filling for a decadent choco-banana treat.

Pineapple Coconut Rolls

Substitute mashed bananas with crushed pineapple and shredded coconut for a tropical twist.

Maple Pecan Rolls

Incorporate chopped pecans into the filling for added crunch and flavor.

Apple Cinnamon Rolls

Replace bananas with finely chopped apples for a classic fall flavor.

Berry Infusion Rolls

Experiment with your favorite berries mixed into the dough for a fruity, colorful touch.