

Bananas and L-Tryptophan

The soothing effects of bananas may be explained by the presence of L-tryptophan in the fruit, an amino acid essential for the production of serotonin (a relaxing neurotransmitter) and melatonin. Tryptophan has been amply studied and its benefits for health are popularly known. A recent study showed that a diet rich in tryptophan, combined with an adequate supply of vitamin B6, favored serotonin production and reduced depression symptoms.

Bananas are high in L-tryptophan but also high in calories

Bananas are surprisingly high in L-tryptophan, rich in magnesium and potassium, Although potassium isn't directly related to mood it's needed to regulate fluid levels and keep muscles working properly which is important for feeling energized a key factor for a sunny outlook. Bananas are great for mental health, when you eat a banana you'll notice a rapid boost from the fructose as well as sustaining energy from the fiber which helps prevent a blood sugar spike and the ensuing decline in energy and mood. Carbohydrates aid in the absorption of L-tryptophan in the brain and vitamin B6 helps convert the tryptophan into serotonin.

Bananas are also high in calories compared to other fruit at around 89

Calories Per 100 grams. <https://fdc.nal.usda.gov>

Nutrition facts for 100 grams of bananas

- Calories: 89
- Water: 75%

- Protein: 1.1 grams
- Carbs: 22.8 grams
- Sugar: 12.2 grams
- Fiber: 2.6 grams
- Fat: 0.3 grams

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Bananas help you sleep better

Bananas can be considered as a natural sleeping remedy. They contain tryptophan, an essential amino acid, which, combined with vitamin B6, allows the synthesis of serotonin and melatonin, hormones playing an essential role in promoting sleep. Some doctors recommend its consumption 60 minutes before going to bed to enjoy better sleep. Rich in melatonin (commonly called sleep hormone), banana is an excellent sleep stimulator.

An anti-depression and relaxing fruit

According to a survey conducted on people who suffer from depression, many reports feeling better after eating a banana. Banana dopamine is probably not unrelated to this phenomenon, but it is also explained by the presence of tryptophan, a substance that the body transforms into serotonin, the brain's chemical messenger known for its relaxing effect.

The good-mood effect is reinforced by the presence of high amounts of vitamin B6 (0.5 mg per 100 g, or a quarter of the recommended daily intake). Also known as pyridoxine, this vitamin is useful for the production of various mood-

associated neurotransmitters, including serotonin and dopamine. Some studies have shown that, when taken in high doses, it relieves depression associated with the premenstrual syndrome.

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