



dish for 30. Get Alison chatting for a bit of island history and insider info.

Don't write off those island 'fish fries' as touristy. They're a sort of evening street party with music and food vendors. In Saint Lucia, everyone loves the Friday-night fish fry at Gros Islet — it's full of locals. It's the same with jerk chicken in Jamaica: you get a great vibe at Scotchies in Montego Bay.

But there's more to Caribbean food than jerk. Check out what the region's young chefs are up to. There's a place in Bridgetown, Barbados, called Yelluh Meat that's always full of Bajans (yelluhmeat.com; mains about £8). They put

breadfruit directly onto really hot coals to cook it, then use the skin as a bowl and fill it with different things. You can have lentils with lots of spices, lamb stew, or saltfish *buljol*. I myself had some delicious pickled pigtail.

Take it from the Rastas and eat the fruits of the land. There's this incredible Jamaican place called Stush in the Bush, a sort of vegetarian supper club deep in the hills of Saint Ann parish (stushinthebush.com; six courses £75). It's run by a couple called Chris and Lisa; he's a typical chilled-out Rastafarian — everyone thinks he's sex on legs! They grow all their produce on their farm. Lisa made me wonderful ackee ravioli in a butter sauce. She picks the ackee fruit off the tree right there in front of you and then cooks it. It's a real treat.

Ainsley Harriott's cookbook Ainsley's Caribbean Kitchen is published on July 11 (Ebury Press, £20) ■

How to taste the Caribbean

By Ainsley Harriott

Born in London to Jamaican parents, the chef and TV presenter knows where to find authentic island food

Don't be scared to try street food. My favourite comes from a Barbados food van — it's called Hot Legendary Fishcakes and is on Harbour Road. It's run by a great girl who serves the most wonderful spicy, fluffy fishcakes. And you can get the best roti on the island from a van parked opposite the Sandy Lane Hotel; it doesn't have a name. You should order the curried goat.

Ask your hotel where to find the nearest market. My favourite is the Green Market in Santa Cruz, Trinidad, where you can try 'doubles': spiced chickpeas wrapped in fried dough — don't wear a white shirt, because you'll definitely end up covered in sauce. It's also the best place to try fresh coconut:

there's a lovely guy with a big machete who will slice one open for you. Take it back to him when you've drunk the juice, and he'll chop it open further and create a spoon from the husk so you can scoop out the flesh.

If in doubt, order the house speciality. Most restaurants in the Caribbean have one dish they're known for. On Tobago, you have to order the crab and dumplings at the Blue Crab restaurant in Scarborough (tobagobluecrab.com; open Tues–Fri for lunch; dinner is reservation only, on Wed and Fri; lunchtime mains about £10; three-course set dinner about £29). It's run by Kenneth and Alison, who have been together for 50 years and cooking that

Tropical delight: from top, drinking coconut straight from the shell; Barbadian houses; jerk chicken at Scotchies, Jamaica

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