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Caribbean Carnival: A Tradition of Resistance and Cultural Heritage

Across the Caribbean, Carnival stands as a powerful symbol of resilience and cultural identity, a tradition deeply rooted in the history of resistance by enslaved African people. Originating in Trinidad and Tobago in the late 18th century, Carnival was born as a response to the exclusion of enslaved populations from the elaborate pre-Lenten festivities of French plantation owners.



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Faced with oppression, the enslaved adapted and transformed these celebrations into a defiant display of their own. They repurposed discarded garments into satirical costumes, used drumming and coded language to develop Calypso music, and covered their bodies in black mud and paint—an act of reclaiming and celebrating the very identity for which they were once punished.

Today, this historical resistance lives on through J'ouvert, a pre-dawn street procession where revelers, covered in oil and mud, honor their ancestors' fight for dignity and freedom.

Carnival has since evolved into a globally recognized event, attracting thousands of visitors annually, with its peak festivities leading up to Ash Wednesday.

While social media has helped amplify its popularity, many emphasize the importance of remembering its roots beyond the spectacle of glittering costumes and nonstop revelry.

More than a festival, Caribbean Carnival is a living testimony to survival, resistance, and the ability to find joy even in the darkest times. As its popularity grows worldwide, preserving its historical significance remains essential in honoring those who forged this cultural legacy through struggle and perseverance.

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Dark and aromatic beverage connecting Latin America with the Arab world

Coffee, that dark and aromatic beverage that awakens the senses and accompanies the mornings of millions of people, is much more than a simple drink: it is a cultural bridge connecting Latin America to the Arab world.



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Its history is a fascinating journey that begins in the mountains of Yemen, where, according to legend, a goat herder named Kaldi discovered the energizing properties of coffee beans after observing the lively behavior of his animals upon consuming them.

From there, coffee spread throughout the Arab world, becoming a central element of social and spiritual life. The first coffeehouses, known as qahveh khaneh, emerged in cities like Mecca and Cairo, becoming spaces for gathering, debate, and enjoyment.

However, coffee's journey did not end in the Arab world. Through trade and colonial expansion, the beans made their way to Europe and, later, crossed the Atlantic to Latin America. It was in the fertile lands of countries like Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico that coffee found a new home.

Today, Latin America is responsible for over 60% of the world's coffee production, with Brazil being the largest producer and exporter on the planet.

But beyond the numbers, coffee has become a symbol of identity for many Latin American nations, where its cultivation and preparation are integral to culture and the economy.

What's interesting is how both regions have developed rituals around coffee that reflect their values and traditions. In the Arab world, coffee is served as a gesture of hospitality, often accompanied by dates and prepared with spices like cardamom.

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In Latin America, coffee is an excuse for conversation, an inseparable companion in family gatherings, and a key element in celebrations.

Additionally, techniques like café de olla in Mexico or tinto in Colombia show how coffee has been adapted to local tastes, ingredients, and cultural practices. While café de olla highlights the use of spices and traditional cooking methods, tinto emphasizes simplicity and accessibility.

Together, they show how coffee is not just a global commodity but a deeply personal and cultural experience that varies from region to region.

But the connection goes beyond culture: coffee has also been a driver of social and economic change. In the Arab world, it was a catalyst for intellectual exchange during the Islamic Golden Age. In Latin America, coffee cultivation transformed entire landscapes, boosted local economies, and, in some cases, also generated social and environmental challenges. Today, both regions share a growing commitment to sustainability and fair trade, seeking to preserve not only the quality of coffee but also the well-being of those who produce it.

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Coffee, then, is more than a drink: it is a living testament to how two seemingly distant regions can be united by a common thread. Every cup of coffee we enjoy today is the result of centuries of history, cultural exchange, and adaptation. It is an invitation to remember that, although our cultures may seem different, we share more than we imagine. And perhaps, in that first morning sip, we are unknowingly celebrating a connection that transcends continents and eras.



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Arab-Venezuelan Food, When Two Cultures of Delicacies Come Together

Due to strong migratory flows of Arabs to Venezuela during the late nineteenth and twentieth century, especially from Syrians and Lebanese, Arab food has left a deep imprint on Venezuelan gastronomy, fusing into true delicacies that combine the best of both culinary traditions.



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The arrival of Arab immigrants to Venezuela brought with it a wide range of recipes and culinary techniques. In this context, you can find typical ingredients such as wheat, chickpea, honey, garlic, and various spices that have been adapted to the local palates. This cultural integration has allowed Arab food to blend with Venezuelan products, creating a unique flavor.

One of the best examples, are the arepas, a kind of Venezuelan-Colombian traditional bread made from corn in the shape of a disc that is cooked in a hot pan, fused with typical Middle Eastern ingredients. In the web page Cookpad, the user Zandry Abradelo explains the “Arepa Zaatar with Costeño cheese”.

She explains the recipe as follows: you must have ready the zaatar with coastal cheese, have ready the dough for arepas: mix 2 cups of corn flour, 2 cups of warm water, salt to taste and 1 tablespoon. of olive oil, mix and pass it 1/2 hour, should not stick to the hands. Then spread the dough into a plastic wrap and place the zaatar as shown in the picture. Mix until all ingredients are incorporated. Assemble balls of about 4 cm. diameter and flatten with a plate lined with plastic paper. Finally Roast in a teflon pan for both sides.

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An Arab-Venezuelan food restaurant in Venezuela.

In addition, other common recipes are the Arab food in Venezuela includes emblematic dishes such as the “kibbeh”, which mixes lamb or beef with bulgur and spices, served as croquettes or in molds. Also popular are “hummus” and “baba ganoush”, creams of chickpeas and roasted aubergines, respectively, which are enjoyed as appetizers with pita bread or arepas.

The “tabulé”, a salad of bulgur, parsley, tomato and onion, brings freshness to meals and the “baklava”, a sweet made with filo dough, nuts and honey syrup, is highly appreciated in festivities reflect the rich fusion of cultures in Venezuelan cuisine and are very popular in the South American country.

The Venezuelan Arab communities usually celebrate their festivities with banquets that highlight these flavors. For weddings and other social ceremonies the tables are usually filled with these traditional dishes that honor their cultural heritage, merging with elements of Venezuelan gastronomy.

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Cuba's Provincial Book Fairs, Literature All Around The Island

The Provincial Book Fairs in Cuba are an extension of the Havana International Book Fair, bringing the celebration of literature and reading to all provinces of the country and becoming an opportunity to readers and visitors to enjoy the good literature.



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These fairs have been consolidated as significant cultural events that promote access to literature and encourage the habit of reading in various communities, providing the opportunity to bring the literary novelties of the country from “Cabo de San Antonio, until the Punta de Maisí” as a Cuban saying.

Before 1959, book fairs in Cuba were modest events, organized in an elementary way and with limited resources. They were held in places such as the Central Park of Havana and, in practice, consisted of sales of sales and sales of unsold books, both from the few Cuban publishers and from Spanish and Latin American publishers with a presence in the capital.





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With the triumph of the Revolution, culture and education acquired a central role in Cuban society, which led to the transformation and expansion of these events. The book fairs began to be organized in a more structured way and with greater reach, reaching all the provinces and municipalities of the country.

The Havana International Book Fair, held annually in the capital, marks the beginning of literary festivities in Cuba. Once concluded, the fair moves to the different provinces, adapting to the characteristics and needs of each territory. This year's Havana International fair was held from February 13 to 23, and is now expected to tour the entire Caribbean island, traditionally culminating in Santiago de Cuba on March 23.

Each province organises its own fair with main and sub-headquarters in municipalities and communities. These venues usually include public squares, parks, cultural centres and local bookstores. In addition to the sale and presentation of books, cultural activities such as concerts, workshops, conferences and meetings with authors are held, making the fair a real festival of culture.

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Despite the economic and logistical constraints faced by the country due to the tightening of US sanctions, the Provincial Book Fairs remain as events expected and valued by the population, and are a sign of the importance given by the Cuban State to literature and culture in general.

The resilience and creativity of the organizers allow, year after year, to overcome obstacles and continue to promote reading in every corner of Cuba.

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Jamaica's Tourism goes full steam into the digital age

Jamaica's tourism sector is undergoing a digital transformation, leveraging technology to revolutionize communication, enhance customer experiences, and optimize supply chains, according to Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett.



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The island has embraced AI-driven marketing, integrated chatbots to improve guest interactions, and streamlined its supply chain with digital platforms, positioning itself at the forefront of the evolving travel industry.

Bartlett highlighted the importance of digitization in shaping the future of tourism. He emphasized that equipping the industry with the right digital tools is essential for creating innovative and personalized travel experiences.

Jamaica is also harnessing AI and digital platforms to empower small businesses that depend on tourism. One notable example is a local pudding vendor in Ocho Rios who expanded his reach globally through online marketing, attracting tourists staying at resorts and Airbnbs. Similarly, the ALEX (Agri-Linkages Exchange) platform has transformed the local supply chain by connecting small farmers directly with hotels and resorts. Over the past year, this initiative has generated over 1 billion Jamaican dollars in sales, ensuring fresher local produce and boosting incomes for small-scale farmers.

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The country's broader strategy aims to reduce dependence on external suppliers while fostering economic sustainability within the tourism sector. By enhancing market access and fortifying supply chains, Jamaica is positioning itself to better withstand external shocks and disruptions.

Jamaica's digital transformation strategy offers valuable lessons for the global travel industry, emphasizing:

- AI-driven marketing, utilizing data analytics and AI-powered tools to personalize itineraries and optimize outreach.

- Supply chain digitization, linking small producers with the tourism sector to stimulate economic growth.

- Cybersecurity and crisis management, strengthening digital security to protect traveler data and ensure reliable communication during emergencies.

- Education and training, integrating sustainability and crisis management into academic curricula to prepare future tourism professionals.

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The fifth level contains the General Collection, the patrimonial heritage of all Salvadorans. It includes books on narrative, short stories, novels, poetry, art, sagas, politics, Latin American oral tradition, classics, science fiction, self-improvement, psychology, exact sciences, technology, biographies, history, among others.

Visitors can consult and enjoy the books in reading rooms and terraces overlooking the historic center.

The last two levels are dedicated to technology and plastic arts. Virtual reality, prototyping, robotics and 3D modeling rooms have been designed. There is a digital reading room, an immersion room with simulators and a video game area with consoles and gamer computers. There is also a space for VIP meetings, a coworking area, a home automation area and another terrace with views.

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