Chocolate Banana Babka

1/4 cup warm water

1 teaspoon maple syrup

2 teaspoons yeast

3 overripe bananas, mashed well

1/2 cup milk

1/4 cup maple syrup

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

3 - 4 cups flour

1/4 cup dark cocoa powder

2 Tablespoons butter, melted

1/4 cup brown sugar

1 Tablespoon cinnamon

Combine 1/4 cup water and 1 teaspoon syrup in bowl of standing mixer. Sprinkle yeast over mixture and let sit 15 minutes - or until foamy.

Combine mashed bananas, milk, syrup, salt and vanilla.

Add 1 cup flour and beat with flat beater until combined.

Switch to dough hook and beat in enough remaining flour to make a soft dough.

Remove two thirds of the dough and add cocoa powder to remaining dough. Mix with dough hook until well combined.

Transfer both doughs to a greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap and let rise 1 hour.

Transfer dough to counter and flatten slightly with hands.

Combine butter, cinnamon and brown sugar.

Spread cinnamon mixture over dough.

Cut dough into 3 equal pieces. Fold each third in half covering cinnamon mixture.

Braid three pieces together.

Cut braid in half and place each dough half in a greased bread tin. Let rise 30 minutes.

Bake babka 45 minutes at 375.

Transfer to a rack to cool completely.