

Vegan Chocolate Babka
By Isa Chandra Moskowitz

FOR THE DOUGH:

4 cups all-purpose flour
½ cup plus 2 Tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons salt
1 cup unsweetened almond milk (or your favorite non-dairy milk), warmed
2 ¼ teaspoons active dry yeast (one 0.75-ounce packet)
½ cup mashed very ripe banana
½ cup refined coconut oil, at room temperature

FOR THE FILLING:

12 ounces semisweet chocolate chips
¾ cup refined coconut oil
1 ½ cups finely ground chocolate wafer cookies
3 tablespoons agave
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

MAKE THE DOUGH: In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, ½ cup of the sugar, and the salt. In a large mixing bowl, combine the warm milk with the yeast and the remaining 2 tablespoons sugar. Let it sit and get foamy.

Mix the mashed banana into the milk mixture. Add the dry ingredients in batches, mixing well, until all ingredients are incorporated. Mix in the coconut oil. Turn out the dough onto a floured surface and knead for a good 10 minutes, until smooth and elastic.

Wipe out the mixing bowl and lightly grease it. Add the ball of dough, spinning it in the bowl to get it lightly coated in oil. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a towel and set aside to rise for about 1 ½ hours. It should double in size.

Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper and lightly coat the parchment with oil. Divide the dough in half, and form into two rough squares on the parchment. Let the dough rise again in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes.

MEANWHILE, MAKE THE FILLING: In a large metal bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water, melt the chocolate with the coconut oil, stirring with a rubber spatula, until smooth. Let cool to room temperature, then stir in the cookie crumbs, agave, and cinnamon.

MAKE THE BABKAS: Lightly coat two 9-by-4-inch loaf pans with nonstick cooking spray and line them with parchment paper, allowing 2 inches of overhang on each of the long sides.

Roll out each square of dough to a 16-inch square. Remove $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the filling mixture and set aside.

Using an offset spatula, spread half of the remaining filling in an even layer over each of the dough squares, spreading to within $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the edges. Starting at the edge nearest you, tightly roll up each dough square jelly roll-style into a tight log.

Using a sharp knife, cut the logs in half crosswise. Using your offset spatula, spread half of the reserved filling on the top and sides of one of the halves. Set one of the other halves on top in the opposite direction to form a cross. Twist the two halves together to form spirals and transfer to one of the prepared pans. Repeat with the remaining filling and log halves. Cover the loaves with a towel and let stand in a warm place until doubled in size, about 2 hours.

When the loaves are almost done rising, preheat the oven to 375.

Bake the loaves until puffed and well browned, about 45 minutes. Let cool slightly, then use the parchment paper to lift the babkas out of the pans and onto a cooling rack. Let cool most of the way before slicing and serving.