

Cherry Banana Morning Cake

I call this a morning cake because it's not too sweet and serves as a fitting bridge between breakfast and lunch. Flo Braker's Banana Streusel Snack Cake (from [Baking for All Occasions](#), Chronicle Books, 2008) served as my rough model here, but I left off her streusel, covered the cake with cherries, messed with the flour and generally bastardized her recipe. For the record, I'm sure her original version is perfectly delicious as well.

Makes one 8-1/2" square cake

1 cup cake flour
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
4 ounces (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 cup mashed bananas (2 or 3)
3 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3/4 teaspoon almond extract
5 ounces fresh cherries (about 1 cup), stemmed, pitted, halved
2-3 tablespoons demerara (coarse) sugar, for topping

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Coat an 8-1/2" square cake pan with nonstick spray and fit the bottom with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, whisk the two flours, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and granulated sugar until creamy and light, about 3 minutes. Add the egg and beat until incorporated. Mix the mashed banana, milk, and two extracts in a small bowl and add them to the mixer, beating well until all the ingredients are incorporated. (The batter will look curdled. Don't be alarmed.) Add the flour and beat just until the batter comes together.

Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and lay the cherries, cut side up, on top in any pattern you like. (I prefer a rustic, haphazard placement.) Sprinkle the whole cake with the coarse sugar, making sugar to get some in the cherries.

Bake in the center of the oven for about 35 minutes, or until a tester comes out clean. Set the pan on a wire rack to cool for 10 minutes, and then carefully unmold and continue cooling. Wait until the cake has finished cooling before cutting it into generous squares.