

## Abstract

Banana (*Musa species*) is an important food crop worldwide (Robinson, 2007). About 70 million people in East and West Africa are estimated to derive more than one quarter of their food energy requirement from plantains (Rowe, 1998). Bananas are chiefly eaten raw as desert fruit, because in the ripe state they are sweet and easily digested. In their unripe state they are used as starchy fruits cooked before eating. They are usually boiled, fried or roasted. The unripe fruits are peeled, wrapped in banana leaves and steamed. They are then pounded into a porridge and eaten, the starchy dish being called Matoke`. Unripe or ripe fruits may sometimes be baked, roasted or fried. In Uganda and Tanzania a nutritious beer is also brewed from plantains and large quantities of this are consumed in the region.

Plantains and cooking bananas also form part of the daily diet of people in the Caribbean and Latin America .Apart from their major uses as desert fruits eaten raw, or as starchy fruits cooked before eating, only a relatively small proportion of bananas and plantains are processed to other products. Bananas and plantains do not lend themselves readily to processing because the lack of acidity makes preservation difficult and the year-round availability of fresh fruits also makes preservation unnecessary (Gowen, 1988). In addition there must be sufficient surplus fruits available as rejects from the fresh fruit market, steady supply of such fruits at low price maintained throughout the year, a viable alternative market because fresh fruits are available throughout the year, processed products must receive value-added return compared to fresh fruits because factory infrastructure and labor costs have to be covered. The different products which can be processed from bananas and plantains, and the different procedures involve canning, drying, freezing,extraction, drying or fermentation.