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23 June 2025

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The Culinary Richness of Haiti: Tradition, Identity, and Resistance

Haitian cuisine is one of the most representative pillars of the Caribbean nation's cultural identity. A complex fusion of African, French, Taíno, and Creole influences, traditional Haitian food stands out not only for its flavor but also for its strong symbolic and historical significance.

One of the most emblematic dishes is griot, pork marinated in citrus and spices (epis) and then fried until crispy. It is commonly served with rice and red beans (diri ak pwa wouj) and pikliz, a spicy pickled cabbage and carrot relish. This combination is widely considered Haiti's national dish.



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Another cultural cornerstone is Soup Joumou, a squash soup with meat, pasta, and vegetables traditionally consumed every January 1st to commemorate Independence Day. During the colonial era, this soup was reserved for French slaveowners, and its inclusion in the diet of free Haitians became a powerful symbol of emancipation.

Other typical dishes include diri djondjon, rice cooked with black mushrooms that give it a distinct flavor and color; tassot, fried goat or beef; and tchaka, a festive stew made with dried corn, beans, and pork.

Seafood plays an important role in Haitian cuisine, especially lambi (conch) and pwason boukannen, grilled fish often served with fried plantains. Popular appetizers include accras (malanga fritters), Haitian patties (savory filled pastries), and banane pése, twice-fried green plantains.

Among drinks and sweets, akasan stands out—a thick cornmeal beverage; kasav, a cassava flatbread; and krémas, a sweet coconut, rum, and spice drink traditionally served during celebrations.

Beyond its flavor, Haitian cuisine is a form of cultural resistance. The use of epis—a blend of garlic, onion, peppers, and herbs—is the hallmark of Creole seasoning and an essential element in most dishes.

Through its food, Haiti preserves its history and affirms its identity to the world.

Published by teleSUR 16 June, 2025

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Capoeira: The Afro-Brazilian Circle Where Resistance Becomes Art

More than a martial art, more than a dance, capoeira is a living expression of Afro-Brazilian heritage. Recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, this practice fuses combat, rhythm, and ritual into a dynamic circle of movement, music, and memory.



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In capoeira, practitioners—capoeiristas—form a circle (roda) where two players engage in a fluid, acrobatic game of feints, kicks, and dodges. Around them, others clap, sing, and play traditional instruments like the berimbau, atabaque, and pandeiro, creating a rhythm that guides the interaction.

Each circle is led by a master (mestre), who preserves the group's knowledge, initiates the chants, and sets the tempo. The mestre is also a guardian of ethics and ritual, ensuring that capoeira remains a space of respect, discipline, and cultural transmission.

Capoeira's roots trace back to the resistance of enslaved Africans in colonial Brazil, who disguised their training in self-defense as dance. Today, its practice continues to affirm identity, resilience, and social cohesion, especially among marginalized communities.

Learning capoeira means more than mastering kicks—it involves building instruments, singing ancestral songs, improvising verses, and embodying a code of conduct passed down through generations. Knowledge is shared orally and physically, through observation and imitation, reinforcing bonds between teacher and student, community and history.

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From the streets of Salvador to community centers in Ohio, capoeira has become a global symbol of Afro-diasporic pride and creativity. Yet at its core, it remains a circle of resistance, where every movement tells a story of struggle, survival, and joy.

Published by teleSUR 18 June, 2025

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Cuban Emerald: The Green Jewel of the Island's Skies

Darting through flowering gardens, dry forests, and shaded plantations, the Cuban emerald (Riccordia ricordii) is one of the most beloved and recognizable birds in Cuba. With its shimmering green plumage and rapid wingbeats, this tiny hummingbird has become a symbol of the island's natural beauty and cultural identity.

A Hummingbird for All Cubans



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Measuring just 9 to 10 centimeters in length, the Cuban emerald may be small, but it leaves a lasting impression. Unlike its elusive cousin, the bee hummingbird (Mellisuga helenae), the Cuban emerald is commonly seen across the island—from rural fields to urban balconies.

Males boast a brilliant metallic green plumage, while females display more subdued tones with white underparts. This sexual dimorphism adds to the species' visual richness and charm.

A Resilient Species

The Cuban emerald is classified as a species of Least Concern, thanks to its adaptability and stable population. It thrives in a wide range of habitats, including dry and humid forests, gardens, and even city parks. Its resilience makes it a vital pollinator and a constant presence in the daily lives of Cubans.

Cultural Symbolism and Folklore

In Cuban music, poetry, and oral traditions, the zunzún (as it's affectionately known) is a symbol of energy, freedom, and tenderness. Its buzzing wings and restless flight have inspired metaphors of vitality and good fortune.

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“Some say that when a zunzún visits your home, it brings blessings,” says Mario Vallejo, a farmer from Viñales. “It’s like a little guardian.”

Conservation and Awareness

Although not currently endangered, experts warn that habitat loss and pesticide use could threaten the species in the future. Protecting the Cuban emerald means preserving not only biodiversity but also a living emblem of the island’s spirit.

With a heart that beats over a thousand times per minute and wings that blur into invisibility, the Cuban emerald reminds us that greatness often comes in the smallest forms.

Published by teleSUR 17 June, 2025

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Kokomo Island: A Hidden Gem of Bahamian Elegance and Escape

Just minutes off the coast of Eleuthera lies Kokomo, a secluded Bahamian island that has quietly preserved its reputation as a sanctuary of luxury, history, and natural beauty.

Also known as Sandals Cay, this private isle offers a rare blend of Caribbean charm and European refinement, once favored by the Duke and Duchess of Windsor as a personal retreat in the 1940s.



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Today, Kokomo remains a refuge for couples seeking exclusivity, serenity, and indulgence. The island is partially untouched, while the developed side features a lagoon-style freshwater pool, a world-class spa, a beachfront restaurant and bar, and private cabanas reserved for guests of the Sandals Royal Bahamian resort, which owns the island.

The island's legacy of elegance is matched by its modern amenities. Guests are ferried to Kokomo for a day of pampered seclusion, complete with butler service, bonfires at sunset, and access to two pristine beaches.

Offshore, a vibrant reef teems with lobsters, stingrays, and tropical fish, making it a favorite for snorkeling enthusiasts.

Despite its curated comforts, Kokomo retains a sense of wild beauty. Palm trees sway over powdery white sands, and the soundscape is dominated by waves and birdsong rather than crowds. The island's dual identity—as both a natural haven and a boutique escape—has made it one of the Caribbean's most coveted yet discreet destinations.

Kokomo offers a reminder that paradise is not lost—it's just a short boat ride away.

Published by teleSUR 19 June, 2025

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Miguel Ángel Asturias: Guatemala's Mythical Chronicler Who Spoke to the World

Miguel Ángel Asturias Rosales (1899–1974) stands as one of the most influential writers in Latin America. Born in Guatemala City, this lawyer, journalist, poet, and diplomat marked a turning point in Hispanic literature by blending indigenous traditions with the social concerns of the 20th century.

His work was foundational in shaping magical realism—years before the so-called "Latin American Boom"—and earned him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1967.

