



Bananas

Bananas derive from the family Musaceae in the genus *Musa*. It is believed that there are over 100 different varieties of banana, but the vast majority of Bananas cultivated for export to Western markets is the *Cavendish* variety. Bananas are believed by some to be the world's oldest fruit. Certainly they are mentioned in Ancient Chinese, Hindu, Greek and Roman texts, and the earliest record in Sanskrit dates back to 5000 B.C.

Growth, from tree to fruit

- These plants are native to Southeast Asia, first domesticated in Papua New Guinea, and now cultivated throughout the humid tropics throughout the world. They are harvested all year round.
- Banana plants are very picky about the climate they grow. They need about ten to fifteen months within a frost free climate, where they can be in a warm climate in full sun with proper hydration. The sun, however, can cause scorching to these plants which prevents them from producing. These plants are also susceptible to being blown over by large wind gusts.
- Bananas arise from the tip of the pseudostem of the plant as a purplish bud and opens into various clusters of white flowers. The fruits spring from these fertilized flowers as deep green fruits that then ripen into an orange-yellowish color, depending on the species. Once these bananas are picked from the plant green, they ripen to the yellow color we are accustomed to with the help of ethylene-gas.
- The banana plant itself is normally mistaken for a tree, but in actuality the stem is called a pseudostem and stems from connecting rhizomes beneath the ground. These plants can grow to the height of two to eight meters with their characteristic leaves spanning up to three and a half meters in length. Yellow, green and even red bananas are known as a product of this plant. The fruits are grown in clusters on the pseudostem, which are also referred to as a hand. The cluster is divided into tiers, with three to twenty tiers to a bunch and about twenty bananas to a tier. A cluster of each pseudostem produces a bunch of bananas before dying and being replaced by another stem.
- A banana consists of a protective covering on the outside and a fleshy inside. Both of these parts of the banana can be consumed. The inside portion of the fruit is normally eaten raw, with the peel discarded, within Western cultures. Bananas, however, can be cooked and are frequently found in Spring Rolls and deep fried in Asian cultures.
- The banana fruit is divided into approximately 75% water and 25% dry matter.



Interesting facts

- Bananas are America's number one fruit.
- Twenty-eight pounds of bananas, with a pound equaling about three bananas, is the average amount consumed by the average American per year.
- Banana is derived from the Arab word "banan," which means finger.

- Despite being usually being grown in a tropical climate, Iceland has begun to successfully produce bananas with the help of geysers providing energy to create a tropical environment.

Contents

- All eight essential amino acids that the body does not produce are contained within a single banana.
- Bananas are a good source of vitamin C, vitamin B6, potassium, iron and fiber. Bananas are sodium, fat, and cholesterol free.
- Red bananas contain more nutrients than their yellow cousins.
- Bananas contain three natural sugars, sucrose, fructose and glucose along with fiber. A banana thus giving both an instant and a substantial boost of energy sufficient for overcoming mid-meal energy lows and also in post-exercise recovery.

Health Benefit

- Bananas reduce the risk of high blood pressure due to being sodium free and their high content of potassium.
- A banana, not an apple, a day will keep the doctor away. Health benefits from bananas far surpass those of the apple.
- The fiber contained within a banana can aid in digestion and help in stopping constipation.
- Bananas contain the chemical tryptophan, the same chemical in turkeys that helps to regulate one's mood by making you happier.
- Bananas are excellent for fitness activities because they replenish some of the body fluids and carbohydrates used by the body during this time.
- The potassium within bananas is linked to improving brain function and alertness
- Hangover cure: smoothies containing a banana and plain yogurt are said to restore blood sugar levels after a heavy night of partying. Bananas can also reportedly reduce the effects of nicotine withdrawal within a person trying to quit smoking.
- May reduce symptoms of morning sickness in pregnant women.
- Reportedly, rubbing banana peel on mosquito bites may reduce itching
- Rich in iron and promotes the production of hemoglobin.

For more information visit

- ["Banana Facts"](#).
- ["14 Banana Health Benefits You Might Not Know About"](#).
- ["Banana"](#). California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc.
- ["Banana"](#). The Fruit Pages.
- ["Banana"](#). Wikipedia.

Nutritional Facts

- A medium sized banana
 - 0g fat
 - 105 cal; 4 cal from fat
 - 1.2g protein
 - 2.7g fiber
 - 1g sodium
 - 14g sugar
 - 27g carbohydrates
 - Vitamins
 - ◆ Vitamin A 2%
 - ◆ Vitamin C 17%
 - ◆ Calcium 1%
 - ◆ Iron 2%
 - ◆ Thiamin 2%
 - ◆ Riboflavin 5%
 - ◆ Niacin 4%
 - ◆ Vitamin B6 22%
 - ◆ Potassium 12%
 - ◆ Phosphorus 3%
 - ◆ Magnesium 8%
 - ◆ Zinc 1%
 - ◆ Copper 5%