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BANANAS

Bananas are one of the most popular fruits in America. They are available year-round. Easy to eat and digest, bananas are a great first fruit for babies to eat.



Use the following tips and recipes to help your family select, store, and enjoy bananas.

SELECT

► Choose bananas that are bright yellow to eat right away. Buy bananas that are pale yellow with some green to eat in a few days. Soft bananas with brown spots are excellent for baking. Bananas come “pre-packaged” and make the perfect snack for work, school, or outdoor activities.



STORE

- Ripe bananas can be kept at room temperature for a few days before becoming overripe. To keep bananas from bruising, hang them by their connected stems or place them upside-down on the counter so that their stems and tips touch the counter.
- Do not refrigerate bananas before ripening; they will not ripen properly in the refrigerator.
- Once ripe, you can store bananas in the refrigerator for 2–3 days. The skin will turn brown, but the flesh will stay cream colored.
- To freeze (good for smoothies and baking): Cover a baking sheet with wax paper or foil. Spread fruit slices in a single layer on the baking sheet and place it flat in the freezer for several hours. Place frozen slices in resealable freezer bags, and press out as much air as possible. Write “banana slices” and the date on the bag.

BENEFIT

- Bananas are a tasty source of vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- Bananas are one of the best fruit sources of vitamin B6. Vitamin B6 helps with metabolism and a healthy immune system.
- Bananas are good for your heart health and blood pressure and can help your body recover after high levels of activity.
- The fiber in bananas helps with gut health and digestion.

FUN WITH FOOD

CHILDREN CAN HELP:

- Mash overripe bananas to use for baking.
- Make banana ice pops:
 - Cut a ripe banana into fourths.
 - Insert an ice pop stick.
 - Place on a baking pan lined with wax paper.
 - Place the pan in the freezer until ready to enjoy!



ENJOY



BANANA MUFFINS

- 3 ripe bananas, about 1 cup mashed
 - $\frac{1}{3}$ cup unsweetened applesauce
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup low-fat sour cream
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract or flavoring
 - 1 large egg
 - 1 cup all-purpose flour
 - 1 tablespoon baking powder
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
 - Vegetable oil cooking spray or vegetable oil
1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
 2. Wash your hands well with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
 3. Peel the bananas, put them in a medium mixing bowl, and mash them with a fork.
 4. Add the applesauce, sour cream, vanilla, and egg and beat the mixture with a whisk or fork until smooth.
 5. In a separate medium mixing bowl, add the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt and mix well.
 6. Coat a 12-cup muffin pan with vegetable spray.
 7. Add the wet ingredients to the flour mixture and mix until combined. Fill each muffin cup about two-thirds full. Bake for 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center of a muffin comes out clean.
 8. Store muffins in an airtight container or bag.



BREAKFAST BANANA SPLIT

- 1 small to medium banana
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oat or whole-wheat cereal
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup low-fat yogurt
 - 3 medium strawberries
 - 12 blueberries
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon honey
1. Wash your hands well with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
 2. Peel the banana, cut it in half, and place it in a bowl.
 3. Top the banana with yogurt and cereal.
 4. Wash and cut the strawberries into small pieces and add them to the bowl.
 5. Wash the blueberries and add them to the bowl.
 6. Drizzle honey on top of the fruit.
 7. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

- To learn more about storing and freezing bananas, visit HappyHealthy.MS and click on Tips and Videos
- How to Store Fruits and Vegetables
 - How to Freeze Fresh Fruits and Vegetables



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