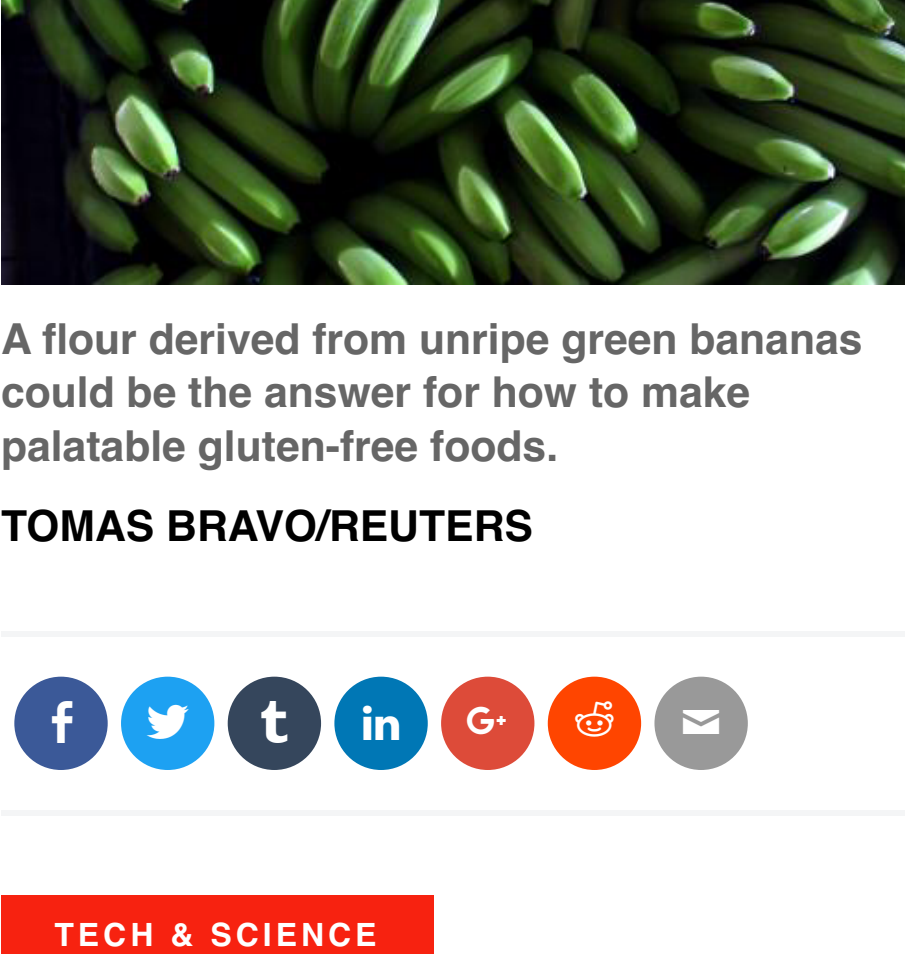


# GLUTEN-FREE BAKING: TRY GREEN BANANA FLOUR

BY **JESSICA FIRGER** ON 9/14/17 AT 4:46 PM



A flour derived from unripe green bananas could be the answer for how to make palatable gluten-free foods.

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TECH & SCIENCE

GLUTEN-FREE COOKINGBANANAS

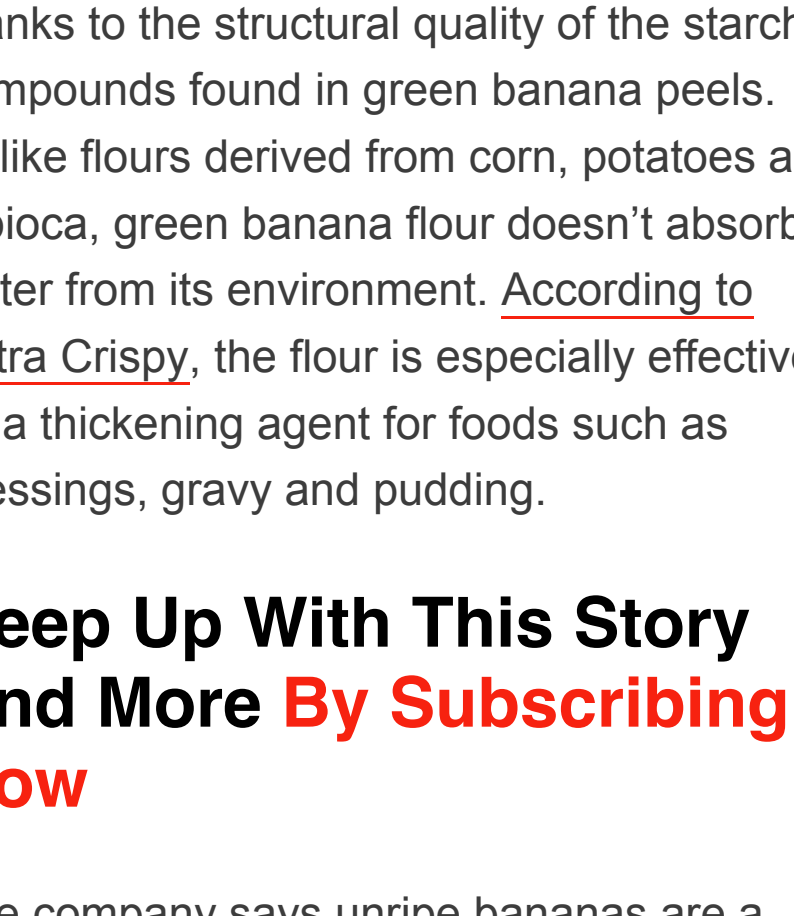
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The food industry is constantly developing palatable products that allow people with gluten and wheat allergies to enjoy breads, baked goods, pastas and other foods that require flour to produce. The problem is that many flour substitutes used in these items don't deliver the desired texture. Muffins baked with gluten-free flour may end up moonlighting as paperweights. The bowl of spaghetti made from rice flour turns into a giant pile of mush. And good luck finding a tasty baguette produced from potato and tapioca.

A North Carolina–based startup food technology company, International Agriculture Group (IAG), has introduced an intriguing new stand-in for flour substitutes. And the food innovation is produced from a simple, humble fruit: NuBana is a flour made from unripe green bananas.

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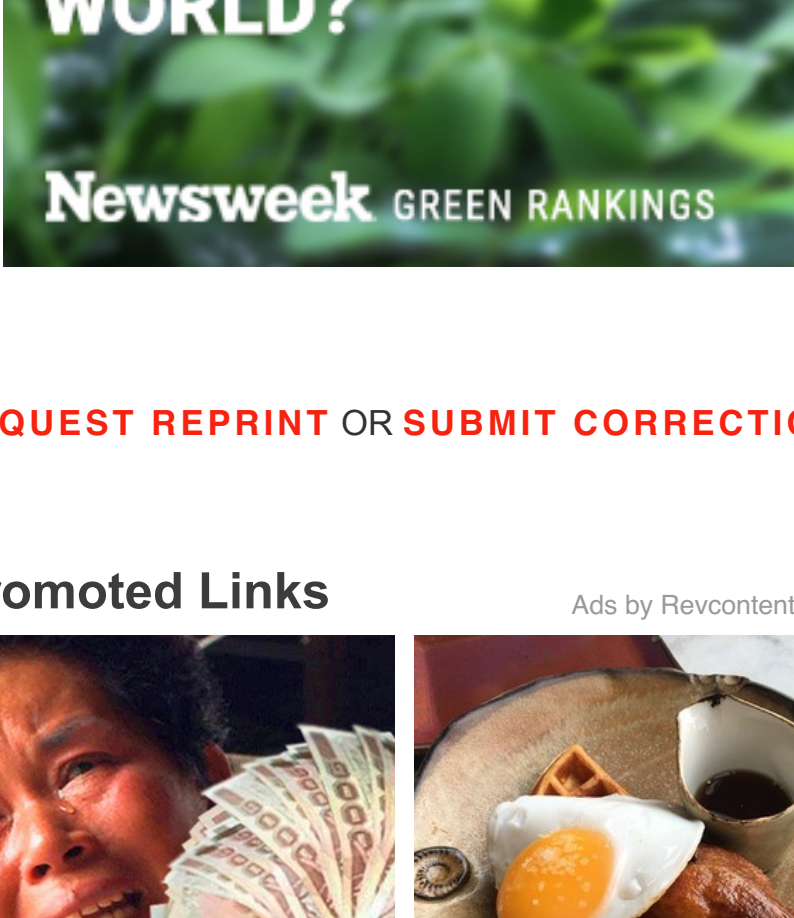


According to IAG, green bananas produce a “neutral-tasting fruit flour.” The company says the flour can be used to make breads and other products, and with a limited amount of binders these products are likely to have a mouthfeel similar to those made using standard flour. The desired chewy texture is thanks to the structural quality of the starch compounds found in green banana peels. Unlike flours derived from corn, potatoes and tapioca, green banana flour doesn't absorb water from its environment. According to Extra Crispy, the flour is especially effective as a thickening agent for foods such as dressings, gravy and pudding.

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The company says unripe bananas are a good source of insoluble dietary fiber known as resistant starch. Resistant starch is any type of starch that is not fully processed by the upper gastrointestinal tract, which means it makes a beeline to the large bowel much faster and is therefore good for promoting digestive regularity. When gut bacteria ferments undigested fibers, it produces a byproduct of short-chain fatty acids, which provide the main source of energy to cells that line the colon. That means short-chain fatty acids are essential to digestive health.

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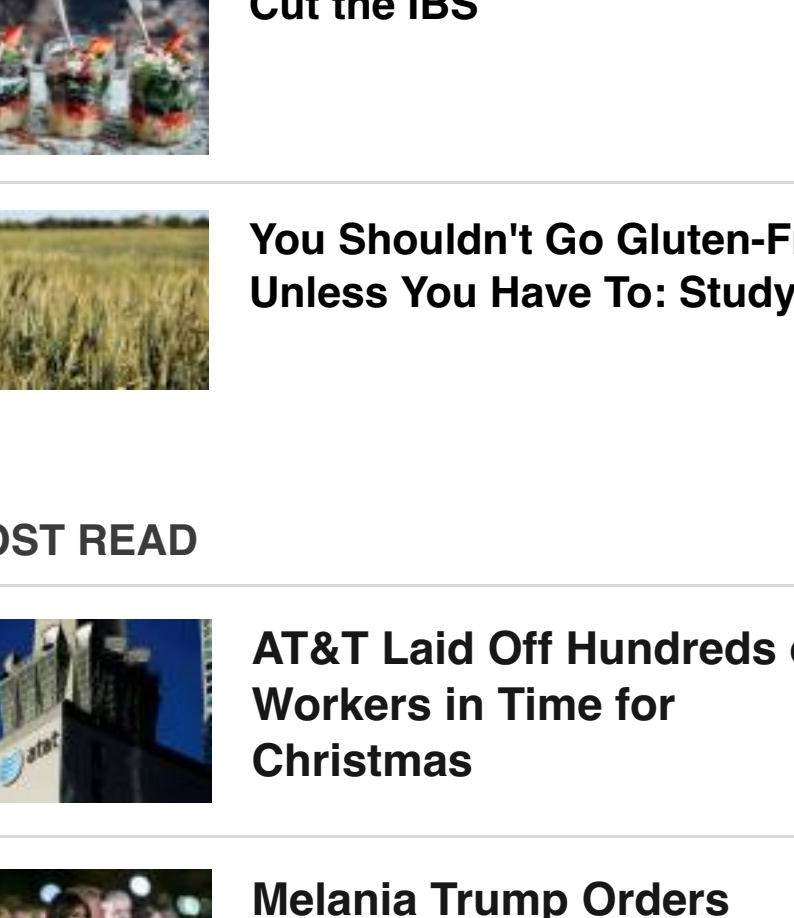


The existing research on short-chain fatty acids suggests that green banana flour may also be useful as a nutritional and dietary supplement, due to its high level of potassium and magnesium.

Green banana flour isn't an entirely new innovation. It's been used for ages in Haiti, Jamaica and countries in West Africa and Central America as a cheaper substitute for standard flour. In 2012, green banana flour all but rescued Uganda's agriculture industry. A government-funded pilot program known as the Presidential Initiative for Banana Industrial Development ventured to support farmers by developing *matookes*—large, green cooking bananas—into a gluten-free flour for global export.

According to the International Agriculture Group, up to 20 percent of bananas grown for the commercial market are destroyed or composted because they do not meet standards of shape and size. Producing flour could be a way to cut down on waste.

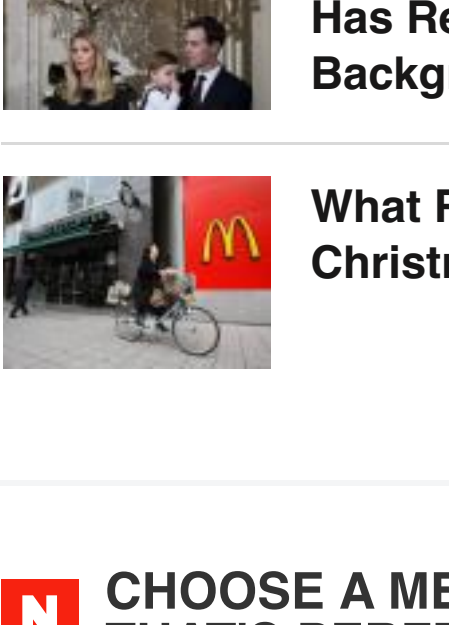
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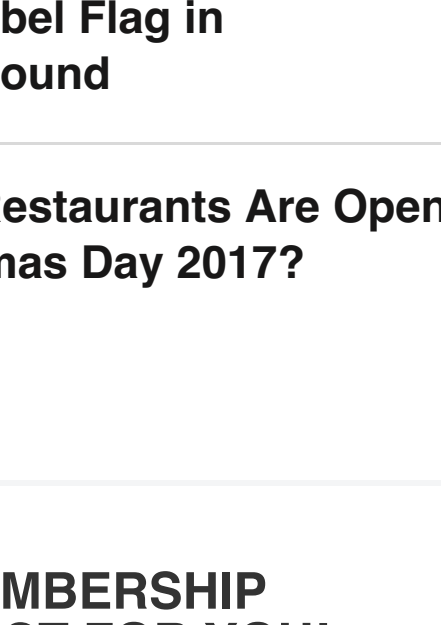
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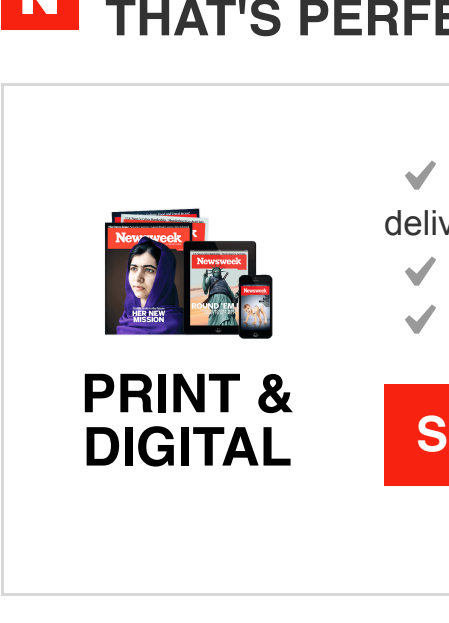
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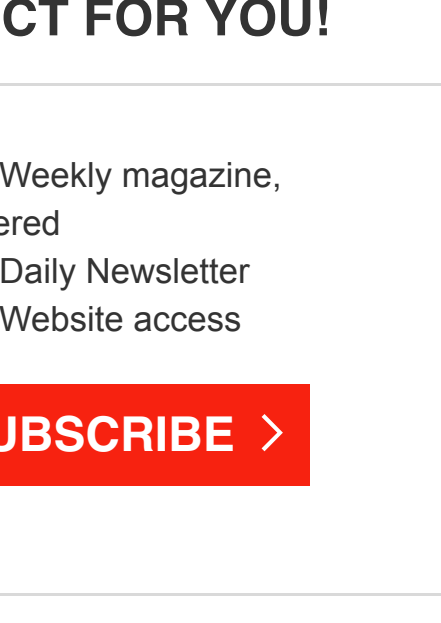
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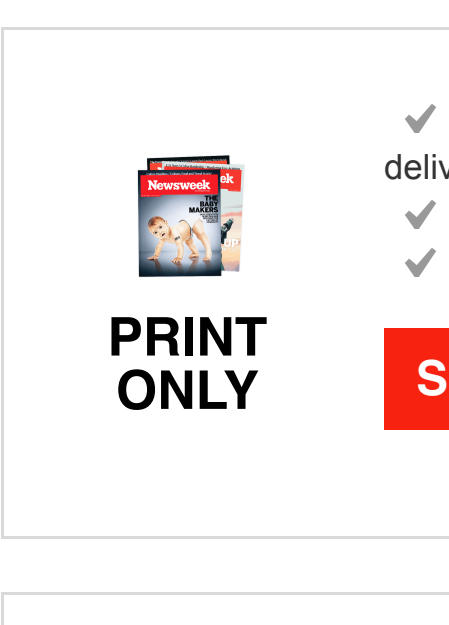
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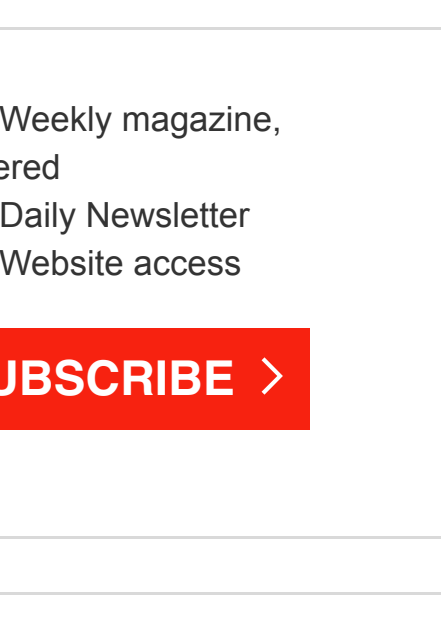
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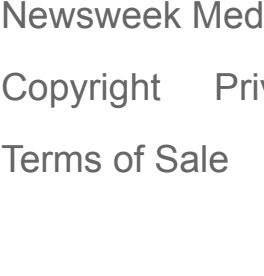
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