



Go Bananas provides an interesting snapshot into the journey of a banana; helping learners to appreciate where our food comes from and develop a range of skills including using maps and images, inference, critical thinking and discussion. This creative cross-curricular resource could be used at any time of the year but also provides an ideal starting point for learning, thinking and taking action in schools during Fairtrade Fortnight or Harvest time.



Image info: This is a banana farm. You can see the baby banana plants being watered at the front of the image, and the ones in the background are fully grown. Once the plant is fully grown, it flowers and then the bananas appear. It takes about a year for banana plants to grow, flower and produce bananas. Each banana plant only produces one big 'bunch' of bananas and it then dies. However, whilst it's growing, the next banana plant is already growing next to it. Many banana farmers call this the 'daughter' of the banana plant.

Photo credit: Eduardo Martino

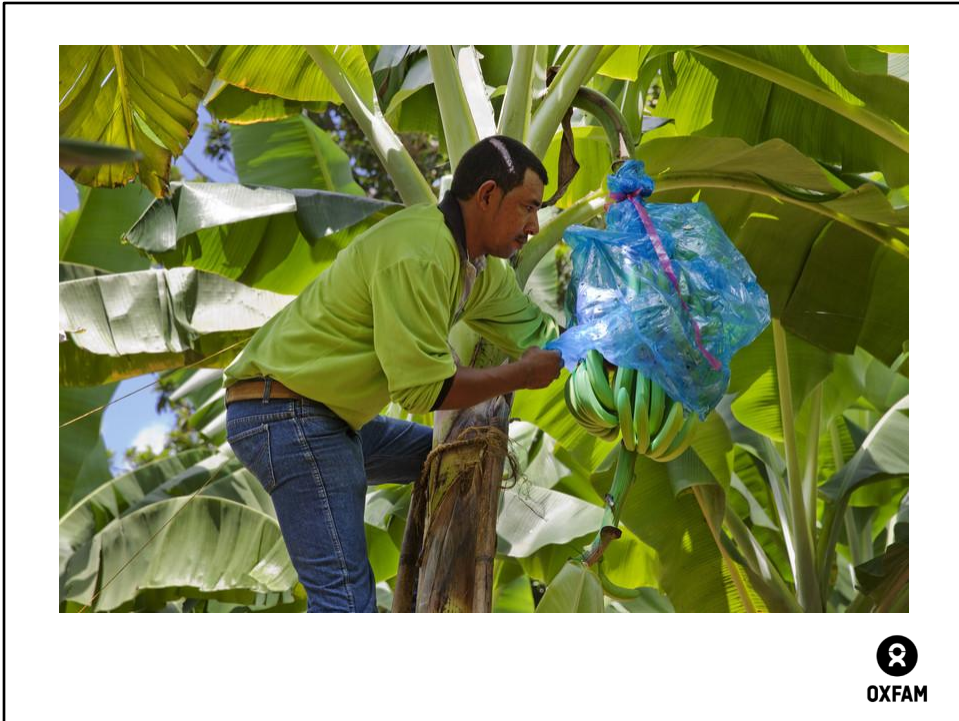


Image info: Once the bananas start growing, the farmer puts a blue bag over the bananas to protect them from pests. Fairtrade farmers have to recycle their blue bags and the farmers say that local rivers are much cleaner since they started doing this.

Photo credit: Eduardo Martino



Image info: When they are ready, the bananas are cut down and carried to the washing and packing room. Bananas are harvested when they are still green. The farmers have to be very strong to carry the heavy bunches, each of which might have 50 bananas on it!

Photo credit: Eduardo Martino

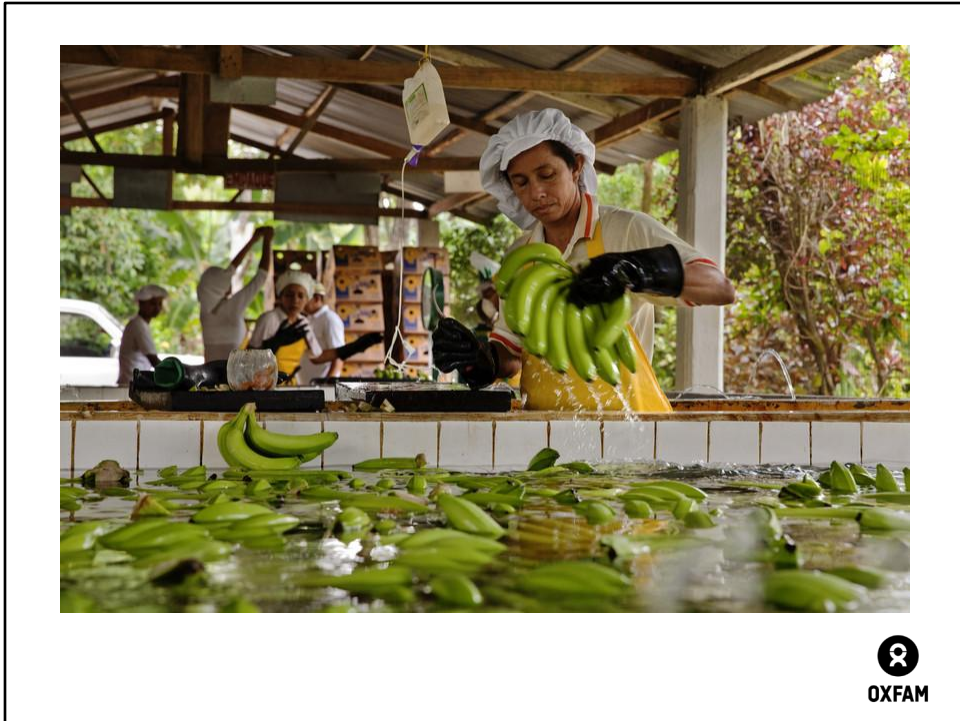


Image info: The bananas are cut into smaller bunches and carefully washed to make sure they are completely clean.

Photo credit: Eduardo Martino



Image info: A FAIRTRADE Mark sticker is added to each bunch of bananas.

Photo credit: Eduardo Martino

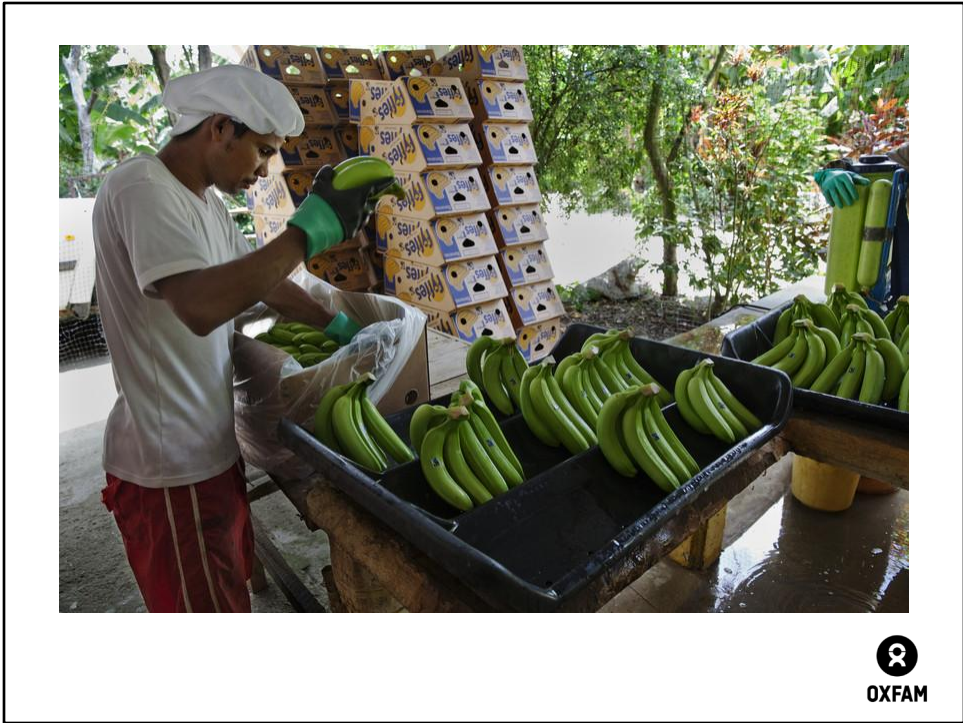


Image info: The bananas are packed carefully into boxes to make sure that they don't bruise or get damaged during their long journey to the UK.

Photo credit: Eduardo Martino

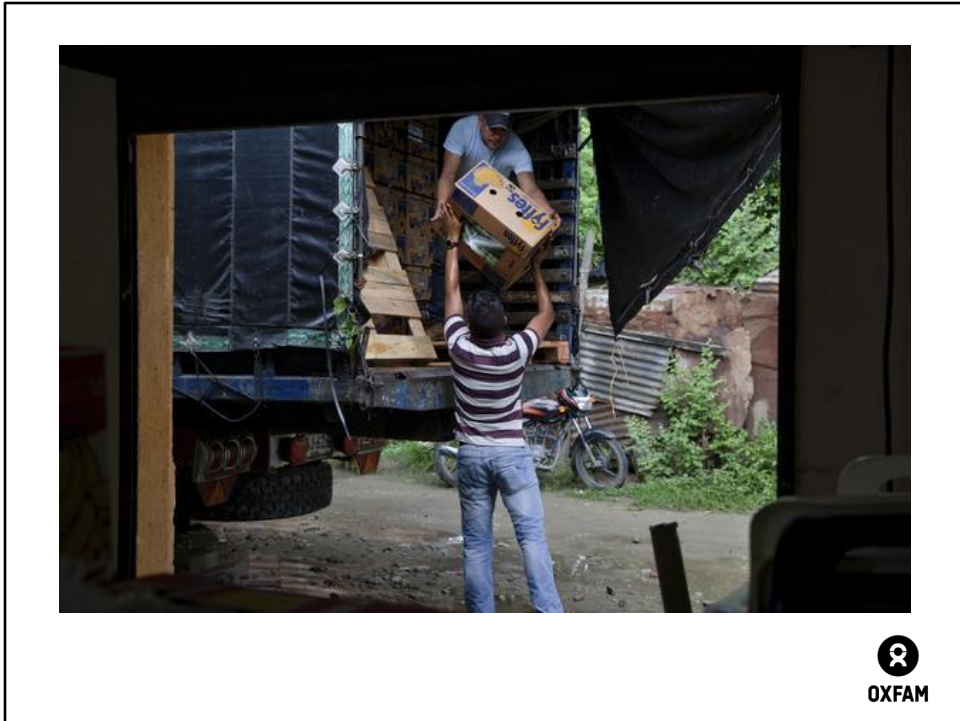


Image info: The boxes of bananas are lifted one by one into a lorry. The lorry visits lots of different farms once a week to collect boxes of bananas from each farmer.

Photo credit: Eduardo Martino

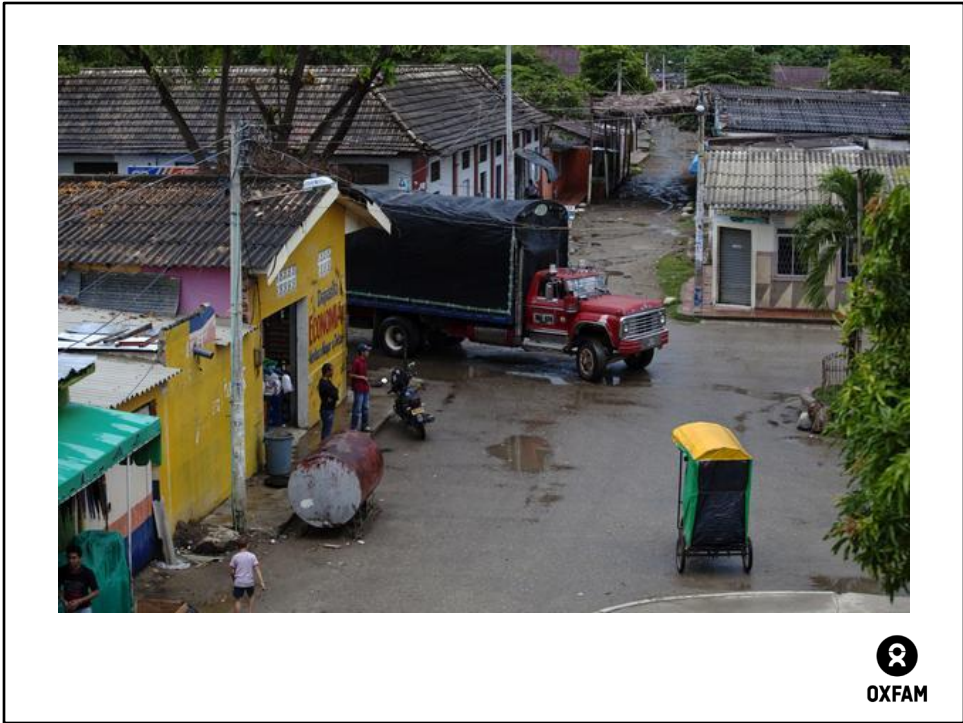


Image info: Full of bananas, the lorry is driven through the villages towards the port.

Photo credit: Eduardo Martino

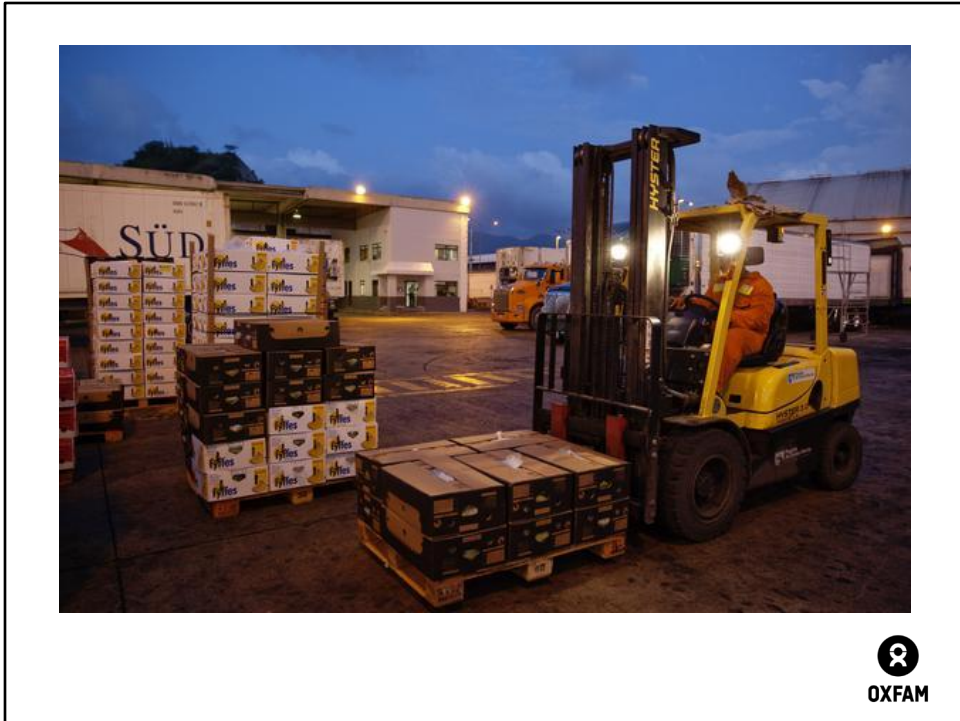


Image info: At the port, the boxes of bananas are inspected before being loaded into shipping containers. The containers are refrigerated to make sure that the bananas don't ripen before they reach the UK.

Photo credit: Eduardo Martino

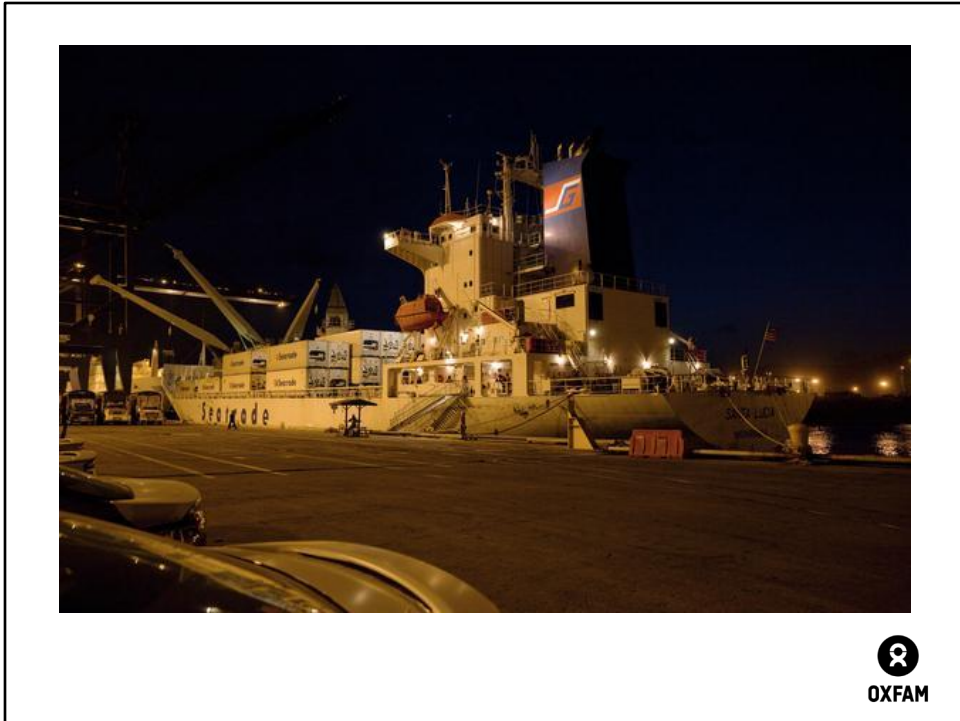


Image info: The containers of bananas are loaded onto a ship that travels thousands of miles across the ocean to the UK.

Photo credit: Eduardo Martino



Image info: When they arrive in the UK, the bananas go to a special ripening room where they gradually turn yellow. Once the bananas are ripe, they are taken to the supermarket by lorry.

Photo credit: Fairtrade Foundation



Image info: Finally the bananas are put on sale in the supermarket.

Photo credit: @Kate Fishpool

Mapping bananas

Here are some of the countries where the bananas we eat are grown. Try and mark these countries on your world map.

Ghana Colombia
Windward Islands Peru
Dominican Republic Costa Rica
Côte d'Ivoire Belize



Put them in order

Côte d'Ivoire	3,102 miles
Ghana	3,176 miles
Windward Islands	4,278 miles
Dominican Republic	4,362 miles
Belize	5,234 miles
Colombia	5,283 miles
Costa Rica	5,424 miles
Peru	6,321 miles



Data source: www.foodmiles.com/

Note: Distances are as the crow flies and assume that the bananas have come from the capital of the country and are travelling to London in the UK.

What do you remember?



- 1) Describe one stage in the journey of a banana, from being grown in Colombia to being sold in a supermarket in the UK.
- 2) Name a country where the bananas that we eat in the UK are grown.
- 3) What sort of climate is best for growing bananas?
- 4) Can you guess how many bananas we eat in the UK every year?



Answers

- 1) The stages of the journey of a banana include:
 - Growing the banana plants. This needs a warm, sunny and moist climate. Once the bunches of bananas appear, they are covered in blue plastic bags to protect them from pests.
 - Harvesting the bananas.
 - Cutting the bananas into smaller bunches and carefully washing them.
 - Adding a FAIRTRADE Mark sticker to each bunch of bananas.
 - Carefully packing the bananas into boxes.
 - Transporting the bananas by lorry from the farms to the port.
 - Inspecting the bananas at the port before loading them into refrigerated shipping containers.
 - Transporting the bananas to the UK by ship.
 - Putting the bananas in a special ripening room after they arrive in the UK, where they gradually turn yellow.
 - Transporting the bananas to the supermarket by lorry.
 - Selling the bananas in the supermarket.

2) Countries include: Ghana, Colombia, Windward Islands, Peru, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire and Belize.

3) We eat over 5 billion bananas in the UK each year, that's more than 13 million bananas every day!*

***Data source:** Fairtrade Foundation, www.fairtrade.org.uk/

Image source: Fairtrade Foundation



Image source: Fairtrade Foundation