

Malayan banana varieties in 1919

What were the bananas cultivated a hundred years ago?

From J.N. Milsum, *Fruit Culture in Malaya*. Department of Agriculture Bulletin No. 29.

Pisang Abu	The ash banana. There are several minor varieties, such as 'Abu Puteh' and 'Abu Kling'. These are distinguished by the bloom or dust on the ripe fruit. The fruit is 4.5 inches long and about 2 inches in diameter. Skin yellow, thick. Flesh white. A cooking variety.
Pisang Lebah	A green fruit with white flesh, about 3.5 inches long.
Pisang Awak	Known in some districts as 'Pisang Siam'. Skin dark yellow, turning red when bruised, 4 inches long and 1.5 inches in diameter. Fruit ridged. Flesh white, stiff and sometimes containing a number of seeds.
Pisang Ayam	Used as a vegetable. Fruits small, triangular in shape, curved, ribbed. Skin yellow.
Pisang Batu or Tembatu	The stone banana. Also known as 'Pisang Bengala'. A large plant with fruits 4 inches long and 2 inches wide. The ridges are well-defined. Flesh soft, containing many seeds.
Pisang Bakar	The burning banana. Medium sized fruit, green when ripe.
Pisang Berangan	The chestnut banana. A similar fruit to 'Pisang Rajah'. Skin yellow, with numerous black spots when ripe. About 4 inches long. Flesh reddish, soft, sweet and fragrant.
Pisang Boyan	A small fruit about 3 inches long by 1 inch in diameter. Ridges hardly visible and knob at apex of fruit well-defined.
Pisang Bunga	A long fruit, 6 to 7 inches in length. Skin yellow. Flesh red, soft and sweet.
Pisang Chekek Laki	Bunches freely produced. Fruits curved. Skin light yellow. Flesh white, stiff.
Pisang Jari Buaya	Crocodile's fingers. Fruit long and narrow, 6 inches in length by 1 inch in diameter. Well-defined ridges present. Skin green, flesh slightly yellow, often seeds present. This variety appears to be known to the Malays in some districts as 'Pisang Gigi Buaya' or 'Pisang Taring Buaya'.

Pisang Kapas	The cotton banana. Reported as also known as 'Pisang Putar'. Fruit yellow, 5 inches long, 2 inches in diameter, with 3 well-defined ridges. Flesh white and tasteless.
Pisang Kapok	Fruit large and green, having a bitter taste. Reported only from Johore.
Pisang Kelat	A yellow fruit, narrow, with undefined ridges, 4.5 inches long, 1.5 inches in diameter. The flesh has a reddish tinge, is stiff and sweet.
Pisang Lang	The hawk banana. Fruit 8 inches long, 1.5 inches broad. Skin reddish-yellow. Ridges slightly defined. Flesh white, stiff and sweet.
Pisang Lemak Manis	Fruit small, 2.5 inches long and 1 inch wide. Skin yellow, very thin when ripe. Ridges barely visible. Knob long and green. Flesh yellowish, soft and sweet.
Pisang Lidi	Thin and long. Greenish colour when ripe, flesh sweet.
Pisang Embon	The dew banana. 6 inches long, 1.5 inches in diameter. Skin yellow when fully ripe, thick. Flesh soft and fragrant.
Pisang Mas	A great favourite and extensively grown for sale in the local markets. Fruit 2 to 3 inches long, 1.5 inches broad. Skin thin, often sticking to the flesh, golden-yellow. Flesh soft and sweet, somewhat greasy.
Pisang Masak Hijau	A common market banana. Obtaining its name by being green when ripe. The fruit is curved, 5 to 7 inches long and 2 inches broad. Flesh soft and white.
Pisang Minyak	The oily banana. A variety similar to Pisang Mas but larger.
Pisang Nangka	Fruit 8 inches long, 1.5 inches broad. Skin green with 5 or more ridges not sharply defined. Flesh light yellow, stiff and rather sour.
Pisang Nipah	A yellow fruit about 4 inches long, with 3 well-defined ridges. Flesh white.
Pisang Pinang	The areca-nut banana. Fruit 3 inches long, 1.5 inches thick, short and flat. Ridges not present. Flesh white.
Pisang Pindik	A variety with very small fruits, yellow when ripe

Pisang Rajah	Varieties of the Rajah type are said to be varieties of <i>Musa sapientum</i> . A large fruit 5 to 6 inches long, produced in great quantity. The fruit is curved, 3-sided, yellow when ripe, with numerous black spots. Flesh stiff and of a reddish colour. This variety is recommended for making banana flour.
Pisang Rajah	A large and valuable fruit. Fruit 8 to 10 inches long, 3 inches in diameter. Skin yellow. Flesh when ripe, red, soft and sweet. Also called Pisang Toman.
Pisang Rasa	A fruit of medium size, good flavour and soft when ripe.
Pisang Rastali	A common market banana, being valuable for dessert and a good cropper. The fruit is about 4 inches long. Curved, with 5 undefined ridges. Skin yellow, with many black spots when fully ripe. The flesh is white, soft and has a pleasant, rather acid flavour.
Pisang Seribu	The bunches are borne on a long stalk, with a large number of fruits on each, becoming smaller in size towards the end of the stalk. The fruits are much curved.
Pisang Serendah	The dwarf banana. Fruit 3 to 4 inches long, skin green, flesh soft and sweet.
Pisang Susu	Fruit 4 inches long and 1.5 in. diameter. Skin yellow when ripe. Flesh reddish and watery.
Pisang Tandok	The horn banana. Only 2 or 3 combs in a bunch. A large fruit 8 to 12 inches long and 3 inches broad. Skin yellow, flesh golden-red when ripe, stiff. Sometimes called Pisang Panjang.
Pisang Udang	The prawn banana. Fruit 3 to 4 inches long, 1.5 inches diameter. When ripe, deep brown or red. The Malays do not often eat this fruit, as it is supposed to cause skin trouble.