

Eat a Bat Fruit Salad

Fruit bats play a role in your ability to eat fruits from around the world, such as bananas, mangoes, and figs. Bats not only pollinate fruit trees but also spread their seeds—sometimes by sucking the juice from the fruit and spitting what’s left onto the forest floor, including the seeds. These seeds can eventually grow into new trees that produce fruit of their own. By pollinating plants and dispersing seeds, bats help keep forests healthy and grocery stores full of delicious fruits.

ADULT SUPERVISION REQUIRED

INGREDIENTS

-  Banana
-  Mango
-  Peach
-  Dried dates (a handful)
-  Fresh or dried figs (a handful)

UTENSILS

-  Knife
-  Cutting board
-  Large plate or serving platter
-  Forks and small plates for sharing

Serves 3 to 4

Begin by rinsing your selection of bat-pollinated fruits with tap water. Peel the banana and slice it into 1-inch chunks on top of a cutting board. Place the banana slices on a large plate or serving platter.

Slice the mango in half, starting slightly right or left of the center to avoid the seed in the middle. Ask an adult to watch and/or help. Set the smaller half aside. Take the larger half and slice off a 1-inch strip from the middle, which should contain the seed. Discard the piece of mango with the seed. Peel the skin away from each mango half, then slice the flesh into strips and place them on the serving platter.

Cut into the peach until you hit the seed in the middle. Slice in a circle so one half of the peach separates from the seed. Remove the seed and the tough parts that surround it. Cut the peach into slices and place the slices on the serving platter.

Add some dried dates and a handful of figs to your serving platter. Hand out some forks and serve some of each food item onto smaller plates. Explain the role that bats play in their ecosystems as pollinators and as seed dispersers to everyone who shares your snack.

Extra Credit

Bats help pollinate many other types of fruits and nuts, including papaya, agave, dragon fruit, guava, durian, cashews, and even cocoa beans, from which we get chocolate. Punch up your fruit platter by adding some of these tasty treats.