



Canarias:

home of the tomato and the banana

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. 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: vegetables, sweet fruit, citrus fruit and tropical fruit. 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.

Wide-ranging and diverse: these are the words that best describe Canarias fruit and vegetable growing. 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) pineapple and orange, but its emblematic crops are tomato and 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.

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.

