

## Middle Basin

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From an aerial view, if you could have looked down on Central America 100 years ago, surprisingly, there were no bananas. Bananas did not exist here. From this, a story of geopolitics in the Sixaola River Basin emerges. The United Fruit Company changed their name to Chiquita, and their presence remains across the basin. The famous oval blue and yellow label can be seen on the sides of shipping trucks crossing the bridge, overtop the border—the transboundary Sixaola River between Costa Rica and Panamá.



### **BANANA FIELDS, THE MIDDLE BASIN, THE SIXAOLA RIVER BASIN**

Lining the lower valley roads are thousands of square feet of processing plants with the famous signage at the front gates. “Chiquita” is the very last noticeable thing seen at the port, sending thousands of tons of banana directly to Europe. Supporting the economies of trade of the indigenous community territories, and of Costa Rica and Panamá, the

banana has become a part of the local residents' story, influencing their lives and livelihoods.

But what helps can also hurt. The emergence story of the banana is a robust politick that has persisted alongside the cultural values of the Sixaola River Basin residents. Residents existed long before the banana in this region. How residents identify culturally and spiritually with their waters, with their land and with their trees has held strong over time. But to say that the banana has had no influence on river basin culture and basin residents would be naïve.

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This text is an excerpt from *"Navigating Cultural Currents: The Sixaola River Basin Story, that can be found here:*  
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