

Versatile Hospitality around the Globe a Case Study on Cuisine and Culture in Hospitality Industry - Mauritius

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Abstract: *The cuisine of Mauritius is influenced by the tropical location of the island as well as the cultural diversity which characterizes the country. Mauritian cuisine is a blend of African, Chinese, European (mainly French) and Indian influences in the history of Mauritius. Most of the dishes and practices into the culinary traditions are inspired by French culture, former African slaves, and Indian workers and Chinese migrants arriving during the 19th century. Over the years, communities found in Mauritius have adapted and mixed each other's cuisine to their liking, resulting in the development of Mauritian cuisine. While some popular dishes and desserts are consumed by Mauritians of all ethnic groups or communities, there are also form of cuisines which remain distinctly ethnic and are unique to a specific ethnic community due to their ancestral cultural and historical connections. Local food which varies depending on ethnic communities therefore reflects the strong traditional, cultural, and historical influences of each community. What culture is Mauritius?*

68% of residents are of Indian origin with roots in Bhojpuri, Tamil, Hindi, Urdu, Telugu. 27% are Creoles, either Franco-Mauritian or from Rodrigues. Added to that 3% are Chinese and 2% of European descent. Religion [1]Hinduism is the primary religion in Mauritius with around 52% identifying as Hindu.

There are five broad ethnic categories: Franco-Mauritian, Sino-Mauritian, Indo-Mauritian, Afro-Mauritian and Creole-Mauritian.

What are the traditions and customs in Mauritius?

Tradition. Like everywhere in the world, Mauritius has its own traditions. The "Sundowner" - literally the "sunset" - is a traditional weekend and holiday ritual during which the Mauritians meet on the beach to enjoy the last rays of the sun: a very pleasant moment, especially in summer.

Mauritius has a mixed developing economy based on manufactured exports, agriculture, tourism, and financial services. Government efforts to diversify the economy after 1980 have been successful, and the island is no longer as completely dependent on sugar production as it was throughout most of its history.

Keywords: Development, Economy, Sundowner, Cuisine.

I. INTRODUCTION

Common main and side dishes in Mauritius

Chinese noodles (fried or boiled), fried rice (called "diri frir"), "bol renversé", "boulettes" (i.e. fish balls, vegetables and meat balls in broth), Sino- Mauritian spring rolls, Chop seuy, haleem ("halim"), "biryani" (also written as "briani" and sometimes called "brié"), "dholl puri" and roti served with tomato sauce and pickles; curry, including "sept caris" (Tali), are popular form of dishes for the Mauritians regardless of their ethnicity. Another popular dish is "vinny" (or "vindaye"); the spicier version of vinnday is made by using a mixture of vinegar, mustard seeds, and turmeric.

[2]Mauritius is known for its sauces and curries which are typically served with meat, seafood, and vegetables dishes. Other common preparations are chutney, archard, and pickles. The Mauritian curries are unique as they rarely contains coconut milk, typically uses European herbs (e.g. thyme), and uses more variety of meat (e.g. duck) and seafood (e.g. octopus). The rougaille (also written as "rougay") is a tomato sauce cooked with onions, garlic, chillies, ginger and a

variety of spices, which is popular; it can be eaten with fish, meat and vegetables. The Mauritian versions of curry, chutney, rougaille, and pickles have a local flavor and differ, at times considerably, from the original Indian recipes.

French influences in Mauritian Cuisine

Mauritius has had strong ties with French culture throughout its history and was deeply influenced by the French people's "savoir vivre". French hunting traditions have also influenced Mauritian cuisine in the use of venison and wild boar, which is typically served on domaines or estates, restaurants and hotels. As years passed by, some have been adapted to the more exotic ingredients of the island to confer some unique flavor. French influences in Mauritian cuisine can be found in the consumption of Rougailles (light stew) scented with thyme, Daube (i.e. chicken or beef stew), croissants, baguette bread, bouillon, tuna salad, civet de lièvre and coq au vin served with good wine. Many forms of French desserts and cakes were influenced by the Franco-Mauritians and can also be found in France; such as tarts. French tarts and milk coffee are well-liked by Franco-Mauritians.

| Types of Food | | List of food |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Savory dishes | Stew | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civet de lièvre • coq au vin • Daube (i.e. chicken or beef stew) • Rougailles (light stew) scented with thyme, |
| | Soup | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bouillon |
| Salads | Fish-based | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tuna salad |
| Bread | baguette bread | |
| Desserts and Pastries | croissants | |
| | Tarts; i.e. French tarts | |
| Drinks | Non-alcoholic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk coffee |
| | Alcoholic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wine |

II. SUMMARY

Hospitality Industry In Mauritius

Historical Background

In Mauritius, the first hotel was the Paik Hotel in 1952 so as to accommodate the crew members coming at that time. Then came the Mauritius Hotel, the first beach hotel, built in 1954 at Le Morne followed by Le Chaland, another beach hotel in 1961.

But the real development of tourism took place soon after Mauritius got its independence from the British. In early 1970's the creation of l'Ile aux Biches Hotel by the Mauritius Hotels, the setting up of the Club Méditerranée and the Saint Gervais Hotel by the Southern Sun Hotels as well as the Melville Beach Hotel by the ex-British Colons who wanted to come back here during the winter months of England. [3] The Mauritius Hotel is now the Beachcomber group and the Southern Sun Hotels is the Sun

International Resorts Limited. At present there are 95 hotels in Mauritius and there are not less than 5 more under construction as per the registered list set by the Ministry of Tourism. The number of hotels, rooms and bed places have increased constantly from 1991. Moreover the Prime Minister has announced his vision to reach 2 million tourists in 2015. Consequently an average annual growth of 10% in tourist arrival is expected. In order to reach this target, an approximate number of 18500 rooms should be made available. This will bring about the creation of around 37000 direct jobs and double the amount in terms of indirect jobs. Due to the rapid growth of tourism and hospitality industry, the government has introduced incentives for the private sector to bring in sustainable development, namely by corporate governance and corporate social responsibility. This is achievable through proper public-private sector partnership.

Overview of the Hotel industry in Mauritius

The hospitality industry in Mauritius has developed rapidly during the past 25 years. The coastal regions as well as the interior part of the island are constantly changing with the construction of the hotels and the increasing number of vehicles being used for the tourism industry.

In 2007, the tourism industry was considered the third pillar of the economy after Sugar and Textile, and currently it plays a vital role in the economic growth of the country. The undoubted fall of 35% in the price of sugar and the removal of preference agreement with the EU market, has earmarked the tourism industry as the main industry capable of boosting the Mauritian economy.

In July 2008, according to the last bulletin published by the Central Statistical Office (CSO), Mauritius welcomed 81,169 tourists as compared to 77,225 in 2007, registering a 5.1% growth over the same period a year ago.

Source: Tourism sector performance for the month of July, AHRIM Report, August 2008, pg 2

But after two decades of impressive growth, the need for responsible corporate governance has been felt in the country as the attitudes, mentality and knowledge of those working in that industry have not evolved at the same pace in terms of social responsibility and environmental awareness. Impacts of this rapid and somehow unplanned development are being experienced in the environment at large. Still, a lot has to be done to meet the competitive edge through proper campaign and involvement of all stakeholders so as to contribute towards sustainable development of the hospitality sector.

In order to support its continuous growth, the Mauritian Tourism and Hospitality industry needs well-trained staff with full knowledge of their product while respecting the socio-economic and cultural environment in which the Mauritian tourism product is evolving. It is really important to maintain a high standard of efficiency and service so as to meet the requirements of an increasingly competitive and sophisticated global market.

III. CONCLUSION

The religious landscape of Mauritius is diverse and tolerant. While Hinduism is the most widespread faith with 51.9% of the Mauritian population being Hindus, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism are also practised by a significant portion of the population. As a secular nation, Mauritius adopts freedom of religion as a fundamental right enshrined in the constitution. Interfaith disputes are unheard of, and the people coexist in harmony.

[4] The country engages in several age-old traditions and celebrates its festivals with great enthusiasm. The vast range of festivals reflects the population's famed ethnic diversity. Some of the annual national festivals celebrated include Slavery Abolition Day (February 1), National Day or Independence Day (March 12) and Labour Day (May 1).

The different religious communities of Mauritius celebrate their respective festivals lending a vibrant atmosphere to the island. Hindus celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali, Ugadi and Maha Shivratri, during which the devotees make a mass pilgrimage to the most sacred Hindu site in Grand Bassin, where a towering statue of Lord Shiva resides beside the Ganga Talao.

Muslims celebrate fasting during the month of Ramadan and Eid. Other Asian festivals such as the Chinese New Year and lantern festival brighten up the night sky and are a spiritual as well as a visual delight. The entire population celebrates major Christian festivals such as Easter, Christmas and New Year and visiting the country during these festivals makes for a fantastic experience.

Although Mauritius has no official or national language, French and English are the two major languages spoken in Mauritius. Consequently, the island nation finds itself as a member nation of the Commonwealth of Nations and La Francophonie. The mother tongue of most Mauritians is a unique blend of European and African languages and is known as Mauritian Creole. This is the prominent language for music, religious and cultural activities.

All media and literature in the nation involve French as the medium of communication. Apart from these, major Asian languages such as Bhojपुरi, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and Chinese are also spoken albeit by small groups of people. Tourists visiting the island should have no problem communicating as long as they understand and speak English or French.

Mauritian cuisine derives its inspiration from Creole, Chinese, French and Indian cuisines. Be it street food or fine dining, Mauritius has lip-smacking options across the spectrum. Dhol Pori, a Mauritian iteration of Paratha with Dal is the most famous street food on the island.

The tropical climate allows several varieties of fruits to be grown on the fertile volcanic soil such as golden pineapples, refreshing coconuts and luscious mangoes. Any mention of the cuisine of Mauritius is incomplete without mentioning its hallowed seafood. A pescatarian's paradise, be it fish, lobsters, crabs, prawns, squid, shrimps or octopus, the options available are limitless and sumptuous. Mauritius' local favorites - phoenix beer and rum are great options for those who appreciate fine spirits.[5]

The attire of Mauritians varies greatly from person to person. While there exist no strict pan-island social guidelines with respect to the clothes a person chooses to wear, the dress code often varies depending upon the community one belongs to and the place he is visiting. Swimwear while allowed on the beaches is frowned upon elsewhere.

Hindu women wear traditional sarees as part of their cultural legacy and Muslim women can be seen wearing hijabs and burkas. It is essential to wear appropriate clothing while visiting sites of religious significance to avoid hurting the sentiments of the locals. Leather accessories and articles are barred in Hindu temples.

Social restrictions on clothing are beginning to be relaxed recently due to the influence of Western tourists visiting the island. Many upmarket restaurants and nightclubs often exercise certain restraints concerning the clothes customers may choose to wear. To maintain their high-end atmosphere and feel, they may not allow admission to customers dressed in casual clothing such as jeans, shorts and flip-flops.

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