



PHOTOS THIS SPREAD
CLOCKWISE FROM
TOP LEFT Bajan
sign; Mount
Gay distillery.



...Rum
hasn't
always
been made
this way...



Barbados

WHERE ON EARTH

BARBADOS

Land of Rum
and Salted Fish

by TALIA WOOLDRIDGE

PHOTOS THIS SPREAD
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

LEFT Caribbean beach view; Flying fish; dining at the Tides; Breadfruit vendor; Flying fish platter; Frying fish balls; Chicken and macaroni.

«WARM RAIN SPRINKLES down on a bustling crowd who are dancing to live reggae. People sway to the music with rum and coconut water in hand. It's just another Friday night at Oistin's Fish Fry in Barbados and we, along with hundreds of others, dance, chat and sip while enjoying tasty salted fish cakes and flying fish sandwiches.

HISTORICALLY, BARBADOS traded sugar and rum with Canada for Atlantic-Canadian salted cod and lumber via Bluenose vessels in the late 17th century. It was this trade that helped Barbados become the gateway for trade in the Caribbean to the rest of the world. The first Canadian banks were in Barbados and remain so today. Today, Bajan rum remains a major export for the island. Their fish cakes have also outlasted the cod fish trade — and understandably so. One bite will help to explain why this dish is considered an island specialty.

For many, the best fish cakes are made by award-winning Executive Chef Creig Greenidge, a culinary ambassador to Barbados and owner of CM Catering, a sought-after outfit based on the island. While visitors to the island cannot find his cuisine readily available — including his famous macaroni pie — I managed to obtain two recipes from him to share.

Cuz's Fish Shack in Pebble's Beach serves up another local favourite: the delicious cutter fish sandwich. If you time your visit right, you can enjoy these mouthwatering delights while watching an exquisite sunset over the turquoise sea. I had to withhold from ordering seconds to save space for our dinner reservation at Cocktail Kitchen, a casual five-star restaurant situated on The Gap, Barbados' busy night life strip and home to excellent dining.

Cocktail Kitchen is cozy and modern. It delivers scrumptious appetizers that can be shared tapas style, a diverse selection of mains and outstanding cocktails and desserts. It is run by local Chef Damian Leach, NIFCA Chef of the Year winner, recipient of The Governor General's Award of Excellence and prestigious CHTA Caribbean Chef of the Year (2017 and 2018 for best seafood). Chef Damian worked his way up in Barbados' five-»



BARBADOS TOURISM AUTHORITY

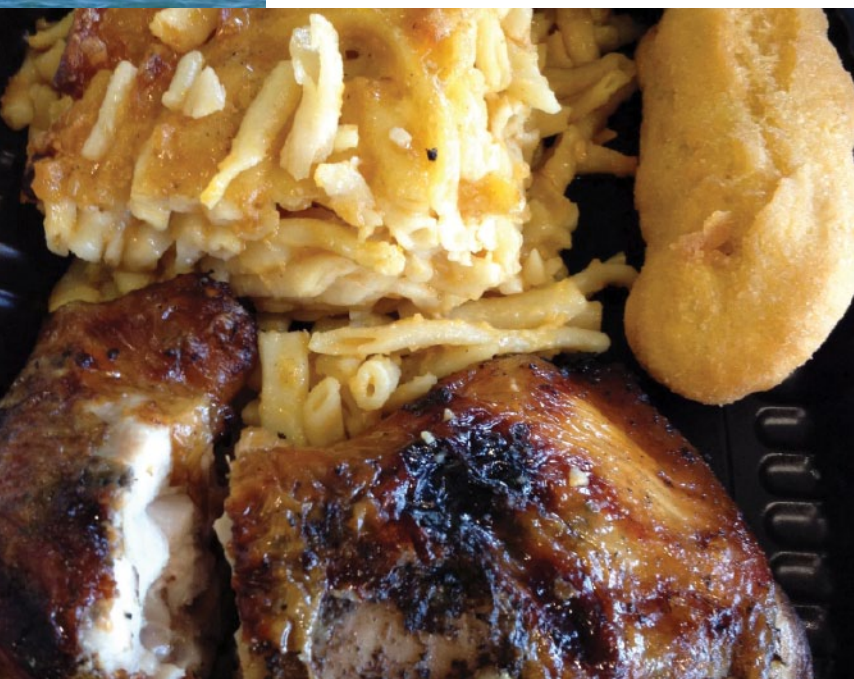


LAND OF RUM AND SALTED FISH

DESTINATIONS

BARBADOS

THE TIDES



BARBADOS TOURISM AUTHORITY



BARBADOS TOURISM AUTHORITY



SERVES 8

Macaroni Pie

I WAS LUCKY to get the recipe for Chef Creig Greenidge's macaroni pie, regarded by many as the best in Barbados! Straight macaroni is preferred over elbows but you can use either shape.

Macaroni 1 lb**Evaporated Milk**
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups**Tomato Ketchup**
1 cup**Yellow Mustard**
2 Tbs**Grated Cheddar Cheese** 1 lb,
divided**Salt and Pepper**
to taste**Bajan or other Hot Pepper Sauce** to taste

- 1 BOIL** the macaroni in salted water until al dente. Drain the water and add the macaroni back to the pot.
- 2 ADD** the evaporated milk, ketchup, mustard and two thirds of the cheese. Mix well and season to taste with salt, pepper and hot sauce.
- 3 PLACE** the mixture in a baking dish and top with the remaining cheddar cheese.
- 4 BAKE** in 350°F oven for 45 minutes.
- 5 ALLOW** to cool for 15 minutes, cut and serve.

«star restaurants, The Cliff and Tapas. At Tapas he was head chef before he left to open Cocktail Kitchen in 2016.

We sampled Cocktail Kitchen's spin on the Bajan fish cake, Salt Fish & Crab, along with Lionfish & Bakes, heavenly lobster with breadfruit, perfectly spiced Caribbean Seafood Curry and Island Spiced Chicken. We paired all with CK's



signature Rum Punch leaving just enough room for delectable Caribbean S'Mores.

Luckily, The Gap offered a few places to dance off our dinner and dessert! We also sampled some of Barbados many rums and justified some late-night BBQ from vendors along the strip.

For seated fine dining, The Cliff and Tides are two of the island's best and for good reason. The next evening, we lucked into a reservation overlooking the water at The Cliff and feasted on a succulent lobster main paired with some sparkling wine and an amazing view.

While hundreds of rum shops are scattered across Barbados, Foursquare Rum Distillery (makers of Rum Sixty-Six), West Indies Rum Distillery Ltd. and Mount Gay are the island's major exporters. A tour of the Mount Gay Rum Distillery offers tastings and a fascinating history lesson and window into the massive rum production of these large distilleries.

But rum hasn't always been made this way.

St Nicholas Abbey, a boutique Bajan rum distillery and historic attraction on one of the oldest plantations in the Caribbean, still utilizes the traditional 350-year-old distillation process. St Nicholas Abbey plantation workers began to experiment with fermenting molasses into alcohol resulting in the first (terrible tasting!) rums known as 'Kill-Divil.'

Starting in 2006, the Warren family restored the property to its original glory making St Nicholas Abbey one of the last surviving, intact 17th-century plantations on the island. They also created the signature St Nicholas Abbey Rum, an artisanal blend made with pesticide-free sugar cane grown on the property and Barbados' naturally filtered water from limestone caves. The distillery's location atop Cherry Tree Hill allows for ageing with the cooling trade wind breezes.




THIS PHOTO
Bathsheba
Beach.



The award-winning white rum, made from the Estate's own sugar cane that is pressed in the 1890 steam mill, is sweet and sugary with fresh highlights of marshmallows, coconut and vanilla. The Abbey's premium 15-year-old rum is aged in bourbon oak casks and offers a smooth finish with complex fruit notes.

For spirits connoisseurs, St Nicholas Abbey rums are hand-bottled in a beautiful glass decanter engraved with a number and date, along with a handmade etching of the St Nicholas Abbey Great house. The decanter is sealed with a mahogany cork, honouring the 250-year-old trees planted atop Cherry Tree Hill, and covered with hand-embossed leather.

When visiting St Nicholas Abbey Distillery, be sure to leave time to tour the Jacobean great house, surrounding grounds and ride the steam engine along the St Nicholas Abbey Heritage Railway. The view of the breathtaking Bathsheba Beach from Cherry Tree Hill is a must. 

Oistin's Fish Fry
www.barbados.org/oistins.htm#XN31m1NKjEZ

Cuz's Fish Shack
www.facebook.com/Cuzs-Fish-Shack-Barbados-116977991701317

Creig Greenidge
www.instagram.com/chefcreig_246

Cocktail Kitchen
www.ckbarbados.com

The Cliff
www.thecliffbarbados.com

Tapas
www.tapasbarbados.com

The Tides
www.tidesbarbados.com

Mount Gay Rum
www.mountgayrum.com

Rum Sixty Six
www.rumsixtysix.com

St Nicholas Abbey
www.stnicholasabbey.com



BARBADOS



SERVES 6-8 AS A SNACK

Bajan Fish Cakes

FISH CAKES are a favourite breakfast dish and snack food in Barbados.

Salted Cod
1 lb

All-Purpose Flour 1 cup

Baking Powder 1 tsp

Fresh Thyme
chopped,
2 Tbs

Fresh Dill
chopped,
2 Tbs

Onion 1 small,
finely chopped

Scotch Bonnet Pepper 1,
chopped

Salt and Pepper
to taste

Vegetable Oil
for deep frying

- 1 BRING** the salt cod to a boil in 6 cups of water. Boil for 4 minutes then drain and discard the water.
- 2 ADD** enough fresh water to just cover the cod and bring to a boil for 3 minutes. Flake the fish with a fork and allow to cool in the cooking water.
- 3 IN** a mixing bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, onion, thyme, dill and Scotch Bonnet pepper. Add the cod fish and its cooking water. Mix well. Season with salt and pepper. (If the fish is still salty after cooking, you may not need to add salt).
- 4 HEAT** 2 inches of vegetable oil in a heavy-bottomed saucepan or a Dutch oven. Drop teaspoonfuls of the fish mixture into the oil and deep fry until golden. Drain on paper towels and serve while still warm.

TALIA WOOLDRIDGE is a Toronto-based freelance writer, fashion designer and music lover.