

# ETHNOBOTANICAL COMPARISON OF BANANA AND ENSET USE IN AFRICA

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In Africa two crops from the banana family (Musaceae) are cultivated as main regional food staples: banana (*Musa* spp.) in the Great Lakes region of East Africa and enset (*Ensete ventricosum*) in the southern highlands of Ethiopia. This ethnobotanical study compares uses of these important food staples in their respective regions. Processing methods, such as fermentation and mashing, are unique to each crop, and several cooking methods are similar to those of various root crops. Further, almost the entire plant of each crop is used for many purposes. The leaves and pseudostems, which are readily available and easy to process, are particularly important in material culture, and both banana and enset plants are exploited for a wide range of uses.

**Keywords:** Africa, Banana, Enset, Food, Utilization