



national science week 2019

Indika Fernando

This Banana is too Ugly for Me!

Food Scientist, Logistics Engineer

**Australian Maritime College,
University of Tasmania**

Hey, would you like to have an ugly banana for dessert? Of course not! Everybody likes nice looking fruits but sometimes you can only find ugly bananas at the supermarket. Some people don't mind eating ugly bananas, however many of these ugly bananas end up in the garbage bin when we don't eat them. My project is focused on making fruits look better in the supermarkets and taste better when you eat them.



Some tropical fruits like bananas travel thousands of miles across Australia before they land on the supermarket shelves, and many things happen to them between the farm-gate and the retail store. For example, vibration from the trucks can cause bananas to be damaged, discolored, squashed or even break-off from the clusters. These damages cost millions of dollars to the growers and retailers. The worst out of all is that unconsumed food waste affect a whole lot of other issues such as landfill and environmental pollution. In my project I have used several methods to identify what is causing damage to bananas during post-harvest transport and handling, which means I can make changes and recommendations to improve the fruit quality and minimize wastage.

I have been always fascinated by solving real-world problems which was why I chose to work on this project. I also like multi-disciplinary work, which means I can learn and apply knowledge from different areas to resolve a problem. I get to study food science, agriculture, transport, logistics and engineering! I was not an expert in all these fields when I started, but I am certain that these skills will help me in the future, to work towards solving other real-world problems, like the curious case of 'the ugly banana'.

For more information about my work: www.utas.edu.au/tia/research/research-projects/projects/bumpy-road-to-perfect-fruit