

BANANAS...For Active People!

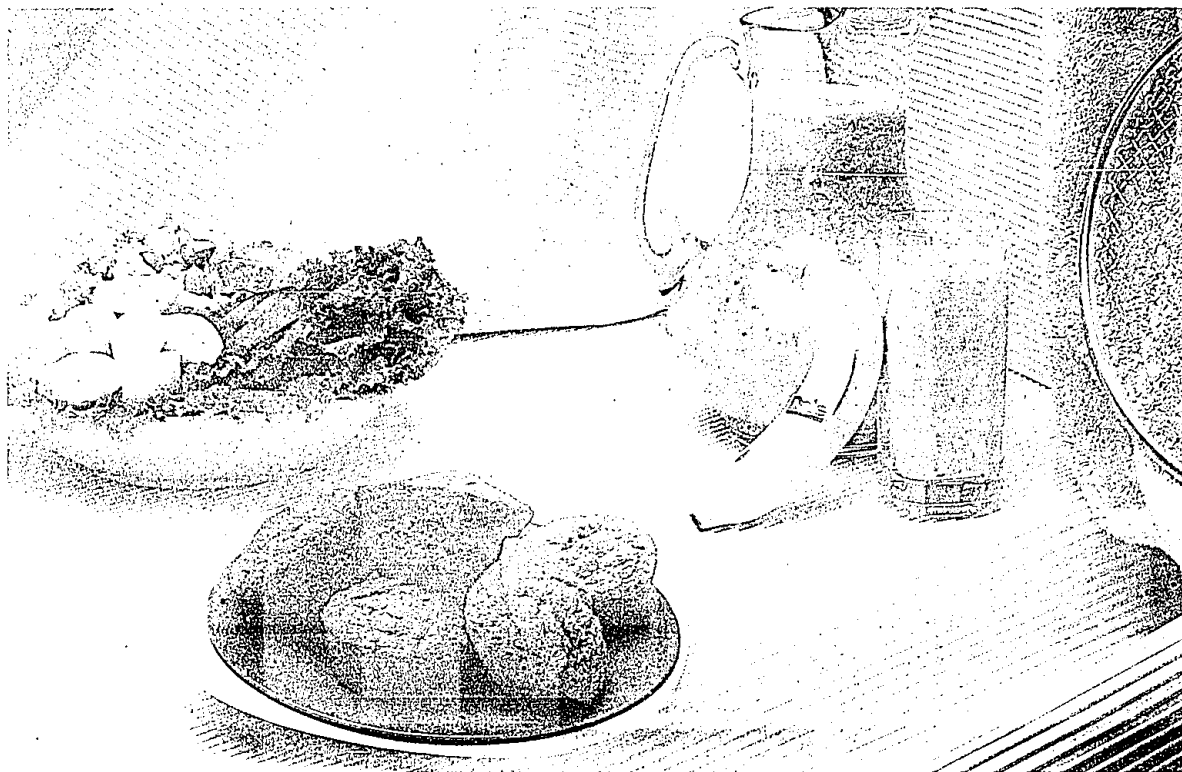


Photo from left to right: Peanut Chicken Salad, Banana Fruit Smoothie, Backpack Banana Muffins

A change in eating habits does not happen overnight. It takes commitment and determination to identify what's best for you and to stay on the route to a moderate and balanced diet.

Seemingly "magic" formulas, crash diets or fads simply don't result in long-term solutions to weight control and fitness. It takes a balanced approach: moderate intake of a variety of foods coupled with regular exercise.

Fortunately, an array of satisfying, nutritious foods and creative recipes are still within your reach once you gain a solid awareness of the basics for healthful eating. Learn about calorie content, find out which foods give you only "empty" calories,

which foods contain more fats than others and which foods supply the highest satiety with the most nutrients. Put the basics into practice with your food selection and your eating habits will take a gradual turn for the better. For example: substitute fruit for pastry on your coffee break; eat whole-grain breads and vegetables, add flavor to foods with herbs, spices and flavorful vinegars instead of heavy sauces and condiments.

Foods arranged with attention to shapes and colors will please all the senses; variety and aesthetics can make dining intriguing enough to keep you from falling back into old habits.

Here are recipes that use bananas to illustrate

the variety you can have with just one fruit: a hearty, chewy bran muffin, nutritious blender drinks, a tasty chicken salad and a light, refreshing dessert.

Bananas are one of the most convenient, nutrient-rich foods available. At 101 calories, a medium-size banana makes a satisfying snack when eaten out-of-hand. Also, bananas add vitamin A, an abundance of potassium, plus fiber to your diet. Extra potassium is especially important after a strenuous workout when your body needs to replace lost nutrients. Bananas are a terrific food to include in an active life—one based on that simple formula of moderation, variety, exercise and creative cooking.

BACKPACK BANANA MUFFINS

- 2 extra-ripe, large Bananas, peeled
- 1 cup whole bran cereal (not flakes)
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1-1/4 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Slice bananas into blender. Whir until puréed (1-1/4 cups). Mix bran and milk to soften slightly. Add mixture to blender along with eggs, sugar, butter and vanilla. Whir and stir until well mixed. Combine remaining ingredients. Pour in banana mixture. Stir until just blended. Pour into greased muffin pan cups. Bake in 350° F oven 25 to 30 minutes. Makes 12 muffins.

BANANA FRUIT SMOOTHIE

- 2 extra-ripe Bananas, frozen*
- 1 can (6 oz. or 3/4 cup) pineapple juice
- 1 cup seedless grapes
- 1 cup strawberries
- 2 egg whites

Slice bananas into blender. Add juice; whir until just mixed. Add remaining ingredients. Whir until smooth. Serves 2 to 3. (Recipe may be doubled.)

*Peel bananas, place in plastic bag and freeze overnight.

PEANUT CHICKEN SALAD

- 3 medium Bananas, peeled
- 3 cups cooked chunked chicken
- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 1/3 cup peanuts
- 2 tablespoons chopped green onion
- Spicy Lite Dressing
- Crisp salad greens
- 2 apples, cored, sliced
- 2 oranges, peeled, sliced

Dice 1 banana; combine with chicken, celery, peanuts and onion. Stir in Spicy Lite Dressing. Refrigerate 15 minutes to blend flavors. Mound onto salad plates lined with salad greens. Slice remaining bananas; arrange with apples and oranges on each plate. Serves 4.

SPICY LITE DRESSING: Combine 1/2 cup plain yogurt, 2 tablespoons mayonnaise, 1 clove pressed garlic, 1 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin and 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger.

BANANA PEANUT SMOOTHIE

(Not Illustrated)

- 2 extra-ripe Bananas, frozen*
- 2 cups nonfat milk
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Slice bananas into blender. Add remaining ingredients. Whir until smooth. Serves 2 to 3.

*Peel bananas, place in plastic bag and freeze overnight.

BANANA-ORANGE YOGURT TART

(Not Illustrated)

- 3 extra-ripe, large Bananas, peeled
- 1 cup orange juice
- 4 teaspoons unflavored gelatin
- 2 cartons (8 oz. each) vanilla yogurt
- 1 tablespoon grated orange peel
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- Gingersnap Crust
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1 firm Banana, peeled, sliced
- 1 large orange, peeled, sectioned

Purée 3 extra-ripe bananas in blender (1-1/2 cups.) Pour 1/2 cup orange juice into medium saucepan. Sprinkle gelatin over juice to soften. Heat mixture until gelatin dissolves. Cool slightly. Stir in puréed bananas, yogurt, orange peel and sugar. Set saucepan over bowl of ice water to thicken slightly, but not until firm. Stir occasionally. Turn thickened mixture into Gingersnap Crust. Chill until firm overnight. Meanwhile, combine remaining 1/2 cup orange juice with cornstarch. Cook until sauce boils and thickens. Cool. When ready to serve, garnish tart with sliced firm banana and orange sections. Spoon cooled orange sauce over top to serve. Serves 6 to 8.

GINGERSNAP CRUST: Combine 1-1/2 cups gingersnap crumbs and 1/4 cup melted butter. Press in 9-inch tart pan with removable bottom. Bake in 400° F oven 7 minutes. Cool completely.

