



## **Breakfast Really Is the Most Important Meal of the Day: Even if it's Chocolate Banana Bread**

By Kay MacInnis, Registered Dietitian

It's that time of the year when you want to stay in bed little longer. It's dark outside and the chilly nighttime air makes great recipe for sleeping in and running late to work. Though, I would not advise this behavior (LOL), I look for things to grab quickly on the way out of the door.

I like tell myself that eating chocolate is decreasing any inflammation that may be occurring in my body. I have modified this recipe by using olive or canola oil in place of the butter. Butter, like many other fats, is solid at room temperature and has been linked to increasing risk of heart disease. I also used Greek yogurt in place of sour cream and cut the salt by half to make it a healthier option.

Some recent studies suggest that by skipping breakfast or eating a really late breakfast may contribute to atherosclerosis, plaque build-up in the artery walls. Eating breakfast may help regulate our appetite and decrease the urge to snack during the day. SO please eat breakfast.

My husband says, "Nothing is ever the same twice at our house!" "You have to always mess around with the recipes!" Just as he begins to really like the way I have changed the recipe, I end up changing it again. Additional recipe modifications include, using less flour and adding some oatmeal or skipping the

semi-sweet chocolate chips and using nuts instead to help with the moisture. I have learned from chefs I've worked with, not to be intimidated when making my standard recipes "healthier"! It will always be good enough.

## Chocolate Banana Bread

- 1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour, spooned into measuring cup and leveled-off
  - 1/4 cup natural unsweetened cocoa powder
    - 1 teaspoon baking soda
    - 1/2 teaspoon salt
    - 1/2 c. olive or canola oil
      - 1 cup sugar
      - 2 large eggs
  - 1 cup mashed very ripe bananas, from 2-3 brown bananas
    - 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
    - 1 teaspoon vanilla
  - 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 °F. Grease a 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan with non-stick cooking spray.
2. In a medium bowl, combine the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda and salt. Whisk until there are no more lumps in the cocoa powder and the mixture is well combined. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl or electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the oil and sugar until light and fluffy, 2-3 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time, incorporating well after each addition. Add the dry ingredients and beat gently until just combined. Add the bananas, Greek yogurt and vanilla and mix on low speed to combine. Fold in the chocolate chips. Do not over mix.
4. Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan and spread evenly with a spatula. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out with a few moist crumbs attached, about 1 hour and 10 minutes. Let the loaf rest in the pan for about 10 minutes, then turn it out onto a rack to cool completely.

*Nutrition Information: 273 calories, 13 gm fat, 58 mg chol, 37 gm carbohydrate, 4 gm protein, 327 mg sodium*

Original recipe from Jennifer Segal at Once upon a chef.

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*This is another in a weekly series of healthy recipes from Kay MacInnis, registered dietitian at Providence Health in Columbia, SC.*

*Kay promotes health and wellness, helping cardiac and diabetes patients eat their way to healthier lives. She works in consultation with the trained chefs at Providence, combining her nutrition knowledge with their food prep know-how to create delicious, healthy dishes for patients and the public. She also conducts a number of health and wellness events for the public, including the monthly Providence Cooks! classes.*

*"She doesn't just give you the fish, she teaches you how to cook it."*

*– a Kay MacInnis fan and Providence Cooks! regular.*