

# Bananas

Bananas are equally popular in Western and Asian culture. Both skin and inner part can be eaten raw or cooked. Western cultures generally eat the inside raw and throw away the skin while some Asian cultures generally eat both the skin and inside cooked.

Besides being a tasty snack, bananas are a healthy source of vitamins and minerals. They contain vitamins A, C, B<sub>1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9</sub> and minerals calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and zinc.

The high Potassium content of bananas has been found to help reduce high blood pressure and the risk of strokes, by eliminating Sodium from the body.

Bananas are reputed to increase ones emotional wellbeing because of their tryptophan content. Coupled with vitamin B6, this protein converts in the body into the "happy hormone" serotonin, known to improve mood, giving relaxation and happiness. What a gift from nature!

In traditional Chinese medicine bananas have been used as medicine for a very long time. They are considered a cooling and moistening fruit. It is Yin enriching and detoxifying, with a focus on the intestines and stomach. Its energetic direction is downward moving. Yin describes the cooling, moistening, nourishing aspect of the body, as opposed to Yang, which is heating, activating and moving. Bananas are therefore used in heat disorders that damage the body's cooling Yin fluids. This may happen when substances of a hot and drying nature are consumed too often or in large amounts. These include hot spices, alcohol, deep fried, oily foods, coffee and tobacco smoke. Also large meals consumed late at night will over time consume stomach Yin. Depleted Yin can cause symptoms of thirst, dry throat, restlessness, dry stools and chronic cough. If the intestines are affected one may experience constipation and bleeding haemorrhoids.

Banana is a tasty and convenient remedy since you don't even have to prepare it in any way. Just peel it and have it raw. 2-3 medium size fruits a day for an adult will suffice for the above mentioned conditions. For infants reduce the dose according to body size.

Be aware that there are health conditions that will be worsened by eating bananas. These are phlegm conditions, for example blocked sinuses or mucus from the throat and lungs and cold conditions of the digestive system such as cold diarrhoea, or abdominal pain while feeling cold.

External application:

The cooling, detoxifying and moistening nature of banana peel makes it useful for treating a number of skin conditions.

Mosquito bites can be treated by rubbing the affected area with the inside of a banana skin. The inflammation, heat and itchiness will be soothed by the cool, moist, soft skin.

Warts, including plantar warts, can be removed painlessly by taping a small piece of banana skin- inside down- onto the wart over night for several nights in a row. The wart will turn black and fall off within days.

For best quality bananas with the highest nutrient content, of course always buy organic!

- The Barefoot Doctor