

# PLANTAIN101

At first glance, it's easy to mistake a plantain for a banana. There are several different varieties of banana-like foods, which are all part of the same family, but taste very different from each other.

## WHAT IS A PLANTAIN?

Plantains are part of the *Musa paradisiaca* family. Plantain trees grow best in moisture-rich, tropical climates and since they don't have a growing season they are available year-round. This makes them a very valuable, reliable food source in countries across the globe from Central and South America to the Caribbean, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

## FRUIT OR VEGETABLE?

The plantain is actually...a fruit! Similar to the tomato, which is a fruit consumed as a vegetable, the plantain is also consumed as a vegetable.

## STAGES OF RIPENESS

Plantains can be eaten and taste different at each stage of development, though the interior color of the fruit will remain creamy, yellowish or lightly pink. When the peel is green to yellow, the flavor of the flesh is bland and has a starchy texture.



Raw green plantains must be cooked prior to eating. This is the optimal stage to make savory foods such as tostones, which are versatile, tender, and crunchy.



As the peel changes to brown or black, it has a sweeter flavor and more of a banana aroma, but still keeps a firm shape when cooked. When prepared at this stage, plantains can be used to make sweet, filling, and satisfying platanos maduros.

## HEALTH BENEFITS

- GOOD SOURCE OF POTASSIUM
- HELPS REGULATE THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM
- BOOSTS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM
- PROMOTES HEALTHY BRAIN FUNCTION
- GREAT SOURCE OF MAGNESIUM
- NATURALLY GLUTEN FREE

### SOURCES

<https://draxe.com/plantains/>  
<https://foodandnutrition.org/blogs/stone-soup/difference-bananas-plantains/>  
<https://www.healthline.com/health/food-nutrition/plantain-nutrition-benefits>  
<https://www.nutrition-and-you.com/plantains.html>