

BANANA - MAI'A

Hawaiian Name: *Mai'a*

Common Name: Banana

Scientific Name: *Musa paradisiaca*

Origin: South East Asia

Plant Part Eaten: Fruit



Locally Grown...

- As of 2003, Hawai'i is the only significant commercial producer of bananas in the US.
- Banana is a "canoe plant" brought to Hawai'i by its first Polynesian settlers.
- A recent book described 140 living banana varieties in Hawai'i.
- Until the early 1800's most varieties were *kapu* (forbidden) for women to eat.
- Bananas are grown and harvested year-round.
- Bananas are a common backyard plant in the islands.



Where else it's grown in the world...

Bananas are also grown throughout the tropical Pacific. Ecuador, Costa Rica, Colombia, Philippines, and Guatemala are also major exporters of bananas.

Nutrition Info...



- Contains vitamin B6, which helps the body convert food to energy.
- Potassium helps keep bones strong, and aids in nervous system regulation, keeping us alert and focused.
- Prebiotic fiber helps to keep our immune system strong by stimulating "good" bacteria in the gut.
- The fiber in bananas aids in weight control by making us feel fuller, longer.

Meet a Farmer...

Farm: Kahuku Farms

Farmers: The Matsuda Family

Location: Kahuku, O'ahu

Website: kahukufarms.com



Kahuku Farms was started in 1986, when the Matsuda and Fukuyama families merged their farms. They grow papaya, banana, eggplant, dragonfruit, acai, lū'au leaves, liliko'i, and more! Third generation farmer Kylie Matsuda says "I feel honored and grateful to perpetuate our family's future in farming." Kylie is a graduate of Kahuku High School and the University of Hawai'i.

In the Garden...

- Cultivated bananas do not grow by seeds, but by "suckers."
- Select and separate a banana "sucker," or keiki (about 2-4 feet high) from a healthy mother plant.
- Choose an area where plants will be protected from the wind.



- Plant in good quality, rich, dark soil with good drainage.
- Add lots of mulch to help keep the soil around the tree moist.
- Fruit can be expected in about a year, but harvest time will vary based on growing conditions.
- After harvest, cut down the "tree," allowing keiki plants to grow up to produce more fruit.

Let's Get Cooking... Banana Sorbet

Ingredients

- Ripe local bananas
- Water or milk (any type)



Recipe by Nina Alena Beatty
and Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation

Directions:

1. Peel bananas.
2. Chop into small pieces for easier processing later.
3. Place in freezer overnight.
4. Blend in food processor until creamy and smooth.
5. If needed, add a tiny bit of water or your choice of milk as you blend the bananas. Serve into bowls and enjoy!



Optional: Get creative and play with different flavors. Add a sprinkle of cinnamon or mix in different fruits like pineapple, mangoes, or berries. You can also top it with chopped Hawai'i-grown macadamia nuts for a gourmet touch!

Reminder: Please compost your food waste.



What can you make with banana?

Smoothies, popsicles, banana bread, banana lumpia, frozen chocolate-covered banana, in fondue, halo-halo, bananas foster, fruit salads, dried bananas, banana chips, and more. Many cultures use green bananas as they would other vegetables. The fruit tastes great by itself, too!

Did you know?

1. Banana stalks and leaves are used in Hawaiian *imu* (underground ovens) to protect food and provide steam and flavoring.
2. Banana plants have many uses including medicine, rope, roofing, dye, paper, and spiritual ceremonies.
3. The banana split was invented in 1904 by a pharmacist in Pennsylvania.
4. In 2001, Britain recorded 300 incidents of injuries related to bananas, the majority of which involved people slipping on the peel.
5. Bananas come in their own biodegradable package! Leaves can be used as plates, too.
6. 96% of American families purchase bananas at least once a month.
7. Each stalk only bears one bunch of bananas.



Fresh Choice Hawaiian Harvest celebrates the diverse, nutritious, and delicious bounty grown in Hawai'i, encouraging children and their families to eat more locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. The Fresh Choice Hawaiian Harvest Toolkit includes educational resource sheets, family take-home letters, produce preparation sheets, and a poster showcasing Hawai'i-grown crops. For downloads and more information, visit www.kokuahawaiifoundation.org/HawaiianHarvest.

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