

Kicked-up Frozen Bananas

Recipe courtesy of Charity Pykles-George, Sugar Dome, 2012

12 Bananas, peeled and cut in half so there is a top half and a bottom half (NOT lengthwise)

Peanut Butter Buttercream, recipe follows

Hardening Chocolate Coating, recipe follows

Peanut Brittle, recipe follows

1 cup small kernels of popped pop corn or popped sorghum grains, which look like mini, pop corn

½ cup Pastry Rocks (available at chefrubber.com)

24 (8-inch) cookie sticks

1 boba tea straw

Peanut Butter Buttercream:

1 1/2 cup smooth peanut butter (crunchy can be used instead)

1 cup unsalted butter

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

1 pound powdered sugar

Whip the peanut butter and the unsalted butter in the bowl of an electric mixer with the whisk attachment until light and fluffy, scraping down the sides of the bowl a few times during the process. Add in the vanilla, and the salt, and mix in thoroughly. Turn the mixer down to the lowest speed, and slowly add in the powdered sugar. Once all the sugar is mixed in, turn the mixer up to medium high speed and whip until light and airy again. For thicker buttercream, add more powdered sugar. Put the frosting into a pastry bag and cut 1/2-inch off the tip to pipe into the hollowed out bananas.

Hardening Chocolate Coating:

300 grams of at least 55% cacao good quality chocolate, chopped (recommended; E.Guittard)

150 grams of organic coconut oil

Place the chopped chocolate and the coconut oil in the top of a double boiler. Keep the water from boiling by placing heat on low to medium low. Stir as the chocolate melts to incorporate the coconut oil until all is smooth and mixed in. Put the chocolate mixture into a tall skinny drinking glass for dipping the bananas. Let cool to room temperature.

Peanut Brittle

1 ½ cups granulated sugar

½ cup light corn syrup

1 cup hot water

2 ½ cups dry roasted, salted peanuts

1 tablespoon good quality vanilla extract
1 teaspoon baking soda

Prepare a half sheet pan by placing a silicone baking mat (recommended: Silpat) in the bottom and set aside. Combine the sugar, corn syrup and hot water in a heavy saucepan, at least 4 quart size as the sugar mixture will grow once all the ingredients are added. Bring to a boil using medium-high heat, stir once or twice as the mixture works towards a boil. Use a clean pastry brush dipped in water to wash down the sides of the pan, to dissolve any bits of sugar, keeping the mixture from crystallizing. Cook with out stirring until a candy thermometer, preferable digital, reaches 238 degrees, about 15 minutes. Stir in the peanuts, and continue to stir often so that the nuts don't burn. Cook mixture until it is a gold amber color, about 5 minutes. Quickly and carefully add the vanilla and the baking soda. The mixture will foam and grow large in the pan. Pour the mixture onto the sheet pan with the silicone baking mat and spread thin with an offset spatula. Let cool completely and then break into small pieces using a small hammer or a meat mallet. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 month. Note: Many different types of nuts and seeds can be used in this recipe, not just peanuts.

To Assemble:

Use the boba tea straw to hollow out the center of each half of a banana. Take the pastry bag filled with Peanut Butter Buttercream and fill the hollowed out centers by placing the tip at the bottom opening and squeezing the buttercream until it is all filled in the center. Place a cookie stick in the buttercream about 2/3 of the way up the banana and then place on a sheet pan lined with parchment to freeze. Repeat this process with the other banana halves and freeze them all for at least 3 hours or as long as overnight. Before dipping the frozen, filled bananas, place the Popcorn, Pastry Rocks and the crushed Peanut Brittle in three distinct and separate lines on a large plate or platter. Remove the bananas from the freezer, and dip each one in the Hardening Chocolate Coating including 1/2 of an inch of the stick at the base of the bananas. Quickly, before the coating hardens, place 1/3 of the banana in the Popcorn, then another 1/3 in the Pastry Rocks and the final 1/3 in the Peanut Brittle. Replace banana on the sheet pan to return to the freezer and repeat this process with the remaining banana halves. Re-freeze for 20-30 minutes, and then serve.

Yield: 24 servings

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Inactive Prep Time: 3 hours

Ease of Preparation: Intermediate