

X is for Xianjiao (Banana)



Xiangjiao (shiang-jeow) is the Chinese word for banana. The banana is actually a berry. Bananas are the most popular fruit in America. In other countries, bananas are cooked and eaten as a starchy side, instead of the sweet ripened way that Americans are used to eating them. Most bananas of the world are grown in India, but the bananas that we get come from Central and South America. Bananas have to travel a long way to get to our grocery stores, but they're in season all year round!

Bananas can be eaten when they are almost yellow, bright yellow, and even brown. Bananas need to be kept at room temperature to ripen, but can be stored in the refrigerator once they are ripe. The skin will turn dark brown or even black, but the fruit inside is still good to eat.

Layer banana slices with yogurt and granola, top hot or cold cereal with sliced bananas, or just grab a banana and go for a quick energy boost! Bananas that get a little too ripe at room temperature make a great addition to baked goods like muffins or smoothies! An overripe banana will sweeten a smoothie without adding any extra sugar.

A fun way to serve bananas is to peel, cut into chunks, dip in orange juice to prevent browning, and roll in crushed cereal, shredded coconut, or finely chopped nuts. Freeze these chunks for a quick and easy (and healthy) snack!

Try this easy recipe to make some super healthy banana ice cream! This is a great way to use up some overripe bananas. Get the kids involved and get creative! Try mixing in other fruits, nut butters, or even some dark chocolate chips for a treat!

Easiest Banana Ice Cream (serves 3)

recipe from whatscooking.fns.usda.gov

Ingredients

- 2 -3 bananas
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 1 tablespoon chocolate syrup (optional)

Directions

1. When bananas have become very ripe, peel and slice them into medium size round pieces. Place on a plastic wrap covered baking sheet and put in freezer overnight.
2. Place frozen bananas in a food processor or blender with a small splash of milk (not over 1/4 cup total).
3. Pulse food processor or blender until bananas begin to break up. They will be tiny balls of bananas at this point.
4. Using a spoon or rubber spatula, scrape down the banana mixture. Continue running the food processor until the mixture is smooth and creamy. This may take a few minutes. The ice cream will look and taste like soft serve ice cream when finished.
5. Serve in an ice cream cone or in a small bowl with a small ribbon of chocolate syrup on top (optional).

