EDITORIAL

Welcome to the fourth edition of "IN THE ZONE", which we have endearingly dubbed, "IN OUR KITCHEN".

The Wider Caribbean is truly a unique destination. As a collective of almost 30 Member States there is so much to explore. From breath-taking mountain ranges, to white, pink or black sandy beaches or the adventurous nature trails, it is recognized that the Region's offerings are plenty.

It is also unanimously agreed that in addition to the scenic beauty and hospitality experienced, the most enticing treasures are the many exquisite culinary delights. Whether it be a "Bake and Shark" at Maracas Bay in Trinidad and Tobago, a "Javaanse Rijstafel" in Suriname, Dominican "Mofongo", a "Reina Pepiada" in Venezuela, or Salvadorian "Pupusas" accompanied by either some Blue Mountain Jamaican Coffee or a Cocktail of Curacao Blue or even a nicely aged Rhum Clément of Martinique, we all keep coming back for more.

Sharing our national dishes and beverages provides the opportunity to share a part of our rich heritage. This one tourism product allows for a genuine interaction between the local community that produces, prepares and presents the fruits of the land and the tourists who sit at our tables and enjoy the offerings. Hence, the potential of securing return visits through gastronomic tourism should not be underestimated.

This edition of "IN THE ZONE", invites you into the kitchens of the Greater Caribbean, with various delightful contributions from Mexico, Haiti, Venezuela, Grenada, Colombia and Suriname.

Truly enjoy,

Gloria de Mees
Director Sustainable Tourism

VENEZUELAN GASTRONOMY

Each region in Venezuela is identified by its own customs and expressions. Diverse and original dishes vary depending on the geographic position of the Bolivarian territory and according to the way of life of its inhabitants.

The main dishes belonging to our traditional Venezuelan cuisine include, par excellence, Pabellón Criollo (black beans with white rice and shredded beef), Arepa (cornmeal roll), Hallaca (cornmeal casing filled with meat and vegetables, wrapped in a banana leaf and boiled), Cachapa (cornmeal pancake), Empanadas (fried cornmeal pies), Asado Negro (dark roast beef), Casabe (cassava bread), Hervido or Sancocho (stew) of (Chicken, Beef and Fish), just to name a few of the country’s traditional dishes.
Venezuelan cuisine also offers a wide variety of creole desserts. Highlighted among them are those of aboriginal origin, such as Majarete and Tequiche (corn puddings), sweets made from brown sugarloaf, corn, bread and plantain cakes, as well as flans and pineapple or coconut quesillos (desserts similar to flans). Another variety of popular sweets includes Preserved Fruits in Syrup, like Papaya, Guava Shells and the so-called Angel Hair, which is made with pumpkin.

There are also different typical regional foods and many more traditional dishes with Venezuelan flavour...!!!

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPH SUBMITTED BY MINISTRY OF POPULAR POWER FOR TOURISM

THE GREATER CARIBBEAN KITCHEN – A CULINARY TOURISM POTENTIAL

Pondering vacationing in the Greater Caribbean, thoughts usually drift towards images of hiking to waterfalls or volcanoes on a nature trail with lush greenery and sounds of the rainforest all around; laying in a hammock staring at different shades of emerald to turquoise as the waters of the Caribbean Sea wash ashore; being enticed by the local artisan or simply just giving in to the rhythm of the islands. Whether visiting for business or pleasure, fully experiencing the wider Region is arguably only complete when it includes the savouring of the offerings of Caribbean Gastronomy. Be it breakfast, lunch, dinner, high tea or a snack in between, all senses are stimulated throughout the day from the delicate taste of ackee and salt fish or pabellon criollo, the alluring smell of nutmeg and cinnamon bark, the smooth texture of a pinda soep or oxtail soup, the lovely sight of ripe mangoes or hearing a sizzling hotplate of seafood.

It is clear that the offerings of tourist destinations in the Greater Caribbean are limitless are varied in both attractions and moreover in gastronomic experience. Considering that culinary tourism can be developed as a year round tourism product, it is opportune to explore whether the conditions are present to fully maximize its potential in the Region as well as contemplate the means to do so. "Thousands of years ago, merchants travelled the Seven Seas, looking for foodstuffs to trade. Spices, wine, fruits and olive oil were the currencies of yore. Today, we unwittingly do much the same. However, modern travellers tend to prefer restaurants and wineries in place of pirate-infested trade routes." (International Culinary Tourism Association).

Emerging from plantation economies where commodities like cacao, sugar, coffee, banana and rice were exported extra-regionally and formed the crux of local communities, many of the Caribbean States have now become almost exclusively dependant on the revenue generated by the Tourism Industry. In the contemporary global context various events have led to a certain conditionality and demand to travelling. For instance, discussions on Climate Change are encouraging tourists to minimise their carbon footprint by consuming locally produced food; the knowledge economy driven by technological advances has the broadened level of expectancy and inquisitiveness of visitors wanting to try something new or different, also in a culinary context.
Herein, lays the opportunity and potential of The GREATER CARIBBEAN KITCHEN. According to the International Culinary Tourism Association (ICTA), Culinary Tourism is defined in the broadest sense as the pursuit of unique and memorable culinary experiences of all kinds, often while travelling, but one can also be a culinary tourist at home. Culinary tourism, the term first coined in 1998 by Lucy Long, from Bowling Green University in Ohio, has been said to be the fiercest niche to emerge within the travel industry in years. However, as with every niche, the culinary tourism experience must be distinctive and unforgettable. The production, preparation and presentation of food and beverage are manifestations of any culture. The sharing of the Greater Caribbean Region’s rich heritage, therefore, through its national dishes and drinks provides the opportunity to engage visitors with the local communities. This can easily be achieved through educating visitors on the history, and traditions behind the culinary delights that they may sample such as the origin of the production of the region’s rums and liqueurs notably Blue Curacao and Angostura Bitters, the versatility of coconut use or the traditional method of preparing cassava bread and tortillas. The essence of gastronomic tourism in the Caribbean, therefore, is that of inescapably alluring stories that are inherent to families and communities which set the Region apart from other destinations.

Noticeable twists to gastronomic tourism offerings in the Region have seen the emergence of Food Fairs both on a large regional scale such as the Latin American Food Show as well as those on a more national and/or local level with themes dedicated to cassava, mango, blue food, wine, food & rum. These events are usually highlighted with demonstrations by the Region’s top chefs and indigenous cooks who share their knowledge, creative recipes and provide the opportunity to view and taste samples of some of the specialties.

The occasions are also used for culinary product manufactures and farmers to showcase their inventions and produce to prospective buyers. By adding to the dining experience components such as cooking classes, cookbooks, kitchen gadget stores and even culinary tours, these events provide an excellent opportunity to develop the culinary tourism product as a niche. This approach allows for the full cluster centred around this niche to be fully engaged whereby the expertise of cooking schools, tour operators and tour leaders, caterers, wineries, breweries, distilleries, food growers and manufacturers can be incorporated. This, in turn, will stimulate the development of stronger linkages with the agro-tourism sector, the creation of national or local brands, culinary attractions, culinary media, guidebooks and more.

From the most modest of breakfast sheds to the most exclusive five star dining establishments, the Greater Caribbean possess all the ingredients to further develop culinary tourism as a main staple of its tourism product. A more focussed approach that includes the strengthening of public-private partnerships in this sector can achieve just that. The potential of this niche is limitless as contemporary and authentic flavours continue to mix, blossoming into colours, flavours and aromas that are truly indicative of the Caribbean flair.

Article and pictures submitted by Ms. Gloria De Mees
Director Sustainable Tourism
Where Grenada’s Celebrations Merge

The Town of Gouyave, in the Parish of St. John in Grenada, is known as the Fishing Capital, and the Town that never sleeps. It is against this background that the Gouyave Fish Friday Festival came into being in June of 2005. This street festival is held every Friday – except Good Friday – and focuses on the sale of diverse quality fish cuisine in a controlled setting, governed by certain established standards. The Festival also caters for the sale of locally produced craft items.

In this environment, patrons can sit comfortably to eat, drink, and converse. Cultural performances, steel band music and drumming are featured at the festival, and the music played is done so at a level to accommodate conversation among patrons. The music is mostly “back-in-time,” and is managed from a central location, so no vendor is allowed to provide his or her own music. On Friday, 3rd February, 2012, The Festival was a major feature of Parish Day activities to mark Grenada’s 38th Anniversary of Independence.

On this occasion, the festival celebrations were moved from its street based location to the Cuthbert Peters Park, which is the main recreational playing field in the Parish. The Parish Day activities also included a Best Village Cooking Competition of Grenada’s National Dish, the “Oil Down”, and cultural performances from various villages throughout the Parish.

The other major activities associated with the Fish Friday Festival, is an annual after Carnival Show in August, which showcases the winners from the National and Parish Calypso and Soca Competitions; a Karaoke Competition in November; Carolling for Christmas; and a Parang Show on the first Friday in January of the New Year.

The weekly Fish Friday Festival is one of the major attractions for visitors to Grenada.

Article and photographs submitted by
The Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation & Culture of Grenada
**Haiti Gastronomy**

As their name suggests, elvers are minute “little” fish that have been newly hatched in the vicinity of river mouths. These alevins are gathered by fishermen before dawn using sheets or mosquito nets, the only materials that can contain them. They rapidly make their way to the market where they are purchased while still swimming around in buckets containing sea water.

The cooks of Grand-Anse have developed extraordinary skill in the preparation of the elvers.

Whether fresh or dried (blocks), fricasséed with tomatoes, roucou or thinly sliced shallots, they can be happily paired with yams, plantains, fried breadfruit or rice.

The ubiquitous goat pepper adds the great aroma and spicy flavour that characterise the succulent Haitian cuisine.

Here in Haiti, elver season often coincides with spring rain, however the precise moment for gathering them remains a secret shared between the benevolent moon and the fishermen, who are able to interpret the signs of the eagerly awaited hatching.

Those who are lucky enough to have tasted elvers can attest to the delicacy of this exquisite dish. And do not think for a moment that by eating elvers we are fishing against nature, just think of caviar…

**Article and photograph submitted by Gérard Thérilien**

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**Traditional Mexican Ingredients, Dishes and Beverages**

*Mexican cuisine* is an intangible cultural patrimony of humanity (UNESCO declaration, November 16, 2011) and enjoys renowned international recognition. Its influence on contemporary gastronomy is ever increasing (even in “fast food”!). As a matter of fact, Mexican restaurants can be found on all continents. Salsa, jalapeños, chipotle, tortillas, are just a few of the words that have been integrated into the international culinary lexicon and at the same time, they are products that are appearing in supermarkets in many countries.

There is a wide variety of dishes in Mexican cuisine, due to the cultural and geographic diversity of the country; but some are particularly characteristic of it, such as mole poblano, chiles en nogada or the versatile tacos, to name a few. Although there are a wide variety of chillies in Mexico, their most important purpose is to infuse flavour. It is indeed a myth that all national food is spicy.

Traditional cuisine, incorporating elements of nature.
Mexican beverages have also achieved international recognition. In all bars or tourist establishments around the world, one key component is tequila, this legendary drink extracted from the cactus known as agave. Other traditional drinks whose origin lies in the cactus are pulque, mezcal and sotol. Additionally, even though beer is not a traditional beverage but rather an international one, mention should be made of the fact that beer manufactured in Mexico can be found in more than 180 countries.

The realm of non-alcoholic beverages in Mexico is much larger, but their consumption is more local. These drinks can be enjoyed cold or hot, combined with water or milk and are generally made with a fruit base, although in some cases, different seeds or vegetables are used. The vast majority is sweet, however, in unique instances; chillies may be included among their ingredients.

Grenada Distillers - A wide range of rums from the Caribbean

Grenada is an island state of the Lesser Antilles between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean - a speck in the sea, just 34 kilometres long and 19 kilometres wide. Most of the inhabitants of the former British crown colony are descendants of African slaves, mixed with those of European masters and East Indian indentured servants.

Apart from tourism, agriculture is the most important branch of the economy: the main products being cocoa, nutmeg, and other spices. The island’s rum production also contributes substantially to their exports.

In 1937, Grenada Sugar Factory, the larger and more renown of the only two rum distilleries on the island, was founded. It is situated in the southern part of the island - Woodlands Valley -and is a popular tourist destination. Nick’s Barrel House is particularly popular - this visitor centre was named after Nicholas Neckles, the father of the Company’s Chairman. The main product, Clarke’s Court Rum, was named after a bay near the factory.
Typical of the production process is the open fermentation in the tropical climate. An experienced team is responsible for the distillation, applying the latest technology and ongoing product development.

In 2001, amalgamation led to the Company being renamed Grenada Distillers Limited, which carries on the manufacture of the island’s finest spirits, from fermentation of molasses to distillation, through blending and aging, to bottling and distribution.

Clarke’s Court #37 Blend, a eight year aged, double mature rum was added to the range of fine rums in 2010 as a premium mix of mature rum from used whisky and bourbon barrels, compiled by Master Blender Ahmad Rasheed.

At the World-Spirits Award, Grenada Distillers Limited secured a top place as a “Distillery of the Year” with the classification of “World-Class Distillery” reached in the rum category with three gold and three silver medals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pure White Rum</td>
<td>the principal product under the Clarke’s Court brand. Exquisitely blended with estery aromas and distinct flavour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Dark Rum</td>
<td>a warm mellow, golden rum with an oaky taste and smoky aroma.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rum Sorrel</td>
<td>a regal blend of the finest indigenous extracts of the local fruit and spices, resulting in a unique light, mellow beverage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planters’ Punch</td>
<td>a premium blend of aged rum punch with a smooth, rounded taste and fruity aroma, with tones of nutmeg, guava and citrus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spicy Rum</td>
<td>an expertly blended aged golden rum that is blended with locally grown spices which captures the true taste of Grenada, the Isle of Spice. The charred oaky aroma tells the story of the barrels in which the rum is aged.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rum Punch</td>
<td>an exquisite blend of exotic tropical fruit juices and spices. Fruity aroma, mouth-watering taste.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rum Lemon</td>
<td>a crystal clear light bodied beverage with the aroma of citrus. A rich, smooth</td>
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It is the Creole name that we in Haiti give to the psathyrella, a highly edible, minuscule, wild mushroom that grows in our countryside and sometimes even in our backyards. It cannot really be said that the djondjon is cultivated in Haiti; being wild it grows where it feels comfortable, as reflected in the creole proverb attesting to its refusal to be domesticated.

Djondjons are harvested and placed in the sun to dry before being sold both in the public market and in the supermarkets. They are dark brown in colour and have an aroma and flavour distinct from any other culinary product.

Camerhogne Spice Liqueur: a delicious liqueur is smooth, spicy and fruity flavoured with an exotic fragrance that seduces towards new heights of luscious indulgence.

Old Grog: a blended five year aged copper-gold spirit which is quite palatable. A silky entry leads to a medium body with tropical fruit and spicy flavour added to oaky elements which linger on smoothly. A pleasant aroma which tells the tale of its ageing process on charred bourbon barrels.

#37: a premium double matured rum with exceptional smoothness, full body and rich fruity flavour, to satisfy every palate and every drinker's repertoire. Pleasing burnt oak aroma adds to the richness of this rum.

Rum Coconut: a flavoured white rum - soft and smooth is the melodious tune, this truly sensational coconut spirit plays as it titillates the palate; refreshing, lasting richness of taste.

Article and pictures submitted by Grenada Distillers
Some say that the djondjon is a gift that nature has given to our country, and they are quite right. Indeed, this unique mushroom is part of our cultural and environmental heritage. The most popular djondjon dish is the famous RIZ DJONDJON (rice with mushrooms), the mere mention of which makes your mouth water.

It is also served in cornmeal, as a perfect accompaniment to poisson gros sel (poached fish marinated in salt). Additionally, it is combined with wild guinea fowl, turkey or native chicken. When added to callaloo, it creates a rich, creamy sauce that makes the Tonm Tonm (traditional dish of Grand-Anse) more palatable. It is the best gift that can be given to a Haitian living abroad. Haitians savour it with great pleasure, while foreigners delight in the delicate taste and unique aroma of the djondjon. Try it and you are sure to become a fan. By protecting your environment you preserve your ration of djondjon.

Article and photographs submitted by Gérard Thérilien of Haiti Gastronomie
On-line communities like the above-mentioned foster the formations of kinships in a cyber-world “West Indian store” per se, as comments not just on the doubles itself, but on political views, childhood memories, Trinidad vacation pictures and videos are shared. This, in turn, provides not only a space for bonding but also for the solidification of the Trinidadian national identity throughout various West Indian diasporas as these websites are globally accessible. It must be noted, however, that this also allows for the romanticizing of life in Trinidad and perpetuates the need for “the real ting” as family members coming from ‘home’ are beseeched with requests when visiting their relatives.

It is difficult to ascertain how this almost fanaticism of doubles originated as, having been an established street food for decades it was no more or less popular than the other street foods in Trinidad. Regardless, today doubles is seen as a “must have” when visiting the island and many a debate has been had over which vendor sells the best tasting doubles to who can eat the most doubles to the best drink that accompanies the doubles. Interestingly enough, as the plurality of its name suggests, eating one is never enough! “Doubles with slight”: only a Trini or one who has been to Trinidad can understand the power of these three words!

Article and photo submitted by
Tamara Ammon, Consultant & Tourism Researcher

GASTRONOMY IN COLOMBIA – CARIBBEAN REGION

The gastronomy in Cartagena de Indias features the most traditional and well-known soups in the region: sancochos and mote de queso, which is a traditional soup prepared with yams and slices of cheese, served with grilled aubergines soaked in olive oil. These dishes are prepared with a special ingredient in Colombia known as sweet peppers.

Rice, very important in Caribbean cooking, accompanies everyday dishes and is combined with black beans, plantain, carrots or onions.

Juices are made from tropical fruit, such as genip (chenette) and corozo (dark red palm nut kernels), when in season. Other juices mainly include watermelon, mango, tamarind, carambola (starfruit), cherries and plums.

For further information on gastronomy and tourism in Colombia:
www.colombia.travel

The best local soups are the sancochos and the mote de queso.
Photo by: Carlos Sueskún
Article by: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colombia
VIADO- A NATIONAL PASTRY OF SURINAME

It has not been officially dubbed a national dish by the National Assembly - absolutely no politics is involved. Regardless, the will of the people definitely makes this Surinamese fruitcake a worthy nominee for the title, as this delightful pastry is served at almost every social gathering. Whether at a birthday party, wedding or funeral/wake, the opportunity is always taken to share (in) this delicacy. Its popularity unwavering, it is served year round as either as a pre-appetizer or dessert, and there are clearly no rules when partaking in it other than to simply give in to its mouth-watering beckon.

VIADO, a truly guilty pleasure, consists of an intoxicating bouquet of spices which generously favours cinnamon balanced with a hint of nutmeg and vanilla, to name a few, combined with chopped almonds, preserved orange peel and Borgoe* Rum-soaked raises. It would be tasking to find a Surinamese national or visitor who does not have an enduring story about Viado.

Indeed, my fondest childhood memories are those of the aroma of freshly baked Viado coming out of my Grandma Martha’s kitchen. Waking up very early, usually at 4.00a.m., she would start the preparation for the Viado orders she had for the day. I would, of course, be awakened much later to the smell of the first batch resting on the stove, while the second or even third set of cakes would be baking in the oven.

Meanwhile, Grandma Martha would be kneading the dough or making the intricate little rosettes from the dough, spices and fruit, and carefully arranging them onto the baking sheet. Looking at her in awe on these occasions, I marveled at the time and care that went into making Viado. It is no wonder that it remains today, one of the most popular Surinamese pastries.

* Borgoe Rum - Suriname’s Premier Rum

**GENERAL INFO**

What is the ACS?
The Convention Establishing the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) was established following the signature of the Convention on 24th July 1994 in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, with the aim of promoting consultation, cooperation and concerted action among all the countries of the Caribbean.

What is the SCST?
The Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST) is a technical body meant to assist in the performance of the Ministerial Council. It brings together the representatives of the Members States to discuss issues and projects related to sustainable development of tourism in the Greater Caribbean.
Contribute:
The DST invites you to send your pictures and articles in for the July 2012 issue of Craft. "IN THE ZONE".

Contact:
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"IN THE ZONE", is conceived to increase interaction and the level of cooperation among ACS member states and International and regional organizations as well as observer countries. It features destinations, events and activities in ACS Member States as well as from our partners.