

STATUS

In the New World Tropics the edible banana (including the plantain) is a very important crop. Throughout the area the banana is used by the people as a locally produced food crop which in many countries takes the place of bread in temperate lands. Especially is this true among the rural population and the poorer classes of city dwellers. The fruit is eaten either in the ripe fresh state as a dessert fruit (bananas only) or in the cooked state; ripe or unripe, (plantain or banana) the latter being an important staple food of the poorer people. From the fruit is made a flour - Bananina of Puerto Rico and Cuba, Banana Bliss of Jamaica - which is used for feeding infants, making cakes, or, as in Guatemala, a delicious beverage with milk and cacao. It is used for making candy, preserves and sweetmeats.

From the countries of the New World - Central America, South America and the West Indies - are exported 80% of the bananas entering world trade. From Central America comes 39%, from South America 32% and from the West Indies 10%.

The diagram and table show the disposition of world exports.

	1938		1952	
	1000 tons	%	1000 tons	%
CENTRAL AMERICA	1,118	43	980	39
SOUTH AMERICA	402	16	799	32
WEST INDIES	615	24	239	10
AFRICA	282	11	427	17
ASIA-OCEANIA	156	6	49	2
	2,573	100	2,492	100