



In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee March 2018

Gone Bananas!



Bananas are one of the world's most appealing fruits for a good reason. They are packed with nutrients such as potassium, protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin B6 and more for about 100 calories for a medium banana. Their sweetness makes them a delicious snack or a tasty addition to sweet and savory dishes.

Banana Chicken Gumbo with Corn and Beans

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| 1 cup cooked long grain rice (<i>use package directions</i>) | 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and chopped |
| 2 tablespoon butter | 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped |
| 2 tablespoon flour | 3 large garlic cloves, finely chopped |
| 2 cups chicken broth | ½ teaspoon fresh ginger, grated |
| One 13 ounce can coconut milk | ½ half small green chili, seeded and finely chopped |
| 2 tablespoons vegetable oil | 1 tablespoon green curry paste |
| 1¼ pounds chicken breast, cut into bite-size pieces | 1 cup toasted ground almonds |
| ¼ teaspoon cardamom | One 15½ ounce can red beans, rinsed and drained |
| ¼ teaspoon cinnamon | One 15 ounce can baby corn, rinsed, drained, cut in halves |
| 1 teaspoon cumin | 2 bananas, sliced |
| 1 teaspoon coriander | Salt and pepper |
| 1 large green bell pepper, seeded and chopped | |

For the sauce: heat the butter, stir in the flour and cook over medium heat until brown, stirring constantly. Gradually add in the chicken broth, stirring to blend. Add in the coconut milk and stir until slightly thickened. Set aside.

Heat the oil in a large sauté pan and cook the chicken pieces until no longer pink. Add in the cardamom, cinnamon, cumin and coriander. Cook for 1 minute or until spices bloom. Add in the green and red peppers. Sweat briefly, then stir in the onion, garlic, ginger, curry paste, green chili, ground almonds and prepared sauce.

Simmer for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally; adding liquid if needed. Add the beans, rice and banana slices. Cook until warmed through, 2 to 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. *Serves 8*

Banana Risotto

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| 3 tablespoons sunflower oil | 1 teaspoon turmeric |
| 1 small onion, finely chopped | Pinch of granulated sugar |
| 6 ounces tofu, cut into bite-size pieces | Dash of cinnamon |
| 2 teaspoons sweet chili sauce | Salt and pepper |
| 1 cup risotto rice | 10 ounces sugar snap peas |
| 1½ cups water | |

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat; add onion and sauté until glassy. Add tofu and sweet chili sauce. Sauté until sides of the tofu are gently browned. Add the rice, water and turmeric, a pinch of sugar and a dash of cinnamon. Cook, stirring often, until rice is soft. Season with salt and pepper. Add pea pods and cook until pods are al dente. Add banana slices and stir into the risotto. Serve immediately. *Serves 4*

Orange-Pecan Shrimp with Bananas and Peas

3 cups cooked rice	1 tablespoon peanut oil
½ cup fresh orange juice	12 ounces large shrimp (12 shrimp), peeled, deveined and patted dry
¼ cup rice vinegar	1 cup frozen peas, thawed and drained
¼ cup soy sauce	Kosher salt and pepper
2 teaspoons cornstarch	1 banana, cut in half lengthwise, then cut into ½-inch slices
½ cup orange marmalade	½ cup pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped
1 teaspoon ground ginger	

Prepare rice and keep warm. In a small saucepan whisk together the orange juice, rice vinegar, soy sauce and cornstarch until well blended. Stir in the marmalade and ginger. Cook over medium heat until slightly thickened. Set aside.

Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shrimp and stir-fry for 2 minutes or until shrimp are just pink. Add sauce and reduce heat to low. Cover and cook until bubbly and heated through, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat; add peas and banana; toss to coat. Serve over warm rice and sprinkle with pecans. *Serves 4*

Banana Chutney with Raisins, Almonds and Pineapple

1 tablespoon canola oil	Kosher salt
½ medium yellow onion, finely chopped	1 teaspoon sweet chili sauce
1 teaspoon fresh ginger, finely grated	½ cup unsweetened pineapple juice
2 teaspoons garlic, finely grated	¼ cup raisins
¼ teaspoon curry powder	¼ cup slivered almonds
¼ teaspoon cumin	1 large ripe banana, cut into ½-inch rounds
⅛ teaspoon dried mustard	

In a medium saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat until shimmering hot. Add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned on the edges, about 5 to 7 minutes. Add the ginger, garlic, curry powder, cumin, mustard and ½ teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring constantly, until the spices are fragrant and slightly darker, about 1 minute. Add ¼ cup water, pineapple juice and raisins. Cook until the liquid is reduced by almost half. Stir in bananas; remove from heat. Serve warm topped with almonds and cilantro. *Makes about 1½ cups*

Avocado, Beet and Banana Salad with a Banana-Poppy Seed Dressing

1 large ripe avocado, cut into bite size chunks	6 cups greens
2 small beets, roasted, peeled, cut into bite-size pieces	Sea salt
1 small ripe banana, sliced, cut into 2-inch pieces	Banana-Poppy Seed Dressing (<i>see recipe below</i>)

Preheat oven to 425°F. Wrap beets in foil and roast for 40 minutes or until done when pierced with a fork. Cool slightly; rub beet skins off with paper towels. Cut off roots and stems; dice into bite size pieces.

Divide greens among 4 salad plates. Arrange ¼ of avocado in center of each plate in a row. Divide cooled beets in a row on one side of the avocados. Finish with a row of banana slices on the other side of the avocados. Drizzle Banana-Poppy Seed Dressing (*see recipe below*) over the salads. Sprinkle with sea salt.

Banana-Poppy Seed Dressing

1 tablespoon water	½ banana, sliced
1 tablespoon shallot, finely chopped	⅛ teaspoon nutmeg
1 clove garlic, finely chopped	⅛ teaspoon allspice
2 teaspoons fresh lime juice	¼ teaspoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon cilantro, chopped	¼ cup olive oil
2 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar	1 teaspoon poppy seeds
½ teaspoon honey	

In a food processor, add the water, shallot and garlic. Pulse 4 to 5 times. Add in the lime juice, cilantro, vinegar, honey, banana, nutmeg, allspice and cinnamon. Pulse 3 to 4 times to mix in spices. On low speed slowly add the olive oil.