

# Versatility in Hospitality Industry around the Globe to Study Cuisine and Culture of Jamaica

Yash Gholap<sup>1</sup> and Ashish J Nevgi<sup>2</sup>

Student, Thakur Institute of Hotel Management, Thakur Shyamnarayan Degree College, Mumbai, India<sup>1</sup>

Coordinator, Thakur Institute of Hotel Management, Thakur Shyamnarayan Degree College, Mumbai, India<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** Jamaica, island country of the West Indies. It is the third largest island in the Caribbean Sea, after Cuba and Hispaniola. Jamaica is about 146 miles (235 km) long and varies from 22 to 51 miles (35 to 82 km) wide. It is situated some 100 miles (160 km) west of Haiti, 90 miles (150 km) south of Cuba, and 390 miles (630 km) northeast of the nearest point on the mainland, Cape Gracias a Dios, on the Caribbean coast of Central America. The national capital is Kingston. Jamaican culture consists of the religion, norms, values, and lifestyle that define the people of Jamaica. The culture is mixed, with an ethnically diverse society, stemming from a history of inhabitants beginning with the original inhabitants of Jamaica. The Spaniards originally brought slavery to Jamaica. Then they were overthrown by the English. Jamaica later gained emancipation on 1 August 1838 and independence from the British on 6 August 1962. Black slaves became the dominant cultural force as they suffered and resisted the harsh conditions of forced labour. After the abolition of slavery, Chinese and Indian migrants were transported to the island as indentured workers, bringing with them ideas from their country.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Trends, Characteristics, Hospitality.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Language

The official language of Jamaica is Jamaican Standard English, which is used in all official circumstances in the country. In addition to English, there is a creole derivative called Jamaican Patois (pronounced patwa) which is the common dialect among Jamaican citizens.

### Religion

By far, the largest religion in Jamaica is the Christian faith. The Anglican Church, Catholic Church, Methodist Church, Baptists, Seventh-Day and the Church of God are present throughout the country. Many old churches have been carefully maintained and/or restored. The Rastafari movement is a derivative of the larger Christian culture, but its origins were influenced by rising consciousness of Africa, and an awareness of political events in that continent. There is also a small number of Jewish synagogues in Jamaica, dating from the 17th century along with a few mosques. [3]

Elements of ancient African religions remain, especially in remote areas throughout the island. Some of these practices are described generally as Obeah, Kumina, or Pocomania. Though the congregations are small, they are visited by many Christians and non-Christians seeking an experience they have not found in the churches. It is estimated that as much as 40% of the population secretly seek the services of the African traditional religious healers (also called Obeah workers) when confronted with serious problems that conventional medicine cannot remedy. [1]

The Bahá'í Faith arrived in Jamaica in 1943, brought by an American Bahá'í pioneer, Dr. Malcolm King. In 2003, as part of the 60th anniversary celebration of the establishment of Bahá'í in Jamaica, the Governor General of Jamaica, Sir Howard Cooke, proclaimed a National Bahá'í Day to be held annually on 25 July. In 2005, the community of about 5000 celebrated their activity and presence in Jamaica with the international Bahá'í choir, The Voices of Bahá. The choir performed at Ward Theater and the University of the West Indies' Chapel, with proceeds earmarked to two Jamaican charities, (one serving families of policemen slain in the line of duty, and the one Denham Town Golden Age Home).

Other religions practiced in Jamaica include Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam.[3]

## Rastafari



A Rastafarian man in a Rasta cap at a port of Jamaica's Black River.

Originating in the 1930s, one of the most prominent, internationally known aspects of Jamaica's African-Caribbean culture is the Rastafari movement, particularly those elements that are expressed through reggae music. In the 1970s and early 1980s, Bob Marley became the most high-profile exponent of the Rastafari culture and belief system. His reputation as an innovative musician devoted to his faith has continued to grow since his death, so that by 2004 his greatest hits compilation, *Legend*, had sold 20 million copies worldwide making him arguably the world's most famous Jamaican in the music industry, and certainly the nation's biggest-selling recording artist.[3]

Rastafari itself is a monotheistic belief system, based on teachings found in the Old Testament and the New Testament – particularly the Book of Revelation. However, what distinguishes Rastafari from Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, (which also cite Abrahamic beliefs), is that Rastas believe in the divinity of the Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.[1]

Hailed by Rastas as H.I.M. (His Imperial Majesty), Haile Selassie I is regarded as God himself, the true descendant of Solomon, and the earthly embodiment of Jah (God) – in what believers see as a fulfillment of prophecy regarding the second coming of the Messiah.

Those Rasta beliefs, which are not explicitly mentioned in the Bible (such as the specific name of H.I.M. "Haile Selassie"), are not gathered into a single holy text. Instead, Rasta beliefs are primarily shared through a community of songs, chants, and oral testimonies, as well as in written texts (including websites). The extensive use of song makes Rastafari a particularly musical source of Jamaican culture. However, more Rastafarians are coming to the understanding that Haile Selassie is not the Saviour they are all waiting for and have now seen that he was just an ordinary man like themselves.

Rasta cultural traditions include wearing their hair in uncut, uncombed strands known as dreadlocks (in adherence to the Nazarite vow), as well as eating unprocessed (natural) foods which are called Ital. However, neither tradition is regarded as compulsory – many people who wear dreadlocks are not Rastas, and many Rastas do not wear them.

One of the most controversial cultural traditions is Rastas' use of ganja as a sacrament which is smoked to aid in reasoning (contemplation and discussion) during their religious rituals. Cannabis is a strictly prohibited substance in Jamaica, so its use by Rastas means the movement is in a more-or-less permanent state of tension with police authorities.[2]

In its Jamaican homeland, Rastafari is a minority culture and receives little in the way of official recognition. Jamaica is an overwhelmingly Christian country, so Rasta beliefs and practices – such as the divinity of H.I.M. Haile Selassie – are sometimes regarded as pagan by Christian Jamaicans. (Some Rastas also express hostility towards aspects of Christianity.) Nevertheless, the artistic contributions of the movement, particularly by Bob Marley, are widely respected. Marley was awarded the Jamaican Order of Merit in 1981, and there are two official monuments to him. [1]

Rastas can be found in many countries outside Jamaica and among many non-Jamaicans. Because it is not a centrally organised religion, there is no way of knowing how many devotees there are.[1]

## Dance

Dance has always been important to Jamaica – from colonial times until the present. Early folk rhythms and movements often enhanced Christian religious celebrations or were associated with Christian holidays. More recently, dances have become associated with the music of Jamaica, particularly dancehall styles.

Dance theatre is also growing in importance. Rex Nettleford, Eddy Thomas, Olive Lewin, and Edna Manley are four Jamaicans whose influences on the arts – music and dance in particular – have been extremely important. Nettleford, Thomas, and Ivy Baxter formed the National Dance Theatre Company in 1962. Other important Jamaicans in dance theatre have included the Tony Award-winning choreographer Garth Fagan (The Lion King on Broadway).

Dancehall, or reggae, music has inspired a number of dance styles as well. To understand the evolution of popular dance, it helps to understand the musical progression. Ska music, with fast beats, also had fast dances. The slow to rocksteady also developed slower dances, allowing dancers to stay on the floor longer. Reggae is associated with many things, including the Rastafarian movement, but influenced the newer styles.

Dancehall music often creates its own dances based on moves in the lyrics of the songs themselves. Soca music from Trinidad and Tobago is popular with most of the popular artists from Trinidad, but many soca Jamaican artists such as Byron Lee, Fab 5, and Lovindeer are famous but also represent Jamaican music.[2]

Bruckins is a Jamaican dance performed to celebrate Emancipation Day.

### Theatre

Jamaica's earliest theatre was built in 1682. Several more theatres opened in the 1700s and 1800s, attracting performances by both professional touring companies and amateur groups. But performances weren't limited to official venues. Many took place in houses, stores, courthouses, and enclosed outdoor spaces large enough to hold them. During this period, classic plays such as Shakespeare were most often produced. However, the Jewish and French communities became large enough to merit productions aimed at them, too.

After the abolishment of slavery, Jamaicans began fusing music, humour, and dance into public theatrical performances. Although it took many years for true Jamaican styles to develop, eventually they became more prevalent than European works. Today's most popular theatrical form in Jamaica, pantomime, began in the 1940s as a fusion of English pantomime with Jamaican folklore. Another popular style, "Roots" (Grassroots) Theatre, evolved in the 1960s and 1970s. These riotous bawdy tales remained crowd favourites in Kingston's open-air theatres. [2]

One artist involved in root plays is Winsome (code name), a Jamaican writer and producer chronicled in Deborah Thomas' book "Modern Blackness". Winsome handled all the publicity for her plays herself, and ended up putting them on in the rural areas surrounding Kingston – the city theaters refused to house her plays because of their controversial nature. In her plays, Winsome explores how sex, money, and power interact every day for Jamaicans. In 1997, Winsome wrote and produced a root play entitled Ruff Rider, in which family, sexual abuse, love, work, and friendship all intersect. According to author Thomas, author of, "In all of her work, the sympathetic characters are those she portrays as struggling to balance their own pursuit of individual gain with 'living well together' with others. As they negotiate the fine lines between egalitarianism and hierarchy, her characters also contribute to the public debate regarding the gendered dimensions of respectability and reputation."

Other notable roots play figures include Ralph Holness, Ginger Knight, Balfour Anderson, Michael Denton, Ian Reid, Paul Beil, Everton Dawkins, Luke Ellington (Lukington), Buddy Pouyat and the late Hyacinth Brown. [1]

## II. LITERATURE AND WRITING

Derek Walcott, a Nobel prize laureate, born and educated in St. Lucia, attended college in Jamaica. Other significant writers from the island include Claude McKay and Louis Simpson. Plays and works in Jamaican English, or patois, attract special attention. Louise Bennett, Andrew Salkey and Mikey Smith have contributed to this phenomenon by writing works in patois. Ian Fleming wrote his famous James Bond novels while living in Jamaica. Jean Rhys is also well known for her novel Wide Sargasso Sea, which was set in Jamaica. Jamaican writer Marlon James won the 2015 Man Booker Prize for his novel A Brief History of Seven Killings.[4]

Jamaican authors are always faced with the decision of writing in standard English for a huge worldwide audience, or in the local patois, for a much smaller, but more trendy, audience. Jamaican films with patois sound-tracks such as The Harder They Come (1972) require sub-titles for export to general markets. In general, the use of patois severely limits the potential audience for the otherwise universal Jamaican message.

Recent poets laureate of Jamaica include Mervyn Morris (appointed in 2014) and his successor Lorna Goodison, appointed in 2017. [1]

## Film

Jamaica's film industry is not widely known, but it is growing. The Harder They Come, Rasta Rockett, Shottas, Third World Cop, Rockers, Countryman, Dancehall Queen & "Real Ghetto Youths" are a few of the best-known Jamaican movies. However, many popular Hollywood movies have also been filmed in Jamaica. A short list includes The Blue Lagoon, Cocktail, Cool Running and James Bond films, Dr. No, Live and Let Die and No Time to Die.

Jamaica's leading annual film event The Reggae Film Festival takes place each February in Jamaica's capital city, Kingston. Members of Jamaica's film industry gather here to make new links and many new projects have grown from the event.

Jamaica has many talented film makers but there is a great lack of available funds and resources for filmmakers. Since the creation of the Reggae Film Festival there have been many new films made in Jamaica and the event has given the industry a real boost, this combined with the recent CARICOM European film treaty which enables Jamaican filmmakers to seek funding in Europe, has opened up a new door for film makers looking to apply for funding and this will hopefully make a real difference to the future of the industry.

Other more recent feature films made in Jamaica are: 'Almost Heaven', 'Roots Time', 'Wah Do Dem', 'Concrete Jungle', 'Redemption Paradise', 'Real Ghetto Youths', and 'Smile Orange'.[3]

Jamaican cuisine includes a mixture of cooking techniques, flavours and spices influenced by Amerindian, African, Irish, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Indian, Chinese and Middle Eastern people who have inhabited the island. It is also influenced by the crops introduced into the island from tropical Southeast Asia, many of which are now grown locally. A wide variety of seafood, tropical fruits and meats are available.

Some Jamaican dishes are variations on cuisines brought to the island from elsewhere. These are often modified to incorporate local produce and spices. Others are novel or fusion and have developed locally. Popular Jamaican dishes include curry goat, fried dumplings, ackee and saltfish. Jamaican patties along with various pastries, breads and beverages are also popular.

Jamaican cuisine has spread with emigrants, especially during the 20th century, from the island to other nations as Jamaicans have sought economic opportunities in other countries.[1]

## History



Women selling desserts in Kingston, Jamaica, c. 1899

## Development of the cuisine[3]

African cuisine developed on the island as a result of waves of slavery such as, Callaloo from the Angolan dish "Calulu". The fruit of the most popular Jamaican dish, Ackee, was also brought to the Island by West African peoples. The Spanish, the first European arrivals to the island, contributed dishes such as the vinegary escovitch fish (Spanish escabeche) contributed by Spanish Jews. Later, Cornish which could be argued influenced the development of the Jamaican patty, a pasty styled turnover filled with spiced meat. More Chinese and East Indian influences can also be found in Jamaican cuisine like Roti and Curry Goat as a result of indentured labourers who replaced slaves after emancipation brought their own culinary talents (especially curry, which Jamaican chefs sometimes use to season goat meat for special occasions). Salted codfish was brought by Portuguese Jews who had escaped the inquisition in the 1500s and now used in the national dish Ackee and saltfish, but was also a staple for enslaved Africans as a long lasting, affordable protein.

### **Jamaican cuisine and the Rastafarians**

Jamaican cuisine includes Rastafarian influences but not entirely. Rastafarians have a vegetarian approach to preparing food, cooking, and eating, and have introduced a host of unique vegetarian dishes to Jamaican cuisine. Rastafarians do not eat pork. However, pork is a very popular dish in Jamaica. Stew pork and jerk pork are some of the most popular ways to prepare it. There are even some who believe in cooking with little or no salt, which is referred to as the 'Ital' way.[1]

### **Popular Dishes**



### **Ackee and saltfish**



A Jamaican patty wrapped in coco bread

A Jamaican breakfast includes ackee and saltfish, seasoned callaloo, boiled green bananas, and fried dumplings.

### **Main courses**

#### **Soups**

- Beef soup
- Chicken soup
- Corn soup
- Cow heel soup
- Fish tea
- Gungo peas soup
- Janga soup
- Mannish water
- Pepperpot
- Pumpkin soup
- Red peas soup
- Split pea soup

#### **Side dishes**

- Bok choy

- Breadfruit (boiled, fried or roasted)
- Callaloo
- Cooked rice
- Dumplings (boiled or fried)
- Festival
- Fried plantain
- Fried rice
- Green banana
- Ground provisions
- Macaroni pie
- Potato salad
- Rice and peas – Otherwise known as "Jamaican Coat of Arms".
- Seasoned rice - pumpkin or Callaloo plus spices
- Stir-fry or steamed vegetables
- Stew peas
- Turned cornmeal

#### Breads and pastries



- Bammy flatbread
- Bammy
- Black cake
- Bulla cake
- Coco bread
- Grotto
- Hard dough bread
- Peg bread
- Rock cake
- Rum cake
- Spiced bun
- Sugar bun

### Beverages

- Bigga and D&G sodas
- Bush tea
- Carrot juice with spices such as nutmeg and vanilla
- Chocolate milk
- Cocktails
- D&G Malta
- Fruit juices (cucumber, guava, mango, otaheite apple, pawpaw, pineapple, soursop, etc)
- Ginger beer
- Guinness punch with spices such as nutmeg and vanilla
- Irish moss
- Limeade
- Liqueurs (Sangster's, Tia Maria, etc)
- Mauby
- Red Stripe
- Rums
- Sorrel
- Supligen
- Tamarind Fizz
- Ting

### Desserts and sweets

Mango and soursop ice cream are two popular desserts. Jamaican ice cream comes in many flavours like grapenut, rum and raisin and Dragon Stout.

Other popular desserts include batata pudding, cornmeal pudding, cassava pone, gizzada, grater cake, toto, banana fritters, coconut drops, plantain tarts and guava cheese.

Tie A Leaf, or blue drawers is a dish made by combining a starch (usually cornmeal or cassava) with coconut milk, then wrapped and tied in banana leaf before boiling.

Asham is parched corn that is ground and combined with brown sugar.

Tamarind balls are candy made with the sticky flesh of the fruit rolled with brown sugar into round sweet and sour balls. You can also make a spicy version that contains hot pepper in the mix.

Bustamante Backbone, named after the first Prime Minister Alexander Bustamante, is a candy.[3]

Jamaican food abroad



Jamaican coco bread from a Los Angeles bakery

Jamaican cuisine is available throughout North America, the United Kingdom, and other places with a sizable Jamaican population. In the United States, a large number of restaurants are located throughout New York's boroughs, Atlanta, Fort Lauderdale, Washington DC, Philadelphia, and other metropolitan areas. In Canada, Jamaican restaurants can be found in the Toronto metropolitan area, as well as Vancouver, Montreal, and Ottawa. Jamaican dishes are also featured on the menus of Bahama Breeze, a US-based restaurant chain owned by Darden Restaurants.

Golden Krust Caribbean Bakery & Grill is a chain of about 120 franchised restaurants found throughout the U.S. These restaurants sell Jamaican patties, buns, breads, and other popular Jamaican dishes. They also supply food to several institutions in New York. [4]

### **III. CONCLUSION**

A breathtaking island bursting with culture and adventure, Jamaica is adding to its international allure by quickly becoming one of the hottest destinations for food lovers around the globe. With fresh and exotic ingredients to experience (and equally amazing places to try them), it was probably just a matter of time before Jamaican cuisine would have its food moment. And that moment is now. While many of us may still be hard pressed to name authentic Jamaican dishes, tourists on the island are falling fast for the country's unique and mouth watering delicacies. According to a study commissioned by a tourism group on the island, Jamaica's culinary offerings are already among its top draws.

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