

# SOUTHERN BANANA PUDDING RECIPE

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Nothing tops off a great home cooked Southern meal any better than this down home, made-from-scratch, banana pudding. Or, as we often call it, "naner puddin." It's just downright good and most definitely...a Southern tradition. We're going to show you how to make this one with or without a real egg white meringue topping, the choice is yours.

I have fond memories of mama's banana puddings. The only one she knew anything about was this

totally made-from-scratch version. She never did discover those instant boxed mixes, and I'm so thankful for that. They just smelled so good coming out of the oven, and tasted even better, whether it was warm or cold.

Unfortunately, most of what you get at a restaurant these days comes from a powdered mix type pudding where you just add milk and stir. Or, more than likely, it's some readymade pudding...straight out of a can. Yes, even here in the South. Let me tell you though, you can certainly taste the difference when you follow these simple and easy steps to make it yourself. Seriously, it's much easier than you think.

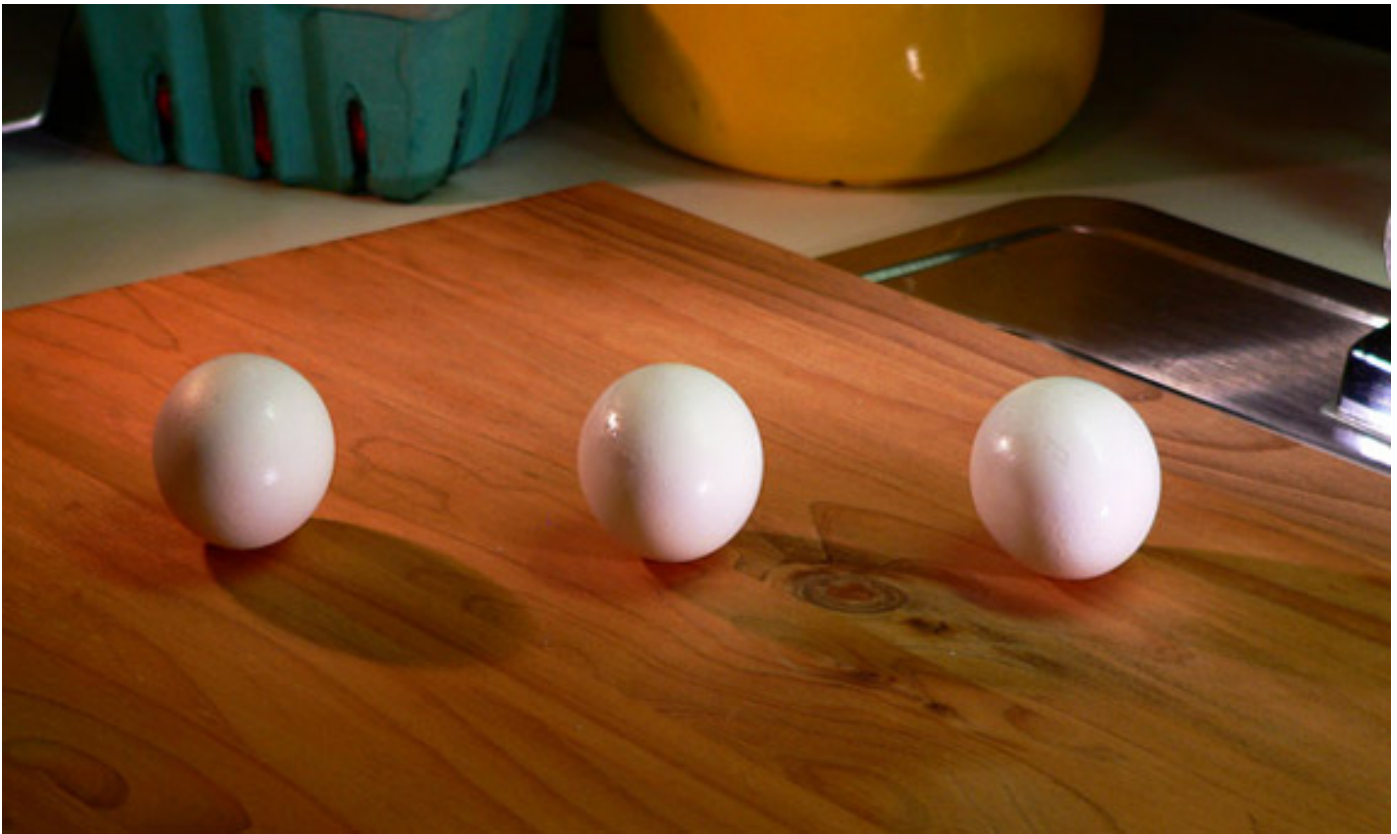
Most people are afraid of making the custard or "pudding" part for fear of turning it into scrambled eggs while cooking. But, if you follow the directions here, and stick with it, you will not – or shouldn't – have any problems. Of course scrambled eggs ARE possible. I've seen it happen. I'm not saying WHO made it happen...let's just say I've seen it OK?

So, tell yourself you can conquer anything, even homemade banana pudding with a real egg white meringue topping, and...

Let's Get Cooking!



You'll need these ingredients. And, if you're thinking my bananas are overly ripe, please forget those thoughts. They were soft, but not mushy, with very minimal brown spots on the banana itself, and that made them just perfect. I even peeled one to show you they weren't dark on the inside. Those brown spots on the skins are sugar spots. You want them ripe but not turning mushy soft and brown on the inside.



Start by separating three eggs. But, not like this.....



Like this. (Sorry, couldn't resist) Separate the egg yolks from the egg whites and set the egg whites aside for the time being. You'll use the egg whites if you decide to add the meringue on top. I highly urge you to do so, unless you just don't like the taste of meringue. If you opt not to do it, refrigerate the egg whites and add them to your next omelet or something.



**IMPORTANT:** The next few steps require your totally undivided attention for about 10-15 minutes. Don't get distracted, and let's avoid making scrambled eggs at this point. Ready...Go.

Begin the pudding by placing three cups of milk in a saucepan, set to LOW heat on your stove top. Most recipes say to do this in a double boiler. If you have one it's perfectly fine to use it. If you will stay with it though, it's very easy to do this in a regular saucepan directly on the stove top. Just

exercise a little patience and you'll be fine. We're about to add the egg yolks, and if you aren't careful, this is where you could end up with scrambled eggs in a pot of milk. Have no fear, you can do it. I've got confidence in you.



Slowly add the flour in small amounts at a time. You'll need to continually whisk the flour into the milk to avoid any lumps. The milk is still cool at this point and the flour should mix in smoothly if you whisk it well. Continue until all the flour is incorporated into the milk.



Do the same with the sugar. Whisk it into the mixture in small amounts until it's all in the pot. Keep stirring.



Use a fork and slightly beat the egg yolks.



This is the make it or break it point...or should I say the scramble or not scramble point. The milk mixture has started to warm up now, and it's time to whisk in the egg yolks. Slowly add the egg yolks to the pot, whisking continuously, to keep the eggs from cooking. Just do it easy and gently, and you won't have any problems. The warmer your milk is at this point, the faster they will cook. The heat should still be on low, and just getting warm, so we have no reason to create scrambled eggs at this point. Just keep working that whisk from this point forward. You can do it!



The pudding mixture needs to cook up to 170° in temperature. I used a candy thermometer to make sure I had reached the desired temperature. As you can see in the photo, the mixture has started to thicken. You just keep stirring with the whisk until it reaches the proper temperature...then...remove it from the heat.



You've now moved the pot off of the stove...keep stirring. Add the teaspoon of vanilla and stir it into

the mixture. Don't you just love the aroma of vanilla? It's so soothing to the soul. Now, let it cool down a bit. The mixture has to cool down before you can add it to the bananas and wafers. If it's too warm when you start the assembly, it will soften the Vanilla Wafers. It will try to thicken up as it cools so again....you will have to stir it every 30 seconds or so as it cools. Just keep whisking on and off as you begin to assemble the pudding. You did very well. I'm proud of you. No lumps in your pudding mixture and you didn't even use a double boiler. This is the way mama did it. I don't recall that she ever even owned a double boiler. Great job!



You'll need a deep casserole type dish to assemble everything in. You could get fancy with some clear type of bowl, but remember, it will need to go into the oven after we add the meringue, so make sure the bowl is oven safe. Now, spread just a thin layer of the pudding mixture in the bottom.



Place a layer of wafers on top of that. Go ahead, be neat about it, and arrange them in the dish. Set aside about 5 of the wafers to use as a crumble topping if you don't plan on making the meringue.



Add a layer of sliced bananas on top of the wafers. Don't go skimping, pile them on.



Add a layer of the pudding mixture. Spread it out to the edges. Depending on how big of a bowl you use, you may have enough ingredients to make additional layers of each. If so, just repeat the layers ending with the pudding mixture on top.



If you're headed to a church homecoming or family reunion, you might consider standing some of the wafers up around the edge of your bowl or container. Go ahead, get a bit fancy and impress them. They're going to love how it tastes, so why not let them Oooh and Ahhh it at the same time. Just stand a row of wafers up all around the outside edge and finish it with the pudding mixture on top.



As you can see, I didn't go fancy with this one. At this point, if you've decided NOT to make the egg white meringue topping, just crumble up those 5 or so reserved wafers and sprinkle them across the top. You'll also want to bake this in the oven for about 10-15 minutes to let all of the ingredients meld together and give it that really homemade taste. After baking, it would then be ready to serve warm or to let it cool and then chill it in the refrigerator for awhile to serve cool. Hopefully though, you'll want to add the meringue, if so, let's move on.



### **Homemade Egg White Meringue Topping:**

Place the reserved egg whites in a small bowl or your stand mixer bowl. You can do this by hand using a whisk, but a mixer will work fine. I suggest you use glass or stainless. Beat the egg whites until they get a bit "frothy" looking, like in the above photo. Don't over beat.



Then, add just a pinch of Cream of Tartar. I used about 1/8th of a teaspoon here. You'll find Cream of Tartar in the spice rack at your grocery store. It's a magical ingredient for turning egg whites into tall, fluffy meringue. Whip it up some more.



Cream of Tartar really sparks up the egg whites. When you get soft peaks like above, it's time to add the sugar.



Pour your sugar into the bowl and whip it up some more.



When the egg whites form good strong peaks...you're done. Don't over whip it though, the peaks will start to fall if you over do it. You've got to get to just the right point and stop. See, easy isn't it?



Use a spatula and gently spread the meringue over the top of your banana pudding. Work it as little as possible but spread it all the way out to the edges. Look how thick that is. Don't you just love it?



Take your spatula, and just dab it up and down lightly into the meringue to make some swirls and peaks stand up in your meringue. This will make it look even better when it comes out of the oven.



Is this not absolutely GORGEOUS? I've impressed myself I must admit. You'll want to bake the banana pudding in a 350° oven for about 10-15 minutes. You only want just a light toasting of the meringue, so watch it closely and don't let it burn. When it looks good to you...it's ready. Somebody pass me a spoon please!





This makes me soooo hungry for Banana Pudding. It brings back all kinds of childhood memories of sitting around that big table on Sunday dinner, finishing off one of mama's great meals, then having this for dessert. We miss you Mama. Thank you for all the love you shared with us through those meals.

Banana Pudding is good slightly warm, but if you can wait and let it cool down, then refrigerate it for awhile, it's even better when it's cold. Either way, I think you will love this recipe. With, or without the meringue, it's pretty simple and easy to make. If you've been using those boxed pudding mixes, do yourself, and your family a favor, and try this totally made from scratch version to see what you've been missing. You'll be amazed at how big a difference homemade can really taste. I do hope you'll try it, and I most certainly hope you like it.

Enjoy!!!