WN *Network*

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Staple foods. Cash crops
Meditation on bananas

Fabio Gomes writes: A starchy staple, a 'carbohydrate' item, a word in a song and a slang phrase, a tropical fruit in school lunch-boxes everywhere, a comfort food, when mushy made into a cake called a bread, when green fried as chips, when orange or red a rich source of vitamin A, a phallic symbol, the feature of an record cover signed by Andy Warhol, a cash crop that created the empire of United Fruit and the term 'banana republic'. Bananas are all of these things. In temperate countries, customers may think bananas are all the same. In tropical countries people are used to half a dozen or more varieties that look and taste different, including the Ouro below, brought to shops often fragrant soon after great bunches are cut off the palms where they grow. In nature all is different, when we look with attention.



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Editor's note
The purpose of *Network* is to remind us of the contribution of the arts, including photography, to our understanding of food, nutrition, health and well-being. It presents the art without any extensive comment – though we welcome follow-up letters for publication in *Feedback*. Please send contributions to wn.network@gmail.com