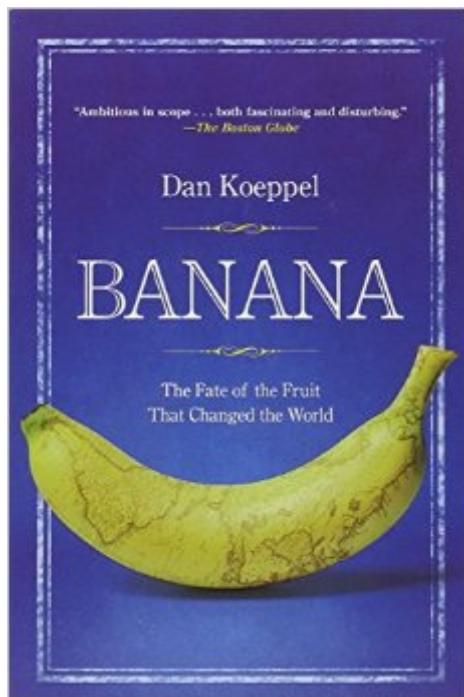


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Banana: The Fate Of The Fruit That Changed The World



Synopsis

Read Dan Koeppel's posts on the Penguin Blog. In the vein of the bestselling *Salt and Cod*, a gripping chronicle of the myth, mystery, and uncertain fate of the world's most popular fruit. In this fascinating and surprising exploration of the banana's history, cultural significance, and endangered future, award-winning journalist Dan Koeppel gives readers plenty of food for thought. Fast-paced and highly entertaining, *Banana* takes us from jungle to supermarket, from corporate boardrooms to kitchen tables around the world. We begin in the Garden of Eden "examining scholars' belief that Eve's 'apple' was actually a banana" and travel to early-twentieth-century Central America, where aptly named 'banana republics' rose and fell over the crop, while the companies now known as Chiquita and Dole conquered the marketplace. Koeppel then chronicles the banana's path to the present, ultimately "and most alarmingly" taking us to banana plantations across the globe that are being destroyed by a fast-moving blight, with no cure in sight "and to the high-tech labs where new bananas are literally being built in test tubes, in a race to save the world's most beloved fruit.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Yes, we have no bananas", goes the song, and even if you are not a devotee of tin pan alley ballads, you can probably make that catchy tune of 1923 sound in your head. It was written at a time when, yes, the world risked losing all its bananas, and yes, we ourselves might have no bananas in the future. If that means you won't have bananas to slice upon your cereal, OK, but for others in the world it means they simply won't have enough food. It isn't all a dire story, but in *Banana: The Fate*

of the Fruit That Changed the World_ (Hudson Street Press), Dan Koeppel, a popular nature writer, has covered a huge amount of history and biology, both of which are full of dark intimations of the worst aspects of human nature. "The _____ That Changed the World" subtitle is overused, but Koeppel makes it clear that this time it accurately applies. The banana, or the way humans have cultivated and used it, has raised and toppled nations, and still affects current geopolitical forces. Bananas have traveled around the world, starting from the wild varieties of South China, Southeast Asia, and India, giving hundreds of cultivated varieties. It is surprising that some have textures like apples, and some must be cooked, and many of them have tart or creamy flavors that American shoppers know nothing about. This is because we buy one banana, the Cavendish which has good properties to make it transportable and long-lasting, but that it forms almost all the world's commercially cultured bananas is its weakness, perhaps a dangerous one. We have been through this before; the Cavendish is not your grandparent's banana.

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