

## Great taste, less time with this banana bread redux



Banana Nut Bread Coffee Cake

Photos Susie Iventosch

### By Susie Iventosch

Do you ever have overripe bananas? It always happens to us, because it seems that whenever I buy bananas, we never eat all of them before they start to get mushy and brown. What do you do with mushy bananas? That's when I freeze them for banana bread, which does get gobbled up!

But what I have never really liked about my banana bread, is that it takes forever to cook and it never gets completely baked in the very center of the loaf without the top getting too dark and overdone. The center can still be gooey even after 50 minutes of baking. Not ideal.

We had houseguests last weekend, so I bought a beautiful bunch of bananas, which

are great for a quick snack. Besides, somehow it looks like you run a professional operation if there are bananas in the fruit basket. At the end of the weekend there were two aging bananas left on the counter, and reluctantly I started thinking about banana bread. After all of these years, I decided to make the banana bread in a square baking pan instead of the longer and deeper loaf pan. Voilà! Banana Bread Coffee Cake. That was

just the ticket and the bread came out perfectly baked on top and cooked, but moist, in the middle and still tasted exactly like banana bread.

Another benefit is that it only takes 20-25 minutes to bake the bread in an 8x8 square pan, so you can make your bread that morning and serve it hot, right out of the oven. If you've ever had banana bread travails like I have, this is your answer. By the way, you don't have to use

mushy bananas for your banana bread, but it is a great way to use them up. (I hate wasting food!) If you're not quite ready to make the bread, just freeze the bananas right in the peel and thaw them and peel them just as you're ready to bake with them. Once baked, the banana bread coffee cake also freezes very well. Just wrap it in plastic wrap or foil and freeze in an airtight container.

### Banana Nut Bread Coffee Cake

(Makes one 8x8 inch-square coffee cake)

#### INGREDIENTS

4 oz. butter, softened to room temp (1 stick or 1/2 cup)  
1/4 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 cup light brown sugar  
2 eggs  
2 cups all-purpose flour (can use half whole wheat flour if you prefer)  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1/2 tsp. salt  
2-3 large ripe bananas, mashed or chopped  
3/4 cup coarsely chopped pecans or walnuts  
1 tsp. vanilla extract

#### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease or spray an 8x8 inch baking dish with cooking spray.

Cream together butter and both sugars until light and fluffy. Add eggs and beat well. Add vanilla and bananas and mix until integrated. Sift flour, baking soda and salt right into the batter and mix well. Fold in chopped nuts.

Turn batter out into prepared pan and bake for approximately 20-25 minutes or until a cake tester comes out clean and the cake is golden brown on top. Serve warm or at room temperature.



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## SMC Dance Company's collective dance concert, 'Unveiling,' Nov. 17



Image provided

The Saint Mary's College Dance Company's collective dance concert, "Unveiling," which will be offered both in-person and live-streamed beginning Nov. 17, shares investigations of time, women's rights, familial warfare, religious oppression, marginalization, and many more innovative concepts.

This showcase is produced, performed and choreographed by the Dance Program's Senior Class of 2023: Faith Alexis, Sofia Amador, Trinity R Boykin, Rochelle Demelo, Sev Fisher, Andrio Jordan Fong, Olivia Rose Grimes, Alexa Janezell, Elena Prisco, and features a new work by guest artist and alumna Micah Sallid. According to the Saint Mary's website, "Unveiling" is a collective dance show that is motivated by the idea of finding grounding and balance within the dance community amidst readjusting from the Covid-19 pandemic. "Returning to campus this fall and reflecting on the shared experiences of the last few years, these emerging choreographers are exploring concepts of familial warfare,

changing love, women's rights, time, self divinity, power within marginalization, religious oppression, homesickness, and the instability of dance spaces."

Andrew Merrell, Dance Faculty and Senior Project Advisor, says he is honored and excited to be on this journey of choreographic exploration with this current group of SMC seniors. "All of them are attacking their work with vigor and deep inquiry. They are on a fearless endeavor of making their voices heard in a world that needs very much to listen and take notice!"

"Unveiling" will be performed Nov. 17-19 at 8 p.m. in LeFevre Theatre, and at 2 p.m. Nov. 19 (Live in LeFevre and livestreamed). Tickets: \$15 General Admission, \$8 for SMC students, \$12 Staff/Faculty/ Non-SMC students. Online sales. A limited number of cash/check-only tickets will be available at the Box Office half an hour before each performance. For information, visit [www.stmaries-ca.edu/Unveiling](http://www.stmaries-ca.edu/Unveiling). – J. Wake

## Can being in the moment help you?



Photo provided

Linda with her daughter during Camino walk in Spain

### By Linda Fodrini-Johnson

Camino de Santiago, a walk that brings life messages. I had the experience of walking over 100 miles on the Camino in Spain this past month. The path is the pilgrimage of the apostle St. James the Great, his bones are housed in the Cather-

dral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain. Unlike most walkers who do 10 miles a day – I did 6 plus miles most days. There were some very tough uphill grades as well as steep down hills and rocky passes.

If anyone had told me I would do this at my age, I would say they were crazy. I

usually walk about two miles a day, five days a week. However, I trusted my daughter to plan the trip, making sure we had private baths in our rooms and a couple of days of rest. In all, it took us 16 days to do our trek. We had only one rest day and we took a 2-mile hike on that day.

This walk is called a "pilgrimage" and you are called a Pilgrim by the Spanish people you meet along the path, who treat you very nicely along the way. You also meet people from all over this world, all doing the walk for a variety of reasons. The advice is to do the "Camino" your way – there are people who feel they need to carry their pack and some think unless you do the entire 500 miles you just are not doing it. We had our suitcases transported daily between stops and just carried a day-pack. We never felt like we were less than the other pilgrims and kept our own pace. We walked in all types of weather, warm and sunny, fog and rain. Like life, we experienced all the challenges of a long journey on foot through the wilderness, farmlands and cities.

A big challenge was the long uphill climbs; I had to find a way to manage the burden of physical endurance. As a result, I learned that worries in life can be a hidden barrier to accomplishing goals and surviving tough days. What I said looking down at the path (and not at the hill in front of me) is "the path is flat" and "the world is round". As long as I

just looked at what was right in front of my eyes and stayed in the moment I was able to climb most hills with little stopping.

I did not ignore the reality of the challenge in front of me – I called that "the world." At the same time, saying the path is flat allowed me to be truly present in the moment. That simple statement became a metaphor that I will use for the rest of my life.

Most of us lead busy lives and some of us are caregivers for those who cannot manage their own life. Thus, we are always thinking ahead and rarely do we enjoy the moment without the burden of worries. The trip taught me the importance of being present in the moment, overcoming obstacles, and a valuable lesson in how to feel calm and beautiful when we simply live in our surroundings – smelling, tasting, touching, hearing and seeing without thinking or processing.

I shared this lesson with my dementia support group and they heard the message. It will be interesting to see if they are able to find 10 minutes a day to be in the moment and how it changes their burden of caring. The world is round and we do have to climb at times but if we do it with the intention to be "present in the moment," it can recharge our energy and give us a calm that other activities do not. Peace to you.

The Zoom dementia class for November is about managing "behavioral challenges." I

will add some new interventions for challenges based on my experience. The class will be held on at 11 a.m. Nov. 11 – for a Zoom link, go to the website ([www.LindaFodriniJohnson.com](http://www.LindaFodriniJohnson.com)) or send me an email.

Affirmation: I spend time daily in the "Moment." Time without thinking, just being.  
Zoom Classes:  
Dementia:  
Managing Behavioral Challenges, Nov. 11  
Dementia:  
Self-Care/Preventing Burnout, Dec. 9



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989. Eldercare Services is now a division of Home Care Assistance and continues to provide Bay Area families with care management, advocacy, counseling, support groups and education.