

Did You Know?

They grow bananas in Iceland



You're kidding, right?

Okay, we'll admit Iceland, located just south of the Arctic Circle, doesn't make most people think of bananas. Bananas like heat – and Iceland is cold, right?

Hot rocks

Right. But Iceland sits at a point called the Icelandic Hotspot, on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge -- the line between the Eurasian and the North American tectonic plates. Those two tectonic plates are slowly pulling apart. As they do, they liberate heat from the Earth's mantle -- sometimes dramatically, like when the Eyjafjallajökull ([come on, you can say it](#)) volcano erupted in 2010 and caused havoc for air travellers. Normally the heat comes up in geysers (geyser is an Icelandic word!), hot springs, and as steady radiant heat that warms the ground.

Cheap heat

Icelanders use that natural warmth rising from deep in the Earth to heat their homes and water. Geothermal energy is cheap, and since the 1920s they have also been using it to heat greenhouses where they grow vegetables, flowers, and fruit.

Including bananas.



Bananas in an Iceland greenhouse

Photo Alistair Lockyer

[Take a tour of a banana greenhouse at Hveragerði, Iceland](#)

English translation of Icelandic text in video

Bananahus was built in 1950 to produce bananas. It now houses about one hundred species of tropical plants including palms, cacti, and fruit-bearing plants. These include oranges, lemons, figs, coffee bushes, and of course banana plants.

The flowers grown in Bananahus are used to teach flower-arranging.

Bananas are not trees but herbaceous plants. Each plant bears fruit only once and is cut down after the harvest. A new plant takes about two years to bear fruit. Each produces about 120 bananas.