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The Fabulous World of Bananas

A visit to [Le Musée de la Banane](#) in Sainte-Marie, Martinique really opened up my eyes to this truly remarkable fruit.



Did you ever really give much thought to bananas other than to put them on your cereal or eat them as a snack? Having grown up with a limited variety of the types of bananas available in the local supermarket, I was totally surprised to learn that there are 300-recorded edible species of bananas, and that there are a total of 1,000 species of bananas counting decorative species. How did I learn that fact? While I was visiting Martinique in April 2006, I saw so many banana trees on this beautiful island, that I decided to make a visit to **Le Musée de la Banane**, located on the north Atlantic side of Martinique in Sainte-Marie on the Habitation Limbé, 22 miles from Fort de France, to learn more about this beneficial fruit. One of the interesting facts I learned is that the banana consists of 75% water, has 393 mg of potassium, is an excellent source of fiber, is full of minerals and vitamins (ABC and E), has 0.2% lipids, 0.4% tannin, 0.8% cellulose, 1.15% proteins, 23.3% glucose, and is easily one of the most convenient foods known to man, just peel and eat, talk about a luxury experience.



Le Musée de la Banane opened in 1996, is located in a 4 hectares park, and is part of a working banana

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plantation. The museum tells the history of the banana and the park features 44 species of rare bananas and tropical flowers. Bananas are found throughout tropical parts of the world and were first discovered in the South East of Asia. A few of the more exotic species of bananas that I saw were the Figue Oiseau, a sweet, small dessert banana that derives its' name from its' bird's beak appearance, the Pisang Lilin, an Asian banana that grows in clumps and has a delicate flavor, and a cooking banana that is called the Banane Argentee, and is also known as the Banane Argentee (Silver or Ice Cream banana) (Bluggoe) from Asia, that looks like two bunches of bananas that are fused together.



Since this is a working plantation, visitors can watch the bananas arriving on trucks from the fields, where the bananas first have their perforated blue plastic bags removed, which help protect the bananas during the growing season. Once the bags are removed, an inspector removes the dried ends, and working in tandem with another worker, the bananas are inspected, cut off in bunches, put in a water bath to remove any impurities, placed on a conveyor belt that loads them onto a trailer, and from there they are then driven to market.



After a tour of the museum, where visitors can enjoy sampling their way through a variety of tasty bananas as part of their banana education, they can also stop at one of the Creole houses in the park and sample banana pudding, banana cake, chocolate and banana cake, banana jam and pastries, liqueur de banana, and even banana punch made with liqueur de banana, milk and rhum. If you like what you sample, you can purchase these items as well as a wide assortment of banana and banana leaf products. This museum is not only very educational it is also certainly the tastiest museum I have ever visited. Le Musée de la Banane is open everyday from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, (Sundays until 1:00 pm from April until the end of November), and admission is charged.

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