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Two men transport freshly harvested stalks of bananas in an oxcart on the road from Nha Trang to Dalat. Visible behind them is a crowded passenger bus with boxes and baskets of cargo tied on the roof of the bus. The driver's assistant, who negotiates with passengers and collects fares, usually rides standing at the back of the bus.

In many parts of Asia, especially in rural areas, animal-powered and motor traffic share the same roads. Open-backed and slat-sided buses such as the one shown here usually serve medium distance links between towns. Passengers crowd together inside, while luggage, produce, and sometimes even livestock are tied on the roof of the bus. Rural farmers often move their harvests to regional markets in such buses.

Bananas are native to Southeast Asia and the Pacific, and are grown there in hundreds of varieties. Some kinds are harvest unripe for cooking as a vegetable, while others are harvested ripe for eating raw as a sweet fruit snack.



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