

DiETING Should Make You Go Bananas

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(NAPSA)—Bananas are the most popular fruit in America and not just because of their taste. Think of the endless ways you can enjoy a banana: blended in a low calorie smoothie, sliced into a fiber-rich cereal, packed in a lunch or eaten as a pre- and post-game energy booster. Sure they taste good but they also supply essential nutrients and carbohydrates your body needs to perform at its peak.



Pivonka

One medium banana, with its smooth, tropical flavor, packs a whopping four grams of dietary fiber and a healthy dose of potassium and vitamins C and B6 into a mere 110 calories. Carbohydrates are the body's main source of energy. Fruits contain carbohydrates, fiber and a wide variety of nutrients. Fiber helps you feel full, so you eat less; and fruits, like bananas, are portion-controlled—a big help to dieters. High protein, low carbohydrate diets, on the other hand, often contain too much unhealthy fat and restrict foods that provide variety, flavor, texture and essential nutrients. People lose weight simply because they are eating fewer calories than they are expending; there is no magic metabolic transformation. Hundreds of large scale studies have demonstrated better health with a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. So, whether you want to shed a few pounds or maintain a healthy weight, remember to go bananas, and include a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables in your diet every day.

Banana and Spinach salad is a colorful salad featuring creamy white bananas, green spinach, red cranberries and orange citrus fruit. It shows you how easy it is to toss together the colors of health. Color is an easy way to think about variety, which is central to good nutrition. By including a mix of colors in your low fat diet—at least 5 to 9 servings daily—you can help maintain (or reach) a healthy weight and obtain a wide range of vitamins, min-



erals, fiber and phytochemicals.

For more banana recipes and information, visit the Web site www.eatmorebananas.com; and for more information about 5 A Day The Color Way, visit the Web site www.5aday.org and www.aboutproduce.com.

Banana and Spinach Salad

- ½ cup pecans
- 1 tablespoon coffee flavored liqueur or coffee
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- 2 tablespoons cranberry juice cocktail
- ¾ cup fat-free raspberry vinaigrette dressing
- 3 bananas, cut into slices
- 1 cup orange sections
- 2 packages (6 oz. each) baby spinach
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced

Line shallow pan with foil, stir together pecans and coffee liqueur. Bake at 300°F., 12-15 minutes stirring twice, until toasted. Set aside. Combine cranberries and juice, cover and microwave on HIGH 30 seconds, let sit 5 minutes. Finely chop cranberry mixture in food processor; stir together with vinaigrette. Toss together cranberry vinaigrette, banana slices and orange sections. Line plates with spinach and onion; top with banana mixture. Sprinkle pecans over salad. Serves 4.

Nutritional information per serving: calories: 353, total fat: 10.5g, saturated fat: 1.1g, % calories from fat: 25%, protein: 5g, carbohydrates: 62g, cholesterol: 0mg, dietary fiber: 8g, sodium: 469mg.