



BANANAS !

Bananas are the most popular and least expensive fruit in the world. Americans eat more bananas than oranges and apples combined. The U.S. gets all of its bananas from Central America.

Bananas are originally from Southeast Asia, from the mountainous tropics in New Guinea. They were brought to Central America and the Caribbean from Africa in the 16th century.

The entire world eats one variety of banana, the Cavendish. The banana you eat is genetically a twin of 95% of the bananas eaten everywhere on earth. Experts predict that the Cavendish banana will only exist for ten years or so longer.

Until the 1950s, the global banana was the Gros Michel, which fell prey to a fungus called the Panama disease – new strain of which is now killing the Cavendish.

All the banana plants you see in Los Angeles yield cooking bananas or plantains. Sweet bananas need a true tropical climate.

The banana "tree" isn't really a tree – its stem is herbaceous, not woody. And technically, the banana is a berry!

Cavendish bananas are picked green.

Using a precise, temperature controlled distribution system, they arrive in 14 days to markets worldwide nearly ripe every day of the year.

The United Fruit Company held a monopoly on banana production in several Latin American countries from 1899 to 1975. By controlling the railroads and the land near them as well as the distribution network they manipulated plantation workers and politicians in over seven countries – once called "banana republics."

Ciénaga, Colombia, was the scene of the most violent event in the history of banana politics. In 1928, the Colombian army fired on striking workers and killed an unknown number of people. Estimates range from 47 to 2,000.

Banana strikers wanted to work six, not seven days, for eight hours not ten; they wanted health care, plumbing in their housing, and to earn wages instead of company vouchers.