Promoting your Destination Through Gastronomic Tourism!

Editorial

The Team of the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) is pleased to present our 14th Edition of ‘IN THE ZONE’ focusing on “Promoting your Destination through Gastronomic Tourism”.

Food is a necessity and a means of survival however it is also an important component of the tourist experience. Tourists consume in order to discover the destination and the intrinsic environments of the visited region. In fact, food and drink have a greater ability to make long-lasting memories than any other kind of tourism experience.

In this edition, the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism wishes to showcase some of the initiatives developed by the National Tourism Authorities and Regional Organizations which have been developing gastronomic tourism in their countries. Gastronomic tourism generates great impact in the tourism sector as a mechanism to increase the demand of tourists while at the same time promoting local farmers, traditional cuisine and the destinations of their countries.

We hope that you enjoy this issue and that it enriches your knowledge as we stand together confident that the Greater Caribbean will be positioned among the leaders of Gastronomic Tourism in the coming years.

Directorate of Sustainable Tourism

ARTICLES BY:

• Belize
• Republic of Colombia
• Grenada
• Mexico
• Republic of Panama
• St. Kitts and Nevis
• St. Vincent and the Grenadines
• Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
• Aruba
• Guadeloupe
• Republic of India
• Republic of Turkey
• United Arab Emirates
Belize has an effervescent culture and an unrivaled cuisine.

Inspired explorers can treat their palate with tasty, traditional dishes during gastronomic festivals throughout the country. There are three Lobster Festivals and a Mango Fest in June; a Chocolate Festival and a Cashew Festival in May.

If you travel along the Hummingbird Highway, you can enjoy Ms Berta’s sizzling hot tamales or the delicacies at Coleman’s Café in Big Falls Village. Every two years, local chefs have the opportunity to prove their mettle at BTB’s international gastronomic competition “Taste of Belize”.

Belize also offers you a great opportunity to enrich your personal experience. You can learn to make corn tortillas and lunch in Maya tradition in San Antonio Village. Those with a sweet tooth can visit AJAW Chocolate & Crafts and Lamanai Chocolate in San Ignacio, Cayo District or Eladio’s Chocolate Adventure in San Pedro Columbia, Toledo or experience the Taste Belize Food & Culture Tours in Placencia.

Article and Photos: The Belize Tourism Board
The Network of Gastronomic Events of Colombia, emerges as an initiative of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. For its creation, the most relevant events of the country were identified and characterized, covering all regions.

Today the Network is made up of 54 events that work to promote appreciation for products, culture, local values and innovation from a sustainable perspective.

The Network generates synergies that have strengthened the Colombian gastronomic tourism product, reinforcing communication channels. This is how this has made it possible to draw lines of horizontal cooperation between the events achieving support in matters of improvement of the issues.

It has a web page (www.regco.co), in which each event has the opportunity to expose its contents as programming, agendas, guests, photos and videos. It also has a presence in the main social networks as a mechanism for promoting and disseminating events.

Article and Photos:
Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Colombia
The tri-island state of Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique is endowed with diverse natural spices and ‘pure’ local agricultural produce.

Mt. Mortiz Breakfast - St. George
The ‘West Indian Sunday Breakfast’ takes place on the last Sunday of each month in the village of Mt. Mortiz and for the past thirty (30) years "Everyone in the community is involved in one way or another".

Sunset City Food Festival – Victoria, St. Mark
This festival is held every last Saturday of each month from 6 pm until. ‘Tania Log’ is one of the local ‘mouth watering’ dishes persons look forward to at the event.

Gouyave Fish Friday - St John
This event takes place every Friday evening from 6 pm to midnight with locally caught Sea foods such as snapper and lobsters being prepared in the presence of visitors with accompanying dishes served under tents in the streets.

The events have grown from a community activity to one which attracts hundreds of locals and visitors who enjoys local Grenadian cuisine.

In Gouyave and Victoria, streets are reserved for food preparation and dining and include mouth-watering Grenadian delicacies like coconut bakes, breadfruit balls, fish cakes, fried breadfruit, fruit salad, fried Jacks, and a variety of souses, traditional Grenadian chocolate or local herb teas which are enjoyed with music from local artistes and sweet steel pan rhythms.
The gastronomy of Guatemala is a legacy of pre-Hispanic, colonial and post-independence times. Relevance in tourism is evident; According to data from the Guatemalan Tourism Institute (INGUAT), tourists spend 39.5% of their outlay on food and beverages. For this reason, in 2017, the Gastronomic Tourism Board has been formed, with the aim of promoting a strategy for its national and international value and promotion.

Apart from that, for 23 years the Gastronomic Festival and for 22 years the Food Fair had been carried out, where a variety of national dishes are presented, by international chefs from all over the country. In this event, the Guinness Record was awarded in 2009, for the largest buffet in the world with 1,236, dishes, 40% of national dishes. Likewise, in different tourist regions gastronomic festivals are realized that foment the local gastronomy.
Sun, beach, natural landscapes, pre-Hispanic architecture, colonial cities, gastronomy...

Those are part of the tourist offer that contributed to Mexico’s 2016 ranking as the 8th tourist destination in the world.

For Mexicans, our cuisine is inherent to our culture. However, Mexican gastronomy is recognized and appreciated worldwide.

Since 2010, UNESCO inscribed traditional Mexican cuisine in the list of Intangible Heritage of Humanity since it is a comprehensive cultural model comprising from farming to ancestral customs and culinary techniques.

Gastronomy is a fundamental part of the touristic and cultural attraction of Mexico. This is showcased in the 18 gastronomic routes throughout the national territory that offer, not only a varied and unique culinary, but also a wine culture to satisfy the most sophisticated palates.

Photo caption: Chile en nogada, Mexican typical dish

Article and Photos:
Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico
Panamanian gastronomy, a collection of three publications being the first of them "TACH Panamanian Autochthonous Cuisine" by renowned chef Charlie Collins, is the new tourism product that promotes the Panamanian Tourism Authority at fairs and international and local gastronomic events.

After four years of research on Panamanian food, it is submitted a compilation of more than 130 native recipes from each region and its protagonists, gastronomic routes, theme tours and culinary events of interest to Panamanians and foreigners, as well as a version of the most traditional recipes elaborated by Chef Collins.

Considered as a cultural legacy, this unique product opens a new door to the country's gastronomic tourism, making it known in our own territory and in the rest of the world.

The great gastronomic offer which has Panama makes this product line of the first order, and therefore enriches the tourist attractions more traditional, such as the Panama Canal and the Casco Antiguo.

The idea is to encourage all restaurants in the country to offer national dishes within their menu and so that both experts and novices in the culinary arts can prepare the recipes that they like the most.

Until now, Panama did not have a very clear gastronomic offer, but with this new product we highlight our real cultural roots.

The Conquest, the Colony and the construction of the Interocéan Railway and the Panama Canal, marked our culinary history and today we enjoy the gastronomic impact generated by the cultures that converged in our country.

Panamanian cuisine traditionally stands out by Panamanian sancocho (chicken stew), rice with chicken, gallo pinto, tortilla, the bun and the com tamale. It is our mission to promote what Panama offers in gastronomy and with it the rich history behind it.
With diverse epicurean offerings influenced by the destination’s natural beauty, cultural heritage, and rich history, St. Kitts is every gastronome’s dream.

Set against the backdrop of the island’s scenic landscape, from rainforest-covered mountains to secluded sandy beaches, a diverse variety of restaurants can be found throughout the island, serving cuisine ranging from sushi, tapas, and fine Italian food to authentic West Indian food in casual or elegant settings.

Each July, St. Kitts holds its annual Restaurant Week, featuring prix fixe menus for lunch or dinner along with drink specials at many of the island’s dining establishments.

Also recommended for foodies is to go “liming” at delightfully authentic beach bars offering delectable food, live entertainment and beach bonfires.

Considered to be an emerging culinary travel destination, there’s opportunity to experience it before everyone else does. Isn’t that quite an appetizing thought?

Visit www.stkittstourism.kn

Article and Photos: St. Kitts Tourism Authority
Each year on March 14th the rural village of Fancy hosts the Garifuna Cultural and Culinary festival. Descendants of the Garifuna, an Afro-Amerindian group indigenous to St Vincent and the Grenadines, use this opportunity to give visitors a taste of their heritage.

Farine, a cassava cereal, Bam-Bam, a wafer thin cassava bread, Dakunna, a type of sweet potato pudding cooked and served wrapped in banana leaves, and Madungo bakes with boiled fish, tend to be popular with patrons. This is part of a local cuisine that is generally Creole. From Wangoo, a com cocu-like meal that is a staple of the Big Drum festival on Union Island to roasted breadfruit and fried jackfish, the national dish, Creole food is steeped in SVG’s socio-cultural history. Visitors can spike their palate with a tour and rum tasting exercise at St. Vincent Distillers, maker of the award winning rums, Captain Bligh and the over proof Sunset Strong.
There are several food festivals held in Tobago; Wild Meat Festival, Sea Food Festival, Yam Festival, however, the largest festival on the island is the Blue Food Festival.

Since its inception in 1998 by the combined efforts of the Parlatuvier, Bloody Bay and L’Anse Fourmi villages, the Blue Food Festival which is held in October in the village of Bloody Bay has grown from hundreds to thousands of patrons who visit Tobago from all over the world to get a taste of the various foods and beverages prepared from the root crop called dasheen or ‘blue food’; the name is derived from the fact that the root (which is a variety of taro plant that flourishes in swampy conditions) turns blue when cooked.

The festival is designed to showcase cuisine and products derived from the dasheen and to encourage economic activities within the involved communities. There is live entertainment, cooking demonstrations and cooking competitions in the following categories:

- Cook of the Day
- Best Tasting Dish
- Most Innovative Dish
- Best Dessert
- Best Drink

Listed by CNN Travel as one of the World’s best food festivals, the Blue Food Festival turns 19 years old this year, 2017!
Boasting a flavor-rich culinary scene, the One happy island of Aruba invites guests to explore local cuisine during the 3rd annual Eat Local Aruba Restaurant Month this October.

Preparations are in full swing for this popular culinary event, highlighting authentic Aruban cuisine from Oct. 1-31. More than 60 participating restaurants offer specially selected menus at mouthwatering prices, with lunches costing US$15 and dinners US$30-$40.

No passes, tickets or vouchers are required—patrons can dine their way around the island throughout the program dates to enjoy the special menu offerings, highlighting authentic local dishes.

“Aruba is proud to be represented by more than 90 on-island nationalities—all of which contribute to our dynamic culinary scene,” said Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes, CEO of Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA). “Back by popular demand, Eat Local Month is intended to provide visitors with a taste of our island’s flavors, ranging from authentic local dishes to fine dining with international flair.”

This initiative was developed by the ATA to showcase the island’s booming culinary scene, emphasizing locally-inspired menus of participating restaurants.

Visit www.aruba.com/eatlocal to ensure a table at your favorite restaurant!

For more information on the One Happy Island, visit www.aruba.com. Engage with Aruba via social media at www.facebook.com/ArubaFans or @Aruba on Twitter and @arubatourism on Instagram.

Article and Photos: Aruba Tourism Authority
Throughout the year, the richness of Guadeloupean cuisine is highlighted through different culinary events. Those food festivals enhance the traditions and the “savoir-faire” of the archipelago. Visitors will be able to discover the diversity and the originality of local cuisine. One must acknowledge that the Guadeloupe Islands offer some unique specialties!

**Schedule:**
- Fête du crabe – Easter April 2018
- Fête du cabri - Easter April 2018
- Grand Marché régional – June 30th 2018
- Festival Koubouyon poisson - July 2018
- Fête du Colombo – July 2018
- Fête des cuisinières – August 11th 2018
- Jou a tradysion – December 2018

**Brand New:** the local tour operator Tourisme Sensation launches the **Food Tour Sensation** throughout the archipelago with trilingual guides!

**Article and Photos:**
Tourism Committee of the Island of Guadeloupe and the Guadeloupe Region Cooperation
April 16, 2014: The iconic B Merwan announced that it is shutting shop! Social media went berserk, posting about the 100-year-old Irani eatery. No detail, no matter how frivolous – from the softest mawa cake to the bun maska, Czech chairs to the 46 baking lines – was spared. It felt as if the curtains had fallen on yet another historic chapter, one that connected Bombay to Mumbai! In fact, Indian culinary history is replete with such Merwans that have shaped civilisations and its palates. Known then as hotels or serais depending upon their location, these places were grounds of innovations of new dishes and commonising cuisines that came down the royal kitchen and assimilated newer ones that arrived on the shores.

Over the years, these standalone restaurants became the hub of culinary inventions like fafda, jalebi, imarti, chhole bhature, chaat and samosa. What added to the charm of these places was them serving as the meeting place. In 1990, the food business suddenly became a commercially viable occupation but innovations and experiments stopped. Such was the rise of experimental cooking and experiential eating that by the latter half of 2000, India had seen molecular gastronomy, slow cooking, vegan, sous vide and the birth of progressive cuisine. And with that Indian restaurants were back to the early 1300s where innovation was key!

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Turkish cuisine originated in Central Asia, the first home of the Turks, and then evolved with the contributions of the inland and Mediterranean cultures with which Turks interacted after their arrival in Anatolia. It was refined and enriched over the centuries in the palace of the Sultan, but its tendency for simplicity and natural tastes was preserved. In line with the palace cuisine, Anatolia’s regions developed their own gastronomic specialties.

Turkish cuisine is considered to be one of the three main cuisines of the world because of the variety of its dishes, its use of natural ingredients, its flavors and tastes which appeal to all palates and its influence throughout Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

For those who travel so as to engage in culinary pursuits, Turkish cuisine is definitely worthy of exploration. The variety of dishes that make up the cuisine, the ways they come together in feast-like meals and the evident intricacy of each dish offer enough material for life-long study and enjoyment.
With around 18 million tourists annually visiting the United Arab Emirates, gastronomy is definitely an important component of its tourism industry. It is true that tourists are attracted to the famous landmarks such as Burj Khalifa, world’s tallest building; Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, one of the world’s largest; and the Palm Islands, largest man-made; but once they are in the country they enjoy the variety and quality of food found in all cities of the UAE.

To celebrate food, the UAE came up with annual events such as Dubai Food Festival, Liwa Date Festival and Abu Dhabi Food Festival that are designed not only to present food, but to serve as platforms to exchange the latest culinary developments.

Aiming at internationalizing UAE traditional cuisine, Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority has launched an initiative to train hotel chefs to offer UAE native dishes.

Besides landmarks and tasty food, the UAE offers a logistical hub and cultural center and it is known as a moderate, tolerant and safe destination.
EVENTS HELD

28th Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-28):

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Directorate of Sustainable Tourism will be developing the following Activities:


THANK YOU

The Directorate of Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States expresses its gratitude to all the contributors of this Newsletter and look forward to your continued support as we work together to develop sustainable tourism in the Greater Caribbean Region.

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