

Canarias:

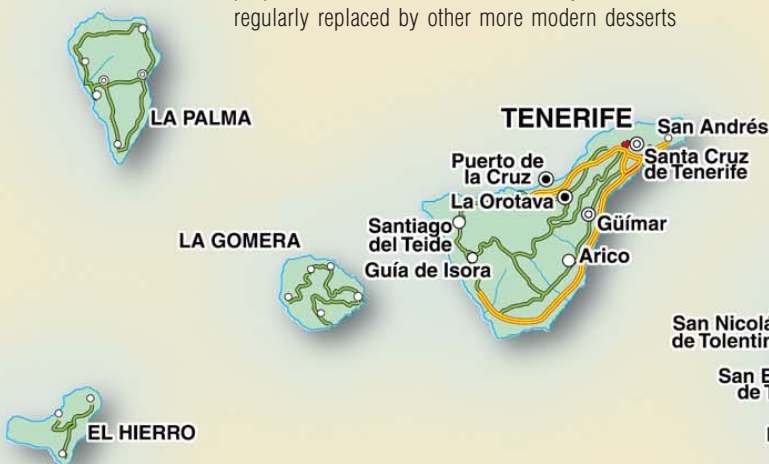
the tomato and banana islands



The fruit and vegetable sector in the Canary Islands is split into many small, high-cost properties. Family-owned properties are predominant in the Islands' four major agricultural concerns: sweet fruit, citrus fruit, tropical fruit and vegetables. The Canary Islands are now known throughout Europe for their excellent climate and beaches and the high quality of their modern tourism and leisure facilities; but they are also famous for tomatoes and bananas. It is in these sub-sectors that large growing operations are starting to emerge. These structural features mean Canary Islands producers and distributors have to concentrate on product quality and engage in a lot of promotion.

Fruit and vegetable growing in the Canary Islands is very wide-ranging and diverse. The main vegetables are potato, peppers, runner beans, onion, lettuce, marrow, carrot, and cabbage, with tomato and cucumber being predominant. The Islands produce oranges and a wealth of tropical fruit, including avocado, papaya, mango, custard apple, lychee, carambola (star fruit) and pineapple, but its emblematic crops are tomato and banana.

Banana: Bananas are easy and practical to eat. They are a mainstay of a balanced diet and assure a proper intake of certain vitamins. They cannot be regularly replaced by other more modern desserts



without throwing your diet out of balance. The fibre content of Canary Islands bananas (3 g per 100 g) is slightly higher than that of widely consumed fruit like apples, pears and oranges. Its calorie content is similar to other fruit.

Tomato: The market-garden crop par excellence is the tomato - it employs the most people and takes up the most arable land. For several decades now, European greengrocers have sold Canary Islands tomatoes in winter: the fruit is round, small to medium in size, bright red and very flavoursome. In recent years, cultivation has increased its surface area significantly using substrates and automatic fertiliser and irrigation systems. Besides the traditional Canary Islands tomato variety, vine tomatoes have been newly introduced. The Islands also grow cherry and cocktail tomatoes, which are much smaller in size and have their own market niches. The larger 'beef' tomatoes are also produced, but are less important for the export market.

Cucumber is another major crop from the Canaries, being the second most important export product.

The Canary Islands fruit and vegetable sector has the potential to develop strongly owing to the excellent climate, which enables growers to produce crops of outstanding quality.

The Canary Islands offer a wide range of tropical fruit, but its emblematic products are tomato and banana.



67



FUERTEVENTURA

LANZAROTE



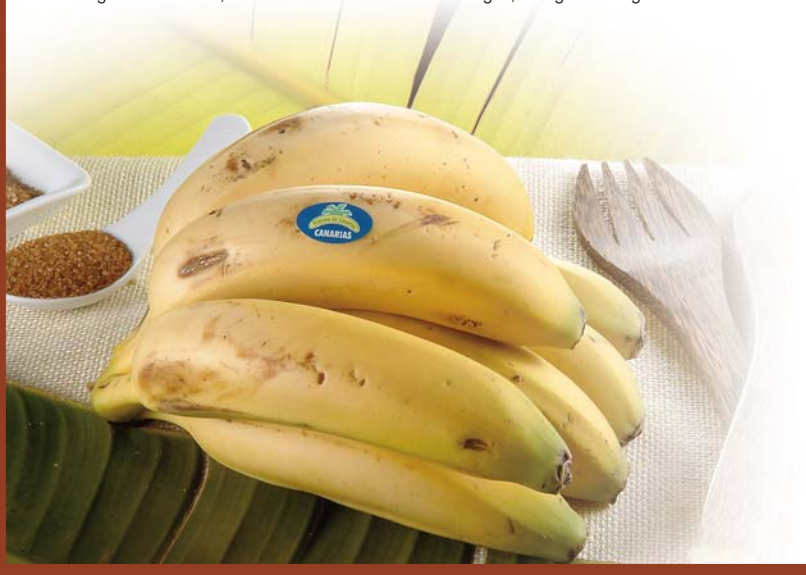
Canary Islands Banana: a unique taste

Plátano de Canarias - the Canary Islands banana - has a flavour other bananas can't match. This is because they grow in the Canary Islands, blessed with an exceptional climate. Their unique taste is achieved by ripening them on the tree itself, which enriches the fruit with vitamins and minerals. Canary Islands plátanos reach you in optimum condition and, as they ripen on the plant, their beneficial properties are kept intact. Their firmer texture and their sweet, flavoursome, delicate flavour with not even a hint of roughness make Plátano de Canarias a very special fruit.

The varied relief of the Canary Islands gives them a wide range of very different micro-climates. All the islands grow bananas, so harvests

reach fruit grocers all the year round at optimum ripeness. The banana varieties most widely grown in the Canary Islands are Gran Enana and Pequeña Enana. The Canary Islands platanera plant produces a small, yellow, mottled banana whose exceptional flavour sets it apart from bananas from tropical countries. The plátanos are slender in shape and their yellow can be more or less intense depending on their ripeness and variety. The colour of the pulp varies from white to yellow (again, depending on the species), its texture is compact and tender, and the taste is truly delicious.

When looking for a Plátano de Canarias, look out for their distinctive mottles, a sure sign of excellent flavour. Canary Islands plátanos are smaller in terms of length, weight and girth than





bananas from elsewhere. The smaller size of Canary Islands bananas is an identifying feature you can recognise them by. Finally, when you try a Canary Islands banana, you'll find it has a uniquely pleasant taste.

A number of studies by the University of Zaragoza have shown that there are definite differences between Canary Islands bananas and the rest, and that their heightened nutritional benefits are due to the special features of their origin (the climate, the soil, the ripening period, the proximity of the source to the point of sale, and more). These special nutritional properties include lower total starch and higher total sugars: so Canary Islands bananas are sweeter, are higher in potassium and phosphorus and lower in sodium than tropical bananas. In addition, their pulp is firmer, yellower, and has a higher proportion of distinctive aromatic compounds.

We need energy to look after our health, and a natural source of energy is the Canary Islands banana. Bananas give you the vitality, power and strength you need for physical exercise. Later, once you've completed your work-out, bananas are very good to prevent cramps and muscle pain.

Plátano de Canarias is so healthy that it provides 100% energy and 0% fat, so you can forget about putting on weight. But it's not just good for doing sport. It's also good for students, because it keeps the mind alert, and its high potassium content is excellent for your memory function. Plátanos are one of the most well-rounded fruits, because they help you keep slim, aid digestion and provide nutrients that protect our skin and our bodies.

Plátanos are high in vitamins (A, C, B1, B2, B3 and B6) and also rich in minerals like calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium and sodium.



Other compounds present in bananas that have beneficial effects are carotenoids and polyphenols, which have antioxidants properties. Plátanos are a great source of vitamins that are hard to find in other foods (particularly vitamin C and provitamin A) and of various kinds of fibre (cellulose, hemicellulose, pectin, etc.) and water. Canary Islands bananas are good for everyone, and specially for children and the elderly, because they're easy to eat.



www.platanodecanarias.net