



~Banana~



The fruit that comes in its own wrapper!

Sautéed Plantains

2 yellow-black to black plantains
1 tablespoon canola oil

Salt and pepper to taste
Juice from 1 lime

Peel and cut ripe plantains in slices $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. When oil is hot add plantain slices to skillet. Cook slowly for about 10 – 15 minutes until plantains are soft, turning as needed and adjusting heat to prevent burning. Season with salt, pepper, and lime juice. Serve hot.

Yield: 4 servings

Plantains make a great side dish when you are serving foods that have beans and/or rice.

Banana Pancakes

1 cup whole wheat flour
1 cup oat flour*
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon sugar

1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 ripe banana, mashed
1 cup water
1 cup skim milk
2 eggs

Combine flours, soda, baking powder, sugar, and cinnamon in a medium bowl. Stir well. In a large bowl, combine mashed banana, water, milk, and eggs. Mix well. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients and stir just enough to combine to two and remove lumps. If batter is too thick, add a little more milk. Preheat a non-stick griddle or skillet and lightly coat with cooking spray. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup batter into pan for each pancake. Cook until pancake starts to form bubble on top then turn and cook until golden brown. Serve immediately.

Yield: 12 pancakes

** Don't have oat flour? You can make some by whirling some oats in the blender or food processor!*

Bananas are the perfect topping for cereal, yogurt, ice cream, pancakes, and waffles.

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Pop-Eye Smoothie

6-8 ounces yogurt, any flavor
½ cup skim milk
½ fresh or frozen banana

½ cup fresh or frozen fruit
1 packed cup fresh spinach

Blend all ingredients well in a blender.
Yield: 1 large smoothie
Delicious as a morning smoothie.

Banana Snack Cake

2 cups whole wheat flour
½ cup sugar
½ teaspoon cinnamon
1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
4 ripe bananas

¼ cup water
1 teaspoon vanilla
½ cup chopped walnuts
½ cup chocolate chips (optional)

Preheat oven to 350° and spray a 9 x 9 pan with cooking spray. Combine dry ingredients in medium bowl and mix well. Place bananas in large bowl and mash well. Stir water and vanilla into bananas. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients then add nuts and chocolate chips. Mix to combine. Pour batter into pan and bake for 45 – 50 minutes or until toothpick inserted into center of cake comes out clean.

Yield: 9 servings

Need a quick and easy breakfast or snack food? These snack cakes work great!

How to choose a banana:

Bananas are picked green and allowed to ripen after they are picked. The banana should be firm and free of soft, brown spots that show signs of bruising. As they ripen bananas turn yellow and soften. A yellow banana with a few brown spots is fully ripe and is at its sweetest. If the banana still has a green tip, it isn't fully ripe yet. They are overripe when they have a strong odor. You can speed up the ripening process by putting the bananas in a brown paper bag. That's because bananas give off a natural gas called ethylene that causes them to ripen. When you put them in the bag you trap more gas making the process work faster. The riper they are, the sweeter they taste. You can also take advantage of the ethylene bananas give off to ripen other fruits. Just stick a banana in a bag with the other fruit to get the fruit to ripen more quickly. Do not put a green banana in the fridge - it will never ripen.

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Broiled Bananas

2 ripe bananas
1 tablespoon brown sugar
Dash of cinnamon

Put oven rack 4 inches from broiler unit and turn oven to broil. Line a baking sheet with tin foil. Peel bananas and cut each one lengthwise in half. Place the banana halves, cut side up, on the baking sheet. Mix brown sugar and cinnamon together in small bowl. Sprinkle each banana half with brown sugar and cinnamon mixture. Place the pan in the oven. Broil the bananas until the brown sugar is bubbly (about 3-4 minutes).

Yield: 4 servings.

Best served while warm! Good with yogurt, oatmeal, and ice cream.

Banana-Strawberry 'Ice Cream'

2 bananas, frozen
2 cups strawberries, frozen
½ cup skim milk
1 teaspoon vanilla

Place all ingredients in high powered blender or food processor and blend until smooth and creamy. Add more milk as necessary to produce desired consistency.

Yield: 4 servings

Bananas are an economical and healthy snack available year round.

Nutritional benefits of bananas:

Potassium, an electrolyte needed to help maintain body's fluid balance and keep muscles from cramping, is lost in sweat and one banana has enough potassium to replace what is lost during one to two hours of hard exercise. Potassium also helps to prevent high blood pressure.

One medium banana has about 9 grams of fiber, a third of our daily requirement!

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