

What Is Banana Flower? All About This Delectable Blossom



Medically reviewed by [Amy Richter, MS, RD](#) — Written by [Shahzadi Devje, RD, CDE, MSc](#) on March 25, 2022

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While it's far less common than banana fruit, the flower of a particular banana species is edible and considered a delicacy.

Preparing banana flower for cooking is a bit like unwrapping a present. You must peel off the outer layers to reveal the edible portion of this beautiful flower, which consists of the florets and the core (heart).

You can then use the outer petals, which typically aren't eaten, as serving plates.

This delicious bloom is also known as banana blossom or banana heart. It's a dark red-orange or maroon cone-like plant that's frequently eaten in Asian countries, especially in curries, soups, salads, and cutlets.

This article explains banana flower's uses, nutrients, and health benefits.



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What is banana flower, and how is it used?

The banana blossom is the edible flower of a wild species of tropical and subtropical banana known scientifically as *Musa acuminata*. It's said to have originated in Malaysia, after which it spread to India and Myanmar (1).

Despite being a fruit, the banana flower is often cooked like a vegetable. For example, in Sri Lanka, it's enjoyed in dishes like vazhaipoo (stir-fry) and keselmuwa (curry).

Banana flower can also be steeped as a tea and taken as a nutritional supplement.

Its taste is supposed to be pleasant, slightly sweet, and flowery, though the sap between the petals should be removed before cooking because it has a bitter flavor. Soaking the petals in lemon water may help reduce any lingering bitterness.

Like the fruit, the flower's leaves are perishable and will turn brown or black when exposed to air. Therefore, you shouldn't peel the outer layers until you're ready to use them.

SUMMARY

The banana blossom is the edible flower of a wild species of Southeast Asian banana. It's eaten in regional savory dishes, brewed into tea, and processed into a supplement. Its flavor is sweet and floral.

Banana flower nutrition information

Banana flowers contain many nutrients, including antioxidants, several minerals, and a small amount of protein. They're also low in calories and fat while offering a balance of insoluble and soluble fiber (2 ✓).

Soluble fiber dissolves in water to form a gel-like mixture in your gut. It may help lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels (3 ✓).

On the other hand, insoluble fiber doesn't dissolve in water. It adds bulks to stool to help it move through your digestive system. This may help prevent constipation and other digestive problems, as well as help you feel full longer (3 ✓).

Here's the nutrient breakdown of 3.5 ounces (100 grams) of banana flower in brine (4 ✓):

- **Calories:** 23
- **Carbs:** 4 grams
- **Fat:** 0 grams
- **Protein:** 1.5 grams

Studies also indicate that banana flower may be especially high in fiber, as well as minerals like potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron, zinc, and copper. These minerals aid numerous functions of your body (5 ✓).

This blossom even provides all [essential amino acids](#) that your body needs and contains fewer natural sugars than banana fruit and other tropical fruits (2 ✓).

quercetin, catechin, phenols, saponins, and tannins. Antioxidants help protect your body from unstable molecules called free radicals and may help reduce disease risk (2 )

SUMMARY

Banana flower is incredibly nutrient-dense, providing fiber, antioxidants, and high amounts of numerous minerals.

Potential health benefits of banana flower

Banana flower has been used in traditional medicine across the Americas, Asia, Oceania, India, and Africa to treat various ailments. The leaves, sap, peel, and roots of the banana tree have medicinal uses as well (1).

Bear in mind that scientific evidence to support many of these traditional uses is lacking.

May lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels

Banana flowers boast several compounds in the stalk and pulp that may lower high cholesterol and [blood sugar](#) levels — two important risk factors for heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Although human research is needed, animal studies show that extract from a different banana species — *Musa sapientum* — has cholesterol-lowering and antioxidant effects. Naturally occurring plant compounds called sterols may be responsible (6 )

Plant sterols are known to help prevent the absorption of cholesterol from your gut, which may help decrease levels of this health marker (7 )

In another study, rats fed a diet containing banana flower powder had [lower total cholesterol](#) and blood sugar levels than those fed a control

diet. Furthermore, the rats in the former group had greater amounts of probiotics in their guts (8 ✓).

Banana flower's high fiber content may also have an effect.

For example, one review found that dietary fiber plus statin medication had a significant cholesterol-lowering effect when compared with statin treatment alone. In fact, adding fiber lowered LDL (bad) cholesterol levels to the same degree as doubling the statin dose (9 ✓).

Other studies have found similar results (10 ✓).

One study noted that the antioxidants quercetin and catechin in banana flower may reduce blood sugar levels after meals. These antioxidants may work by blocking an enzyme that absorbs carbs (11 ✓).

However, this study based its findings on a computer simulation. As such, human studies are necessary to validate these findings.

May aid gut health

As a fiber-rich fruit that includes soluble and insoluble fibers, banana flower may boost digestive health.

Evidence suggests that fiber intake may improve your [gut microbiome](#) — the collection of bacteria, viruses, and fungi in your gut — which may, in turn, reduce cancer risk (12 ✓, 13 ✓, 14 ✓).

Fiber also acts as a [prebiotic](#) to help increase the number of good bacteria in your gut (15 ✓).

All the same, specific studies on banana flower are needed.

May prevent an enlarged prostate

A common urological problem in males over age 50 is an enlarged prostate gland, which may develop into urinary problems such as weak streaming, retention issues, and urgency.

In traditional medicine, banana blossom is used to treat urinary issues.

In one animal study, the [anti-inflammatory properties](#) of banana flower extract reduced the size of enlarged prostate glands. The flower's citric acid and amino acid profiles may be partly responsible for this effect (16 )

Antioxidants in banana flower, including [quercetin](#), have been shown to help reduce inflammation in the prostate and improve urinary flow when combined with other remedies (11 , 17 )

All the same, human research is necessary.

May prevent bone loss

Traditionally, banana flowers have been used to alleviate joint discomfort, which may be a sign of bone loss.

According to one test-tube study, the antioxidants quercetin and catechin — which occur naturally in banana flower — may help prevent bone loss (18 )

A review of animal and test-tube studies found that quercetin offers [bone-protective properties](#) due to its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits (19 )

Banana flower is also a [source of zinc](#), which may help prevent bone loss as well (20 )

Regardless, human studies are lacking and further research is needed.

SUMMARY

Banana flower may have offer digestive, blood sugar, cholesterol, bone health, and prostate health benefits. Keep in mind that

results are preliminary, and significantly more human research is needed.

Are there any downsides of banana flower?

Banana flower has been shown to be generally safe to eat. There are no reported negative effects (21[✓]).

While [banana allergies](#) are rare, anyone with an allergy to the fruit should also avoid this blossom (22[✓], 23[✓]).

Furthermore, if you have health issues or are taking any medications, it's recommended that you consult your doctor to address any possible drug-nutrient interactions.

Finally, if you're interested in taking banana flower supplements, you should consult a healthcare professional before adding supplements to your routine.

SUMMARY

Banana flower is widely considered safe to eat, but anyone with a banana allergy should avoid it.

The bottom line

Banana blossom comes from a species of [wild banana](#) native to Southeast Asia. Its taste is delicate and fragrant. The flower is commonly cooked in savory dishes, steeped in water to make tea, or used as a supplement.

Banana flower is rich in nutrients, including fiber, antioxidants, and numerous minerals. Emerging research indicates that it may [aid digestive](#)

[health](#), prevent prostate enlargement, support bone health, and help lower blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

Nonetheless, more human research is needed.

You may be able to find fresh banana flower at markets in countries where it's native. You can also look for canned banana flower in specialty stores and banana flower supplements in health foods stores.

Just one thing

Try this today: Banana blossom is edible raw, so consider topping your favorite [smoothie](#) with it for a lovely floral touch. Otherwise, you can cook it with vegetables, meat, or fish stock to make a delectable soup.

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How we reviewed this article:

[HISTORY](#)

Our experts continually monitor the health and wellness space, and we update our articles when new information becomes available.

Current Version

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