

Choose relatively dry dates rather than Medjools, which are too soft here.

Position a rack in the lower third of the oven. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease one 9 x 5-inch (8-cup) loaf pan or four 5 1/2 x 3-inch (2-cup) loaf pans.

Cut into quarters (sixths if the dates are large) and place in a medium bowl:

1 1/2 cups packed pitted dates

Stir together, then pour over the dates:

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 cup boiling water

Let stand until the mixture is lukewarm, about 20 minutes. Whisk together thoroughly:



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1 2/3 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

Whisk together in a large bowl:

2 large eggs

1/4 cup vegetable oil

1 cup packed light brown sugar or dark brown sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla

Stir in the cooled date mixture. Stir in the flour mixture just until blended. Fold in:

2 cups coarsely chopped walnuts

Scrape the batter into the pan(s) and spread evenly. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes for small loaves, 55 to 65 minutes for the large loaf. Let cool in the pan(s) on a rack for 5 to 10 minutes before unmolding to cool completely on the rack.

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