

# Journey of bananas

Bananas are a tropical fruit and are usually grown in central American, South American or African countries. Bananas have become one of the most eaten fruits across the world and are now one of the most traded fruits. As they are only grown in tropical climates, bananas have to be traded and transported globally.

## Growing

In Costa Rica, a country in central America, bananas are grown on large plantations. Unlike most fruits and vegetables, bananas grow and are available all year round. Growing bananas is labour-intensive. Growers have to make sure the plants have enough water, are supported when the bananas become heavy, are sprayed with pesticides to get rid of insects and diseases and are wrapped in bags while still on the plant to protect the fruit from insects, birds and the wind.



## Harvesting

Bananas can be harvested 9–12 months after planting. They are harvested by hand while they are still green. Sponges or cloths are placed between the bananas to protect them from damage. They are transported to a processing plant by a pulley system. At the processing plant, the bananas are sorted into bunches and washed to get rid of insects and chemicals. They are checked and packed into boxes carefully so the fruit isn't damaged.



## Transportation

Lorries collect the bananas from the processing plant and take them to the docks. They are packed into refrigerated cargo ships that keep the bananas cool. The bananas must be transported carefully so the fruit isn't damaged. It takes between six and twelve days for the bananas to reach the UK. When they arrive at their destination, they are unloaded from the ship and transported to a ripening room. Ethylene gas is sprayed over the bananas to ripen them. They are then transported by lorry to shops and supermarkets around the country.



Image from: Shutterstock editorial/Paul J Martin

<b>Country of origin</b>	Costa Rica
<b>Average food miles</b>	5424
<b>Transport used</b>	pulley system → lorry → ship → lorry

