



Give Them More
of the
Good Stuff!

Banana Basics



Shop and Save

☀ Bananas are available year-round at low prices. Yellow bananas are the most common and can be eaten at several stages of ripeness. Red bananas are shorter, plumper and only eaten when ripe. Plantains are related to bananas but are starchy, like root vegetables. They are usually cooked rather than eaten raw.

☀ Choose bananas according to the ripeness desired. As they ripen, the skin color changes from green to yellow to speckled with brown to more brown or black. The flesh becomes softer and more flavorful.

Bananas provide potassium, which may protect against high blood pressure and other heart diseases.



More About Bananas

☀ When bananas are peeled or cut, the flesh starts to brown. Browned bananas might not look attractive but they are safe to eat. Reduce browning by:

- Peeling or cutting just before using.
- Dipping in fruit juice that is acidic or high in vitamin C, such as lemon, lime, orange or pineapple.
- ☀ Use banana to replace egg in baked goods:
1/4 cup mashed banana (about 1/2 banana) = 1 egg
- ☀ Bananas can also substitute for up to half of the fat in baked goods. They will add a banana flavor and some sweetness.

Store Well Waste Less



■ Bananas are usually stored at room temperature. They continue to ripen after harvest. The warmer the temperature, the faster they ripen.

• To speed ripening, place in a closed paper bag in a warm area. Adding a ripe apple can speed the process. Check daily.

• To slow ripening, choose a cool spot or refrigerate. Ripe bananas

can be refrigerated for up to 2 weeks. The skin may turn black but the flesh will be fine.

■ Freeze bananas for longer storage.

• In their skin – Use within 2 months for best quality. Thaw in refrigerator. Squeeze banana from the skin.

• Peeled – Use within 4 to 6 months for best quality. Package as chunks or mashed in measured amounts. Use frozen or thawed.

Banana Math

*1 pound =
3 medium bananas
(7 to 8 inches) =
2 to 2 1/2 cups sliced =
1 1/3 cups mashed*

*Frozen banana
chunks are great
for smoothies.*

Enjoy Bananas!

Banana Oatmeal Muffins

Ingredients:

- 1 cup **quick rolled oats**
- ¼ cup **milk**
- 2 **eggs**, lightly beaten
- ⅓ cup **oil**
- 1 cup mashed ripe **bananas**
- 1½ cups **whole wheat flour**
- ½ cup **sugar**
- 2 teaspoons **baking powder**
- 1 teaspoon **baking soda**
- ¼ teaspoon **salt**

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly oil or spray the bottoms of 12 muffin cups.
2. Mix oats with milk. Stir in lightly-beaten eggs, oil and bananas. Let stand while measuring dry ingredients.
3. In a separate bowl, combine dry ingredients and stir well.
4. Add oat mixture to dry ingredients and stir gently to moisten. Don't overmix.
5. Fill muffin cups ¾ full.
6. Bake at 400 degrees F until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out moist but clean, about 18 to 20 minutes.

Note: To bake as Banana Oatmeal Bread, use an 8 or 9-inch bread pan and bake at 350 degrees F for 45 to 50 minutes.

Makes 12 muffins or 1 loaf

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 18-20 minutes

Very ripe bananas give muffins more flavor.

Cuban Baked Bananas

Ingredients:

- 6 **bananas**, peeled and sliced lengthwise
- 4 Tablespoons **brown sugar**
- 4 Tablespoons **margarine** or **butter**
- ½ cup **raisins** or other dried chopped fruit
- ⅓ cup **pecans** or **other nuts**, chopped

Directions:

1. Lightly spray or oil a 9 x 13-inch pan.
2. Arrange the split bananas in the pan.
3. Top evenly with brown sugar, small pieces of margarine, raisins and pecans.
4. Bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes. Serve warm.
5. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Makes 12 half bananas

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 30 minutes

Dried Bananas

1. Peel bananas and slice evenly into slices ⅛ to ¼-inch thick. Thicker pieces take longer to dry.
2. Optional: Dip in acidic fruit juice (lemon, lime, orange, or pineapple) to reduce browning. Sprinkle with cinnamon or other flavorings if desired.
3. Dry until pieces bend like thick leather and no longer feel sticky.

🌟 **Oven** – set at lowest temperature (175 to 200 degrees F); use convection bake if available; takes 1 to 3 hours.

• Arrange pieces in a single layer on a wire rack or baking sheet. A wire rack helps them dry faster. A baking sheet takes longer and pieces need to be turned over part way through the drying.

🌟 **Dehydrator** – set to 135 degrees F; takes 6 to 12 hours.

• Arrange in a single layer on dehydrator racks.

4. Cool. Store in an airtight container or bag.



Kids Can!

When kids help make healthy food, they are more likely to try it. Show kids how to:

- 🌟 **peel bananas.** Try starting at the end away from the stem. The skin is less fibrous and easier to pull apart.
- 🌟 **mash bananas with a fork.** A flat dish or plate might make mashing easier.