

Infographic: 5 popular foods genetically modified by humans—before GMOs

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to eat a completely “natural” diet? Well, for starters, you wouldn’t be able to eat any of the crops developed through conventional breeding methods. That means virtually every fruit and vegetable in your local supermarket, because they have been genetically modified over centuries and millennia by humans selectively breeding for traits such as taste, yield, resistance to pests, durability, duration of life cycle, and more. Over time, and lots of trial and error, this meticulous process has transformed wild plants into the foods we now know as “watermelon,” “bananas,” “corn,” and so on. But what did these common fruits and vegetables look like in their wild, “natural” state? Check out the helpful infographic below, which is based on a 2014 Genetic Literacy Project [graphic](#). [Modern genetic engineering can do this work much more quickly, and more precisely.]

5 COMMON FOODS BEFORE AND AFTER HUMANS DOMESTICATED THEM

Wild watermelon

Judging by paintings of the fruit dating to the 17th century, watermelons may have once had seeds arranged in **swirly geometric patterns**.



Modern watermelon

Over time, humans have bred watermelons to have a **bright red**, juicy interior. The **seeds are often removed** by preventing the plants from being fertilized by pollination.



Wild banana

The first bananas may have been cultivated at least **7,000 years ago** in what is now Papua New Guinea, and were **stocky and hard**, with large, tough **seeds** throughout the fruit's interior.



Modern banana

Today's tastier bananas are **hybrids** of two wild banana varieties, **Musa acuminata** and **Musa balbisiana**.



Wild eggplant

Eggplants once came in a wide array of shapes and colors, from **blue to yellow**, and some were **round** rather than oblong. Primitive eggplant varieties had a **spine** where the modern plant's stem connects to its flowers.



Modern eggplant

Selective breeding has made the **spine disappear** and left us with the **oblong purple** vegetable we're familiar with.



Wild carrot

The first carrots were likely cultivated around the 10th century in Asia Minor and were either **white or purple** with thin, forked roots and a **strong flavor**.



Modern carrot

Carrots today are large, **bright orange**, and tasty.



Wild corn

One of the most standout examples of selective breeding is North American sweet corn, which was bred from the barely edible **teosinte plant**. Natural corn was first domesticated around 7,000 BC and was thought to have been as **dry as a raw potato**.



Modern corn

The corn we eat now is **1,000 times bigger** and much easier to grow and peel. A majority of these changes started taking shape after the 15th century, when **European settlers** started farming it.



The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [What 5 popular fruits and veggies looked like before — and after — we domesticated them](#)