

Kicking Kale and Cauliflower to the Kerb - Make way for the Plantain!

Submitted by: Lisa Roukin (My Relationship With Food)

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Lisa Roukin, the successful chef and author of cookbook 'My Relationship with Food' (<http://www.myrelationshipwithfood.com>), has developed some fantastic grain and gluten free recipes filled with fantastic health benefits using a super Banana known as the Plantain.

This misunderstood Superfood is one that many people are unaware of, but is a major food staple in West and Central Africa, Central America, the Caribbean islands and northern, coastal parts of South America. Plantains are starchy and low in sugar usually baked or fried and used as part of a staple diet in Caribbean and West African dishes, much like potatoes are in English dishes. Plantains are a fantastic source of potassium and fiber and contain a significant amount of vitamin A and vitamin C, making them a powerful and necessary food in the battle of the Superfoods.

One of the many exciting features of plantains is its versatility and ability to combine with other tastes and textures. Tough on the outside, the bigger, harder, and less welcoming versions of plantains are really big softies inside, when turned yellow with black spots. Their mildly sweet, starchy flesh fries up perfectly in your favorite cooking fat and bakes into delicious crispy chips, add a little bit of oomph to all kinds of fish curries and other tropical-themed recipes.

Plantains are a versatile food and their different flavours represented in colours green, yellow and black can be used to make many dishes. Fancy a snack with a little kick, try some plantain chips. For these, you'll want green plantains: just slice them, toss them with enough oil to coat all the chips, and bake for about half an hour, flipping them halfway through. As with fried plantains, you can season them with salt and cinnamon (or any other combination of spices you like)...or just wait until they're done, and use them to scoop up with your favourite dips.

Some of Lisa's other mouth-watering Plantain recipes include Eat The Rainbow Pizza, Plantain filled with Pesto, Plantain and Tomato Soup, Plantain and Tomato Chutney, Nigella Seed Plantain Pancake and Grain Free Plantain and Pecan Loaf.

It has been said that 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away' but now the Plantain steals this powerful claim with its great source and variety of vitamins and minerals. With Fiber it helps to keep bowel movements regular and reduce constipation while its Vitamin C antioxidant helps build up your immune system and scavenge free radicals. Vitamin A plays a role in vision and enhances skin complexion. B6 (Pyridoxine) is beneficial in treating neuritis, anemia, and decreasing homocysteine levels which are often associated with coronary artery disease and stroke episodes and Potassium is an important component of cell and body fluids that help control heart rate and blood pressure.

-ENDS-

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Notes to the editor:

For high res images of recipes: Eat The Rainbow Pizza, Plantain filled with Pesto, Plantain and Tomato Soup, Plantain and Tomato Chutney, Nigella Seed Plantain Pancake and Grain Free Plantain and Pecan Loaf.

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Plantains are a reliable all-season food since they fruit all year round and can be used for cooking at any stage of ripeness and some even eat the raw ripe plantain. Very ripe plantains have softer, deep yellow pulp that is much sweeter than in the earlier stages of its growth.

Green plantains: starchy, with just a hint of sweetness. They taste a little like potatoes, and work well in savoury curries and stews. If you're going to make plantain chips, you'll want them green.

Yellow plantains: a little sweeter and less starchy than the green ones; they're a middle ground between green and black. They're still not as sweet as bananas, though.

Black plantains: sweet (almost like a banana) and soft; bake them and eat them for dessert. Most grocery stores have a mix of colours, but you can also get green ones and wait for them to ripen into the stage you want.

About Lisa Roukin:

Lisa Roukin is a chef, culinary instructor and motivational speaker. In response to her first cookbook, *My Relationship with Food* published in November 2014, she has received substantial press attention. The book, which tracks Lisa's journey from overweight child to underweight young adult to healthy grown-up, has proven popular with readers. Lisa and her story has been featured on BBC Oxford radio and at corporate organisations.

An early proponent of gluten-free and healthy eating, Lisa is a key speaker at corporate events and has recently inspired the employees at many corporate companies to make better food choices.

For over a decade she has taught children of all ages to cook and works very closely with children

recovering from life threatening illnesses, using cooking as a form of creativity and therapy. She is also involved in many different charities, giving talks and demonstrations.

Her journey to healthy-eating is one that is both topical and inspirational to those seeking a better relationship with food.

More on Chef Lisa Roukin at: www.myrelationshipwithfood.com