

## Title:

Culinary Traditions Of The Caribbean Islands

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## Summary:

Authentic Caribbean cuisine is truly an excellent representation of all the cultural influences the Caribbean Islands have experienced since Christopher Columbus' landing in the late 1400's. With a fine mixture of French Island and African recipes, Caribbean cuisine is widely prepared and enjoyed by people of all nationalities, in many areas of the United States and the world.

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## Keywords:

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## Article Body:

Authentic Caribbean cuisine is truly an excellent representation of all the cultural influences the Caribbean Islands have experienced since Christopher Columbus' landing in the late 1400's. With a fine mixture of French Island and African recipes, Caribbean cuisine is widely prepared and enjoyed by people of all nationalities, in many areas of the United States and the world.

Caribbean food and culture was forever changed when the European traders brought African slaves into the region. The slaves ate mostly the scrap leftovers of the slave owners, so not unlike the slaves in the United States they had to make do with what they had. This was the birth of the more contemporary Caribbean Cuisine. The African slaves blended the knowledge of spices and vegetables they had brought from their homeland and incorporated them with the precious fruits and vegetables of the Caribbean Islands, as well as other staples to be found in the area. This created many one-of-a-kind dishes, because many of the produce on the islands at the time was too fragile to make it through the exportation process. Fruits most often found in Caribbean cuisine include yams, yucca, mangos and papaya fruits. Among the produce that is too fragile to be exported is the tamarind fruit and plantains (a fruit grown on a tree that is similar to the banana).

Caribbean food, while spicy, is one of the healthier options among culinary

traditions from different regions. As discussed, the lush Caribbean islands are chock full of vegetables and fruits for healthy living. In addition to that, America introduced beans, corn, chile peppers, potatoes and tomatoes to the islands, broadening their palate.

When slavery was abolished on the islands, slave owners had to look else where for help. Bringing in labor from India and China, different types of dishes using rice or curry were introduced and blended into mainstream Caribbean cuisine. This is how the Caribbean favorite curry goat was born.

The Caribbean islands are in a prime location for one of their specialties-- seafood. Salted codfish is a specialty on the Caribbean islands. It is usually served in a salad or stew, or at breakfast in scrambled eggs. Lobster, sea turtle, shrimp, crab, and sea urchins are also specialties on the islands. They are used to make such exotic, spicy Caribbean dishes as Antillean crab pilaf and curried coconut shrimp.

Desserts are an integral part of the Caribbean culinary experience. Sugar cane is one of the area's chief products, so there are always an abundance of cakes, pies, and dumplings. Caribbean natives incorporate dessert into almost every meal. At Caribbean restaurants you may notice the emphasis they put on their desserts; in their culture, dessert is just as important as the main course.

Caribbean cuisine incorporates flavors from all of the different cultures that have ever graced the shores of the islands, from Africa to China to India. The flavoring in Caribbean cuisine is intense and rich, strikingly similar African and Creole food.