

The public is bananas for this new trend

Sarah Kelly, Commercial Graduate at Synergy Flavours notes the rise in home bakers during the pandemic as a way of coping, in particular a new focus on banana bread

Banana bread saw a massive spike in interest during March/April 2020, the 'brilliant banana loaf' recipe became BBC good food's highest searched recipe on the website and google searches for Banana Bread rose by 84% in the UK and 54% worldwide.

A huge catalyst to the craze was people sharing recipes and pictures across social media, #banana bread has been used over 1.4m times and it's no surprise as 33% of UK 18-24-year olds use their social media accounts to take pictures of food.

Baking has been a source of comfort for many during the uncertainty of Covid 19 as a mindful activity which engages all five senses, something to keep the kids entertained or to try and learn a new skill but with so many options it begs the question why banana bread?

There are a few possible reasons, a simple recipe has encouraged a lot of first-time bakers to give it a go.

While it's comforting and nourishing appeal had been tied to its wartime promotion in the 50's where the natural sweetness of banana helped make the sugar rations go further. With baking ingredient shortages in supermarkets and consumers keen not to waste food, banana bread has been the perfect choice.

With the new influx of bakers trying and adapting recipes a number of trends stood out.

Traditional, using basic store cupboard ingredients and easy recipes may seem like it was primarily the choice for novice bakers', but traditional recipes have been shown to their full potential by renowned Chef Dominique Ansel, celebrity chefs such as Chrissy Teigen and even food delivery company Gousto.

Everything's better with chocolate, chocolate is the top flavour in bakery launches and it is estimated in the UK the average consumer eats 8kg a year. As consumers have turned to evening treats they enjoy the added indulgence

of chocolate banana bread. Instagram influencers and GBBO contestant Pyra shared recipes adding chocolate to the mix.

All together the spirit of support and inclusivity has been captured in the range of vegan & allergen free banana bread recipes shared. As over 36% of UK adults feel it is difficult to find indulgent 'free-from' food & drink that tastes good many may have turned to social media to find recipes, 31% agree that it is a good place to find them. Pip & Nut shared their flourless alternative which was a great choice for those wanting a gluten free option or those struggling to find flour amongst the supermarket shortages.

Twisted & loaded, experiential cooks have shown banana bread has proved a popular base for additional flavours or twisted formats. From carrot cake fusions celebrating nostalgic and comforting flavours to inspiration from celebrity chefs like Nigella's Tahini banana bread or Bobby Flay's choice of espresso banana bread. The creativity hasn't stopped there as banana bread has taken on new formats such as cookies, doughnuts, granola and ice-cream.

At Synergy Flavours they have been excited to see this classic flavour taking on a new lease of life, and in response have created their own banana bread flavour with a modern twist which is suitable for use in bakery and confectionery.

