



“Banana Blossom”



Cooking Banana Blossom into a delicious vegetable

by

Dr Anne Perera

Food & Nutrition Adviser, SIDO Arusha, Tanzania.

Volunteer Service Abroad (New Zealand)

Phone: +255 (0)762575554

anneperera.nz@gmail.com

www.anneperera.co.nz

Introduction

Although it was not on the programme of Training of Trainers (ToT) that we did in Arusha, Tanzania from 17 - 22 January 2011, I offered to demonstrate how to cook

“Banana Blossom”

It was one of those things that fitted into
“I don’t know that I don’t know”
category of things.....a new learning experience!

I would like to share that experience with as many people as possible with the hope that at least some of them will be open to the idea and will acquire a taste for this product.

There is a great potential for this product in Tanzania as bananas grow extremely well and the fruit is consumed in both ripe and unripe forms by the population.

So... What do they do to the “Banana Blossom?”

Throw away or feed to animals.

Now you can try including it in your family menu. It is not only delicious but also nutritious.

Nutritional Benefits of Banana Blossom

Banana blossom is an excellent source of fibre in the human diet. The benefits of having fibre in the diet are well documented in nutritional and medical literature. Banana blossom is a rich source of other nutrients and antioxidants which have several health benefits. A ‘google’ search on nutritional value of banana blossom will lead you to sources of information on the nutritional and health benefits of banana blossom.

A research paper by Sheng et al in African Journal of Biotechnology Vol 9(25) pp 3888-3895 21 June 2010 says “Banana flower has tremendous nutritional value.”

Nutrient Composition of Banana Blossom Of the cultivar Paradisiaca (Sheng et al 2010)



Composition in Terms of 100 grams,

Food Energy	51 Kcals
Protein	1.6 g
Fat	0.6 g
Carbohydrate, total (incl. fiber)	9.9 g
Fiber	5.7 g
Ash	1,2 g
Calcium	56.0 mg
Phosphorus	73,3mg
Iron	56.4mg
Copper	13.0mg
Potassium	553.3mg
Magnesium	48.7mg
Vitamin E (mg/kg)	1.07mg

“The results indicate that banana flowers are good source of minerals such as magnesium, iron and copper. It contains high quality protein because of its well balanced essential amino acid in addition to high dietary fibre and flavonoid concentrations.

A Recipe of Banana Blossom (there are many more)

Ingredients:

- 1 large banana blossom
- [salt](#) water (2 table spoons salt in a litre of water)
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 large [onion](#), sliced
- Chives or any other green vegetable
- 2 cloves [garlic](#), finely chopped
- Spices of your choice such as Masala / Curry Powder
- 2 medium [tomato](#), diced
- 2 tablespoons [vinegar](#) (optional)
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup thick [coconut milk](#) (optional)

Directions:

1. Discard tough outer layers and slice the blossom **thinly**, first cutting it in two lengthways if it is large.
2. Put the slices in a bowl of salt water, rubbing it well to reduce the browning
3. Leave for 10-15 minutes, squeeze out juices, rinse under cold water and squeeze dry.
4. Heat oil in a wok or frying pan and saute onion and garlic until golden brown.
5. Add the spices and mix well to develop aroma
6. Add banana blossom and add tomato, stir for 3 minutes.
7. Mix in the chopped chives or other green vegetable...
8. Add vinegar and bring to the boil.
9. Simmer for 5 minutes.
10. Taste and add salt and pepper as required.
11. Cook until blossom is tender, then stir in coconut milk and remove from heat.
12. Serve with rice or ugali, bread or chapatti.

Raw Material



We received one from Epiphania and plucked extra blossoms from Mama Makundi's garden- We also got some onion leaves / chives from her garden to garnish our new product during ToT.



Remove the outer layers or petals of the banana blossom.

Have salt water ready before starting to cut the blossom into very thin slices. Immediately add to salt water and keep it immersed.



Squeeze in salt water to remove the browning. Discard the brown liquid before cooking the dry slices of banana blossom.



Chop onion, tomato and chives or green vegetables and keep them separately.

Heat oil in a wok or frying pan and saute garlic and onion until golden brown. Add the spices and mix well to develop aroma.



Add banana blossom and start to cook while stirring in well.



Then add tomato and mix well.



On a side start cooking the chopped onion leaves / chives / green vegetable. These give a nice green colour along with the reddish colour of tomato pieces.



Add vinegar and bring to the boil. Simmer for 5 minutes.
Cook until blossom is tender, then stir in coconut milk.



Taste and add salt and pepper as required.



Serve with rice or ugali, bread or chapatti.





At the ToT they all wanted to taste and I was interested in receiving feedback... not only from them but also those who did not know what it was.....



The feedback was positive and the samples disappeared, which was a good sign. They thought it would go well with ugali.....



An instruction booklet on cooking of Banana Blossom into a delicious vegetable to accompany rice, ugali, bread or chapatti.....→

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