



Go Bananas!

Did you know that bananas are in season year-round and are generally considered to be Americans' favorite fruit? While bananas can be a challenging fruit in terms of maintaining quality, this health-packed popular food does not need to be avoided. A little know-how about proper handling and storage techniques can result in high-quality bananas and allow you to get the most out of your money.

Proper Storage

Keep at an appropriate temperature. Ideally 56-58°F (and 90-95% humidity). Note that bananas are vulnerable to chilling injury if kept below 56°F.

Bananas are susceptible to scarring and bruising. Promptly unload container delivery trucks with care. Never drop, roll, or tip boxes. Keep boxes off of damp floors and stack no more than four high to prevent crushing.

Speed Ripening

Take advantage of ethylene gas. Leave bananas in their packing boxes stacked on top of each other. Another option is to store bananas inside a closed plastic or paper bag to trap ethylene gas, or with other ethylene producing fruit such as apples.

Keep at a warmer temperature. Ideally 60-65°F. Green bananas held at 60-70°F will ripen in approximately 5 to 7 days.

Slow Ripening

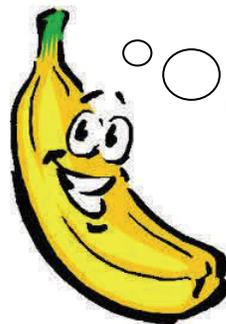
Prevent ethylene gas buildup. Upon receiving, remove the box top, open the plastic liner, and air-stack or stagger-stack the boxes to ventilate them.

Reduce temperature fluctuations. Be conscious of location relative to heat vents and sunny windows, as well as drafts or motors.

Refrigeration. Do not place green bananas in the refrigerator as they may not be able to resume the ripening process even if they are returned to room temperature. Once bananas have reached peak ripeness they may be refrigerated. This will maintain fruit quality but will cause the skin to darken and eventually turn black.

Fun Fact:

An individual banana is called a finger. A bunch of bananas is called a hand.



Use the attached banana color guide to determine your bananas' ripeness. Left in the carton it is received in with the plastic bag overlay, a banana's index number will increase every 24 to 48 hours.

Begin using your bananas as soon as you receive them, even if they are still green. This will help prevent an excess of ripened bananas later on and will provide even greater variety in your menus. Try these recipes courtesy of Chiquita.com.
(Each recipe makes 4 1-cup servings)

Banana Potato Salad

Ingredients

- 2 green and very firm bananas, peeled and sliced thin*
- 5 Red potatoes, cut in quarters and cooked in boiling water, then cooled
- 1/2 cup Celery, diced
- 1/4 cup Red pepper, diced
- 1 Tbsp. Olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. Red wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. Grain mustard
- 2 tsp. pure Honey
- 1 pinch Salt and pepper, or a dash of each



Instructions

Boil potatoes in water and allow to fully cool. Place olive oil, vinegar, mustard and honey in a bowl and whisk together. Adjust taste with salt and pepper. In the same bowl, add remaining ingredients, toss and serve.

*Bananas that have green peels work best for this recipe, but if you like your salad on the sweeter side, try making it with bananas with yellow flecks on the peel.

Nutrition Information Per Serving:

Calories 300; Total Fat 4 g (Sat 0.5 g, Trans 0 g, Poly 0.5 g, Mono 3 g); Cholesterol 0 mg; Sodium 140 mg; Potassium 1450 mg; Total Carbohydrates 62 g; Dietary Fiber 6 g; Total Sugars 15 g; Protein 6 g. Percent Daily Value: Vitamin A 8%; Vitamin B6 35%; Vitamin C 70%; Vitamin D 0%; Calcium 4%, Iron 10%

Light Banana Ambrosia Salad

Ingredients

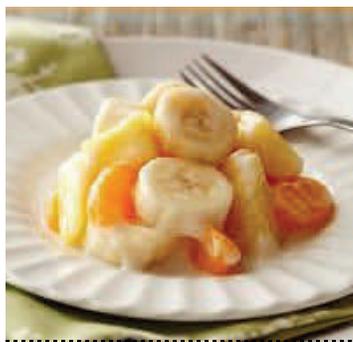
- 3 whole Bananas (yellow with green tips*), sliced
- 1 cup Pineapple chunks
- 10 oz. can Mandarin oranges, drained, juice reserved
- 1/2 cup non-fat Vanilla yogurt
- 1 tsp. Lemon juice
- 1/3 cup shredded Coconut, optional

Instructions

In a medium salad bowl combine all ingredients and stir gently. Chill for at least 10 minutes. For a thinner dressing add in a tablespoon or more of the reserved juice.

Variations: Add other fruit, such as cherries or diced apples, or stir in chopped nuts. For a sweeter salad add 1 cup miniature marshmallows.

Serving Suggestions: Top slices of angel food cake with Light Ambrosia Salad for a light and creamy dessert.



Nutrition Information Per Serving:

Calories 200; Total Fat 0.5 g (Sat 0 g, Trans 0 g, Poly 0 g, Mono 0 g); Cholesterol 0 mg; Sodium 25 mg; Potassium 570 mg; Total Carbohydrates 49 g; Dietary Fiber 4 g; Total Sugars 37 g; Protein 3 g. Percent Daily Value: Vitamin A 10%; Vitamin B6 20%; Vitamin C 50%; Vitamin D 0%; Calcium 10%; Iron 4%.

Banana Pops

If you find yourself with bananas that are ripening too fast, consider transforming them into frozen treats that can be made ahead of time and served later in the week. The University of Florida suggests making kid friendly Banana Pops, and Kansas State Research and Extension Family Nutrition Program developed their own Frozen Fruit Cups.

Peel and cut firm, ripe bananas into any size chunks, and spear with a toothpick, popsicle stick, or small skewer. Dip in orange juice to prevent browning, and roll in any of the following: crushed cereal, finely chopped nuts, wheat germ, or shredded coconut, or come up with your own favorite! Serve the pops right away or freeze and serve

Try This: dip the bananas in yogurt before rolling in topping mixture

frozen. To freeze, arrange the bananas on a sheet of wax paper so that the bananas do not touch. Once frozen, transfer to an airtight freezer bag. Best if served within 1 week.



Frozen Fruit Cups



3 bananas
3 containers (8 ounces each) fat-free strawberry yogurt
1 package (10 ounces) frozen strawberries, thawed and undrained
1 can (8 ounces) crushed pineapple, undrained

Directions:

1. Line 18 muffin-tin cups with paper baking cups.
2. Dice or mash bananas and place in a large mixing bowl.
3. Stir in remaining ingredients.
4. Spoon into muffin-tin cups and freeze at least 3 hours or until firm.
5. Remove frozen cups and store in a plastic bag in freezer.

Before serving, remove paper cups and let stand 10 minutes.

Helpful Hints: Turn these Frozen Fruit Cups into popsicles by pouring the mixture into 7-ounce cups and putting them in the freezer. When partially frozen, put a plastic spoon or popsicle stick in the center of the

Ripe bananas can also be frozen in a sealed container mashed or peeled for up to 3 months and used in baking or smoothies.



Banana Color Guide



ALL GREEN

As received at your warehouse from Central and South America.



LIGHT GREEN

First color change during warehouse processing, usually seen on the shoulder.



50% GREEN, 50% YELLOW

Recommended color for warehouse outturn. Adjust back or ahead for delivery time, temperature, distance and retail color preferences. Consumers purchase now to enjoy later.



MORE YELLOW THAN GREEN

Ready for retail display. Great eye appeal and long product life. Minimum shrink for retailer.



YELLOW WITH GREEN TIPS

Most popular color stage for consumer purchase. Since higher temperatures speed color change, this color can be maintained longer by holding boxes in a cool area at 56° to 60°F.



FULL YELLOW

Firm fruit with great eating flavor. Easily bruised - handle with extra care.



YELLOW FLECKED WITH BROWN

Sweet eating flavor. Perfect texture and consistency for blender drinks and baking.

Ideal banana storage range:
56° to 60° F