

WE ALL EAT BANANAS

with
Su Stella

ADVENTURES AND
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BANANA BASICS

Here is a weird fact about bananas. Bananas are clones. It is easier for banana farms to clone banana trees instead of growing the plant by seed. This means that every plant has the same DNA sequence and is identical to every other banana.

The bananas that we eat are different from the bananas our grandparents ate. There used to be a sweeter variety called 'Gros Michel,' nicknamed 'Big Mike.' Unfortunately, in the 1950s, the sweetness attracted a fungus, and the disease spread rapidly through the fields, easily killing every plant.

The Cavendish variety proved to be disease-resistant, and replaced the Gros Michel. Today we eat the Cavendish banana which has a milder taste.

Here is the spin: The reason that banana candy tastes so weird is that the flavor was invented a long time ago, based on the sweeter Gros Michel variety. I wish a smart foodie would re-invent banana flavor so it tasted like our 'nanas today.

Many of us grab a hand of bananas when we get to the grocery store. A hand is slang for a bunch of bananas with three to twenty fingers. An individual banana is a finger. The dark tip where the flower bloomed is called a fingertip. Multiple hands grow on a stalk or bunch.

Banana Boat -Day O is sung by Harry Belafonte. The song is about the night crew at the dock loading heavy 'Six foot, seven foot, eight foot bunch' of bananas. He wants the boss to tally up his count and pay him.

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