



Fair Trade Bananas 101

Use these facts to educate yourself and others about the need for Fair Trade bananas

General Fast Facts

- **India** and **China** are the world's largest banana producers, with the majority of production serving local markets. The world's largest banana exporting countries are **Ecuador** and **Costa Rica**.
- In the United States, bananas make up **50 percent** of all fresh fruit imports. On average, Americans eat **27 pounds** of bananas per person every year.
- Bananas do not grow on trees, but rather on giant tropical herbs. The banana fruit is botanically a berry.
- It takes about **nine months** for new plants to be ready to harvest. A banana plant will produce fruit for about **five years**.

The Need for Fair Trade Bananas

- Because commercially-grown bananas lack genetic variation, agrochemicals are more heavily used on bananas than on any other crop, besides cotton.
- Less than two percent of bananas imported to the U.S. are Fair Trade certified.
- Growing global demand drives expanding production, contributing to deforestation in the rainforest environments where most bananas are grown.

Conventional Bananas

- Pesticides, herbicides, and other agrochemicals are often sprayed from aircraft, a process known as crop dusting. This application poses a threat to workers' health and the surrounding environment.
- Increased demand and the resulting profits for banana-producing companies are not reflected in the wages of workers, who are estimated to receive just one to three percent of a banana's retail value.
- A significant number of bananas are deemed unfit for sale, generally for aesthetic reasons. The resulting plant waste – roughly equivalent to the total volume of fruit that makes it to market – is often disposed of in nearby streams, threatening local waterways and ecosystems.

Fair Trade Bananas

- **Economic:** Farmers and workers receive additional income in the form of community development premiums. They vote democratically on how to use the premium to benefit the community.
- **Environmental:** Fair Trade standards require proper waste disposal, protection of local waterways and forests, and restrict the use of harmful chemicals.
- **Social:** Workers have the right to establish or join independent unions. Workers also receive training on topics such as workplace safety, freedom of association, and workers' rights.

