

QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF COMMERCIAL DRIED BANANA PRODUCTS CONSUMED IN SULTANATE OF OMAN

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The banana has a long-standing cultural history in Sultanate of Oman cultivated in many of the coastal areas including AlBatinah and Dhofar governorates. It is considered one of Oman's most popular fruit due to both taste preferences within society and nutritional quality of the products. The production of banana in Oman was estimated to 18,432 ton in 2023 (MAF, 2024). This study aims to assess the microbiological, physicochemical, and visual quality of commercial dried banana products available in Oman market. The study had used four of the commercially available dried bananas purchased from the local market in AlSeeb. The study applies AOAC method for chemical analysis and ISO17025 methods for microbial enumeration. The study found that there is a significant difference in terms of total microbial counts, total fungal counts, total *Enterobacteriaceae* counts as well as physicochemical properties of the commercial dried banana products consumed in Oman using Kruskal Wallis ($p < 0.05$). All study samples complied to food safety regulatory standards in Oman. The study is useful in assessing the safety and conformity scientific assessment of the dried banana products consumed in Oman as well as the best possible drying kinetics to maintain the quality attributes of the products on shelf.

Keywords: Banana, Drying, Microbial, Physicochemical, Compliance, Commercial, Oman