

The Banana Controversy

Human beings are pretty gullible. We tend to believe what we are told, especially if we hear it again and again. Take for instance the shape of the first banana. Was it similar to the shape of a modern banana, or was it more like the shape of a potato, as seen in this picture of a modern wild banana?



Archaeological evidence suggests that the banana goes back as far as 8,000 years. So what was its shape? Was it short and fat, like a potato, or was it more like the shape of the modern banana?

The truth is, we don't know, because we don't have 8,000 year-old pictures. But we can get a clue with a little study. We know that the color was different: "These historical bananas were not the sweet yellow banana we know today, but the red and green cooking variety (see below pictures), now usually referred to as plantains to distinguish them from the sweet type."



Notice the shape of these "historical bananas." They are much closer to the shape of modern bananas rather than a potato shape. We can get another clue as to the shape of the original banana by looking at the origin of the word "banana." It comes from the name *banan*, which is Arabic for "finger."



So when the anonymous producer of "the famous -- the Atheist's Nightmare!" video chose a picture of the original banana to make his point, did he choose one that looked like the "historical" bananas and the shape of a human finger? Of course not. He instead picked a picture of the modern wild banana. And then he cleverly morphed the modern wild banana into the shape of a modern banana...and the gullible believed him.

In trying to make me look like a fool, Mr. Anonymous gave me an international platform for my message. I hope that one day he will contact me so that I can buy him lunch and thank him personally. Perhaps we will split a banana-split.

"This photograph shows seed-packed fruit of *Musa balbisiana*, one of the ancestors of the edible bananas." (<http://xmb.stuffucanuse.com/xmb/viewthread.php?tid=4464>)

Notes:

1. "Recent archaeological and palaeoenvironmental evidence at Kuk Swamp in the Western Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea suggests that banana cultivation there goes back to at least 5000 BC, and possibly goes back to 8000 BC."
2. <http://www.experiencefestival.com/a/Banana - History/id/1286075>
<http://homecooking.about.com/od/foodhistory/a/bananahistory.htm>

