



CARIBBEAN – Fun facts and trivia, cocktails and food recipes

an archipelago consisting of a 2,500-mile-long chain of more than 7,000 islands, islets, reefs, and cays scattered across the Caribbean Sea.

Only around 2% of the islands in the Caribbean are actually inhabited by people

75% of the Caribbean population lives on just 2 islands.

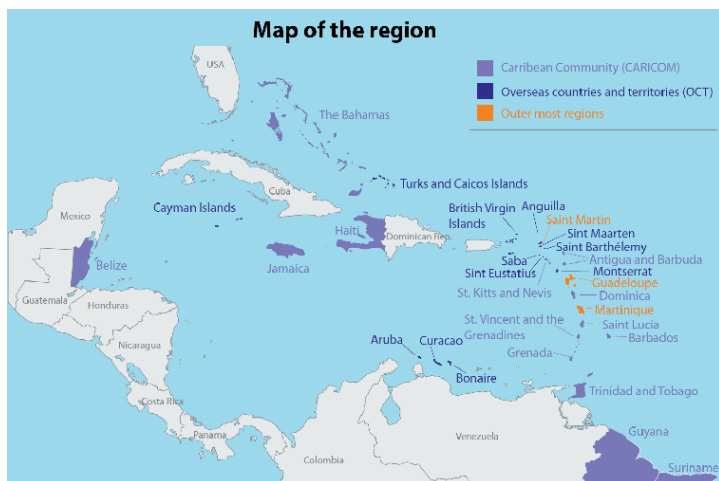
Most of the population of the Caribbean lives in the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Haiti. Since Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the island of Hispaniola, that means that 75% of Caribbeans (about 30 million people) live on just 2 islands.

The Caribbean is divided into 4 island groups.

The Caribbean islands are divided into four groups according to their general location. These four island groups are as follows: the Greater Antilles, Leeward Islands, Leeward Antilles and the Windward Islands. Here are the Caribbean countries that belong to each group:

- **The Greater Antilles:** Cayman Islands, Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico.
- **The Leeward Islands:** Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Guadeloupe, Montserrat, Saint Martin, Saba, Saint Eustatius, Saint Barthelemy, Saint Kitts & Nevis, and U.S. Virgin Islands.
- **The Leeward Antilles (also known as the ABC islands):** Aruba, Curacao, and Bonaire
- **The Windward Islands:** Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & The Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago.

The Caribbean takes its name from the indigenous Carib tribes that had migrated up the island chain from South America. They were fierce warriors and sea-raiders with a reputation for cannibalism. About 3,000 Caribs remain on Dominica today.



Map of the Caribbean region.
(ThinkTank)

9% of the world's coral reefs can be found in the Caribbean

Pigs love the beach as much as we do - located on the uninhabited island of Exuma (a district of the Bahamas), pigs are known for being beach bums.

There are over 520 endemic species in the Caribbean.

Quite literally a melting pot: Caribbean cuisine is a fusion of African, Creole, Cajun, American Indian, European, Latin American, Indian, Middle Eastern and Chinese.

Volcanos helped shaped most of the Caribbean and it looks like they're still not done. "There are 19 'live' (likely to erupt again) volcanoes in the Eastern Caribbean.

Seventy-one brands of rum are produced in Caribbean distilleries.

The Scotch Bonnet pepper, native to the Caribbean, is so named because of its resemblance to a tam o' shanter hat. At up to 350,000 on the Scoville Scale, the Scotch Bonnet can be 35 times hotter than a Jalapeño.

The great U.K. pop singer Joan Armatrading was born in 1950 in Basseterre on St. Kitts.

The islands of the Caribbean are occasionally referred to as the West Indies, due to Christopher Columbus' belief that he had landed in Asia (rather than the Americas).

They're classified as one of [Conservation International](#)'s biodiversity hotspots because they support remarkably different ecosystems ranging from cloud forests to cactus scrublands.

For interesting information about culture and history and the different islands within the Caribbean you could visit:

<https://greenglobaltravel.com/facts-about-caribbean-culture-and-history/>

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Green Global Travel is the world's #1 independently owned ecotourism website encouraging others to embrace sustainable travel, wildlife conservation, cultural preservation, and going green tips for more sustainable living.

LESSER-KNOWN FACTS AND TRIVIA ABOUT THE CARIBBEAN

1. The 1992 movie “Captain Ron” was almost entirely filmed in Puerto Rico.
2. Ackee and saltfish is the national dish of Jamaica. Ackee is an orange-yellow fruit whose flesh has the texture of scrambled eggs. Jamaica cans ackee for export to Caribbean expatriate communities around the world.
3. Legend has it that the frangipani tree, sometimes called the “flower of the Caribbean,” was spread around the world by Catholic missionaries, including to Hawaii where its flowers are woven to make leis.
4. The concept of zombies comes from Haitian voodoo culture, manifested in today’s popular TV series “The Walking Dead” and the 1979 horror classic “Dawn of the Dead.” Then there was that 2010 send-up made in Cuba and titled “Juan of the Dead.”
5. Two of the most remote islands of the Caribbean are San Andres and Providencia with a history that includes both Puritan settlers and pirates. Nicaragua, 150 miles away, is the closest mainland, but because of the twists and turns of history the islands are actually a territory of Columbia, three times further.
6. Nearly forgotten today is the Battle of the Caribbean. Between 1941 and 1945, German submarines attacked oil refineries and tankers throughout the region, including fierce raids on Nicolas Harbor in Aruba and Castries Harbor in St. Lucia, both in 1942.



Pilar at the Hemingway Museum, just outside of Havana.

7. Ernest Hemingway spent most of his working years living on a hilltop estate outside of Havana. After his death, the Cuban government turned the property into a museum dedicated to the famous author. Hemingway’s boat, a 38-foot Wheeler purchased in 1938, is on display on what used to be a tennis court.
8. St. Lucia died a virgin at the hands of the Romans, so it’s a bit ironic that her namesake Caribbean Island, specializes in hosting honeymooners.

9. Ian Fleming wrote his James Bond novels at an estate in Jamaica he named Goldeneye, not to mention a children's book "Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang: The Magical Car." Fleming moved to the island right after the end of World War II.



Ian Fleming at the desk where he wrote James Bond novels.

10. The U.S. Virgin Islands are the only American jurisdiction that calls for driving on the left. Why? Because Denmark drove on the left in 1917 when the islands were purchased by the U.S. Shortly afterward, Denmark switched to driving on the right, while the USVI continued their left-sided ways.

11. West Indian accents are distinctive and melodic. Trinidad with its profoundly diverse ethnic make-up has a reputation for having one of the most suggestive. CNN ranked the Trinidad accent as the 11 sexiest in the world, describing it as "an undulating, melodic gumbo of pan-African, French, Spanish, Creole and Hindi dialects that, when adapted for English, can be sex on a pogo stick."

12. Voters of the Dominican Republic voted overwhelmingly in 1870 to ask the United States to annex their country, which is about the size of New Hampshire and Vermont combined. The U.S. Senate rejected the petition that same year, 28-28.

13. Puerto Ricans often refer to themselves as Boricua, which means a person of Boriquen, the Taíno Indian word for the island we call Puerto Rico.



14. When he returned to Spain from the Caribbean in 1492, Columbus told the queen that oysters in the islands "grew on trees." Hearing this, contemporary artists depicted shellfish hanging like so many pears from branches. Columbus wasn't lying entirely. Caribbean oysters did grow on trees; they clung to the roots of the mangroves, which left them exposed at low tide.

15. Beginning in 1824, freed slaves from the U.S. migrated to the Samana Peninsula of Spanish-speaking Dominican Republic. Their English dialect was officially discouraged during the 20 century reign of dictator Rafael Trujillo, and only about 8,000 people are said to speak “Samana English” today.



The castle of the Mundo King.

16. A couple decades ago an eccentric German millionaire named Rolf Schultz built a wondrous, five-story castle on the side of a hill on the North Coast of the Dominican Republic. Calling himself “Mundo King” (king of the world), he assembled a huge collection of sculptures and paintings dedicated to the notion that Earth has a gigantic

parking garage for alien spacecraft beneath the ocean. Alas, the king is dead, but paid tours of the castle continue.

17. Qualifying as indigenous, people of Bequia are allowed to hunt whales from small sailing craft which receive position reports from lookouts signaling from hillsides using mirrors. Bequia has a tourism industry, too, and every so often foreign visitors are horrified as islanders harpoon and butcher a whale right in front of them.

18. You cannot bring a dog into Jamaica unless it comes from the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland. Jamaica is rabies-free, and dog smuggling is a serious offense.

19. Grenada is the world’s second largest producer of nutmeg. The U.S. invaded Grenada in 1983 to topple a pro-Cuba, pro-Soviet regime. After the victory, U.S. President Ronald Reagan joked that Grenada had to be invaded because “you can’t make eggnog without nutmeg.”



Tainos go boating.

20. The Taíno were an Arawak people who were the indigenous people of the Caribbean and Florida. Some English words from the Taino language: banana, caiman, canoe, cay, cocoa, coconut, hammock, hurricane, indigo, mahogany, mangrove, savannah, tobacco, tomato and yam.

21. Down island driving can be a challenge because of bad, roads, crappy vehicles and a cheerful insouciance on the part of local drivers. By far the worst driving, statistically speaking, happens in the Dominican Republic with 29.3 traffic fatalities per 100,000 people. The death rate would probably be higher if road conditions allowed for higher speeds.

22. After turning down roles in “Splash,” “Midnight Express” and “Officer and a Gentleman,” John Travolta spent some of that free time sailing the Caribbean.



The West Indian manatee.

23. The West Indian manatee’s closest living relative is the elephant.

24. People of the Caribbean Basin love to drink something called Malta, which is a lightly carbonated, beverage brewed from barley, hops, and water, much like beer but non-alcoholic.

25. Little known stateside, the cassava is a food staple in the Caribbean. Problem is: This fibrous root vegetable contains a lot of cyanide. Islanders know to soak cassava for 18-24 hours, then cook it thoroughly to avoid poisoning dinner guests.

COCKTAILS

Piña Colada

Coconut milk provides richness that rounds out sweet-tart chunks of frozen pineapple and adds a creamy texture to this Piña Colada.

Serves: 4

No cocktail evokes crashing waves, salty air, and warm sand quite like the Piña Colada, a drink which for many, has become synonymous with vacation. Though some cocktail bars might serve a more restrained Piña Colada on the rocks, the classic, sweet and frothy frozen version is our go-to. This drink gets served in a tall glass with a straw — extra points for elaborate garnishes like a thick slice of pineapple and bright red maraschino cherries.

Ingredients

- 2 cups diced pineapple (fresh, frozen, or canned in 100% juice, drained)
- 1 cup well-shaken and stirred coconut milk
- 4 ounces white rum
- 4 ounces dark rum, plus more to taste
- ¼ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 ounce fresh lime juice
- ½ teaspoon vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- 1 cup ice cubes
- Pineapple leaves, pineapple wedges, lime wheels, maraschino or brandied cherries, cocktail umbrellas, flamingo drink stirrers, and paper straws, for serving

Directions

1. If using fresh or drained canned pineapple, arrange in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment paper, or in a ziplock bag, and freeze until firm, about 1 hour.
2. Combine frozen pineapple, coconut milk, rums, sugar, lime juice, and vanilla bean paste in a blender; process until smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes. Place blender pitcher in refrigerator, and let piña colada mixture rest until flavors meld, about 30 minutes. Return pitcher to blender base; add ice cubes, and process until thick and smooth, about 30 seconds. Divide among tulip wine glasses or hurricane glasses. Float additional dark rum on top of each drink to taste, and garnish as desired.

Make Ahead

Pineapple can be frozen up to 1 week ahead.

Dark 'n Stormy

Unstirred, this drink's dark rum floats on top of the lighter ginger beer, resembling a looming storm cloud in cocktail form.

By [Food & Wine](#)

Serves: 1

According to a Gosling's rum tale, the Dark 'n Stormy was invented more than 100 years ago when members of Bermuda's Royal Naval Officer's Club added a splash of the local rum to their spicy homemade ginger beer after World War I. They described its ominous hue as "the color of a cloud only a fool or dead man would sail under." Prepared in this manner and unstirred, the dark rum floats on top of the lighter ginger beer, resembling a looming storm cloud.

While the exact details of the drink's origin remain a bit murky, we can say for certain that it was indeed born in Bermuda. Today, the cocktail is enjoyed worldwide, but it does remain the national drink of Bermuda — officially or unofficially, depending on who you ask — along with the Rum Swizzle (yep, they have more than one national drink).

Ingredients

- 2 ounces dark rum
- ½ ounce fresh lime juice (optional)
- Ice
- 1 candied ginger slice
- 3 ounces chilled ginger beer
- 1 lime wheel

Fill a cocktail shaker with ice.

Add the rum and lime juice and shake well.

Strain into an ice-filled collins glass.

Stir in the ginger beer.

Mudslide

Created in the 1970s at Grand Cayman's Wreck Bar at Rum Point, this potent blend of vodka, Kahlúa, and Baileys Original Irish Cream might taste like a milkshake, but it can't be ordered virgin because all you'd get is a cup of crushed ice! The trio of alcohol blends into a smooth and velvety cocktail just sweet and chocolaty enough without being cloying. A generous drizzle of chocolate syrup and a bright red maraschino cherry with a dusting of ground cinnamon top off each glass.

Ingredients

- 8 cups crushed ice
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (6 ounces) vodka (such as Absolut)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (6 ounces) coffee liqueur (such as Kahlúa), plus more for serving
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (6 ounces) Irish cream liqueur (such as Baileys)
- Chocolate syrup (optional)
- Maraschino cherries
- Ground cinnamon

Directions

- Process crushed ice, vodka, coffee liqueur, and Irish cream liqueur in a blender until smooth, 15 to 30 seconds.
- Drizzle chocolate syrup, if using, into each tumbler around inside glass rim. Pour blended drink evenly into prepared tumblers; top each with a cherry and a dash of cinnamon. For an extra kick, drizzle 1 tablespoon coffee liqueur into each straw, if desired.

Sky Juice

This creamy concoction of fresh coconut water and sweetened condensed milk liberally mixed with gin is also known as Gully Wash and tastes equally good by either name. Ground nutmeg and cinnamon bring warming sweetness to balance juniper-forward gin in this creamy cocktail. With a base of hydrating coconut water, it's a pleasantly quaffable drink.

Ingredients

- 2 cups bottled coconut water (or 2 cups fresh coconut water [from 4 fresh green coconuts])
- 1 cup (8 ounces) gin (or white rum), plus more to taste
- 1 cup sweetened condensed milk (from 1 [14-ounce] can), plus more to taste
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Directions

- Stir together coconut water, gin, and sweetened condensed milk in a large pitcher until well combined. Add additional gin and/or condensed milk to taste. Add nutmeg and cinnamon and stir until well combined.
- Refrigerate until completely chilled, 1 to 2 hours. Pour mixture evenly into rocks glasses filled with ice, or pour into empty coconut shells, and serve with straws.

You can find other recipe ideas at [The Best Caribbean Cocktails \(foodandwine.com\)](https://www.foodandwine.com)

FOOD

Jerk chicken recipe

Ingredients

You will need the following ingredients to prepare enough jerk chicken for 4 people:-

One 3 1/2 lb chicken (3lb of chicken breasts may be used if preferred)
6 sliced scotch bonnet peppers (jalapenos may be used if scotch bonnet peppers are unavailable)

2 Tbsp. thyme

2 Tbsp. ground [allspice](#)

8 Cloves garlic, finely chopped

3 Medium onions, finely chopped

2 Tbsp. sugar

2 Tbsp. salt

2 Tsp. ground black pepper

1 to 2 Tsp of the following (to taste)

-ground cinnamon

-nutmeg

-ginger

1/2 cup olive oil

1/2 cup soy sauce

Juice of one lime

1 cup orange juice

1 cup white vinegar

Preparation

Chop the onions, garlic and peppers. These do not need to be chopped too fine as they will be liquidised by the blender.

Blend all of the ingredients (excluding the chicken) in a blender to make the jerk sauce.

Cut the chicken up in to 4 pieces. Rub the sauce in to the meat, saving some for basting and dipping later. Leave the chicken in the fridge to marinade overnight.

Cooking

Bake in the oven for 30 minutes, turn the meat then bake for a further 30 minutes.

OR - Grill the meat slowly until cooked, turning regularly. Baste with some of the

Caribbean fish curry

Preparation and cooking time: **Total time** 30 mins

- **Serves 4**

Check out our vibrant fish curry recipe with Caribbean curry powder, punchy Scotch bonnet chillies and creamy coconut milk

You can use any firm white fish for this – cod, haddock and hake all work well. Look for Mild Caribbean Curry Powder or use a mild Indian curry powder instead.

Ingredients

- 4 large skinless white fish fillets
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 2 tbsp mild Caribbean curry powder
- 1 tbsp groundnut oil
- 1 bunch spring onions, sliced
- a small chunk ginger, finely grated
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 scotch bonnet chilli, finely chopped
- 1 red pepper, chopped into chunks
- 1 tsp of leaves thyme, chopped, plus extra to serve
- 400g tin coconut milk
- to serve cooked rice

Method

- **STEP 1**

Rub the fish with the lemon juice, 1 tsp of the curry powder and some seasoning, and leave to sit while you make the sauce. Heat the oil in a shallow casserole or deep frying pan with a lid. Cook the spring onions, ginger, garlic, chilli and pepper for 5 minutes, then stir in the remaining curry powder and thyme and cook for 1 minute. Add the coconut milk and simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes until the sauce has thickened.

- **STEP 2**

Add the fish, pushing down into the sauce, then cover with a lid and simmer gently for 8-10 minutes or until the fish flakes easily. Scatter with a little fresh thyme and serve with rice.

Jamaican Banana Fritters Recipe

Prep Time: 10minutes

Cook Time: 7minutes

Servings: 8 fritters

Calories: 369kcal

Ingredients

- 4 Very ripe bananas
- 60 g (½ cups) Plain flour
- 3 tbsp Sugar
- ½ tsp Vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp Nutmeg
- ¼ tsp Ground cinnamon
- pinch Salt

Instructions

- Peel the bananas and break them up in a bowl. Crush it using a fork or a masher.
- Add the other ingredients except for cooking oil. Mix until you get a soft paste, similar to the pancake batter but not as runny.
- Add cooking oil to the frying pan at medium heat. The oil should not cover the fritters in the frying pan. When the oil is hot, scoop portions of the batter mix with a tablespoon and add it to the oil.
- Fry until golden brown on both sides and cooked on the inside.

Notes

- It's best to use an overripe banana. The riper the banana, the sweeter it is and the easier it is to crush.
- You may have to turn the heat down once you add the banana batter to the oil to prevent the fritters from burning before cooking.



Simple Orange Cake (Haitian Gateau a L'orange)

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

COOK TIME: 40 minutes

SERVES: 8

Ingredients

- 1 cup = 8oz unsalted butter
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1¾ cups sifted flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 tablespoon grated orange peel
- ¾ cup orange juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon rum (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit, 180 degrees Celsius, Gas Mark 4
2. In a mixer bowl, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
3. Whisk in the eggs one at a time and mix well after each addition.
4. Add the orange zest, then the sifted flour with the baking powder alternating with the orange juice.
5. Add the vanilla extract and the rum. Mix well and on high speed for about 1 minute.
6. Pour the cake batter into a buttered and floured 10-inch tin. Bake in the oven for 40 minutes or when a cake tester or a toothpick inserted comes out clean.
7. Remove the cake from the oven and let cool covered with a kitchen towel. Remove from pan, dust with icing sugar and serve.

Tips for a perfect Gateau a L'orange:

- Use ripe oranges for the juiciest and most flavourful cake.
- Don't overmix the batter. A few lumps are okay!
- Let the cake cool completely before dusting with powdered sugar to prevent it from dissolving.

Caribbean Rum Cake Recipe

PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 1 HOUR

REST TIME: 6 HOURS

Caribbean Rum Cake Recipe – An ultra moist and decadent classic rum cake with pineapple, toasted coconut, and rum glaze dripping down the sides.

SERVES: 18 slices

FOR THE SPICED RUM CAKE:

AD

- 250 g **all-purpose flour**, *sifted*
- 32 g **corn starch**
- 32 g powdered milk
- 19.72 ml **baking powder**
- 4.93 ml **salt**
- 31 g **unsweetened shredded coconut**
- 300 g natural granulated sugar
- 113.5 g **unsalted butter**, *softened*
- 180 g **unsweetened coconut milk**
- 4 eggs
- 120 g dark spiced rum, *or dark rum*
- 14.79 ml **vanilla extract**
- 4.93 ml **almond extract**
- 247.5 g **crushed pineapple**, *drained and juices reserved for glaze*
- 28 g ground almond *for dusting the pan*

AD

- **Nonstick cooking spray**

FOR THE SPICED RUM SYRUP:

- 113.5 g **unsalted butter**
- 100 g natural granulated sugar
- 2.46 ml **salt**
- 118 g **pineapple juice**, *reserved from can*
- 120 g spiced rum

FOR THE GLAZE:

- 180 g **powdered sugar** (*more as needed*)
- 44.36 ml **pineapple juice**, *reserved from can*
- 4.93 ml spiced rum

FOR THE TOPPING:

- 45 g **sweetened shredded coconut**

Instructions

AD

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Spray a **12-cup bundt pan** with nonstick cooking spray and dust with almond meal.
2. For the Cake: With an electric mixer, beat 1/2 cup of softened butter with 1 1/2 cups of granulated sugar. In a separate bowl mix all the dry ingredients together, including the shredded coconut. Then beat the dry mixture into butter mixture. It will be crumbly.
3. Whisk the coconut milk, eggs, rum, extracts, and drained crushed pineapple together, and add to the mixer. Beat until combined.
4. Pour the batter into the pan and bake for 55 minutes. Insert a toothpick into the center of the cake, if it comes out clean the cake is done. If not, bake for 5-10 minutes longer, then test again.
5. While the cake is cooling, prepare the spiced rum syrup. In a saucepan combine all ingredients. On medium heat, bring the mixture to a simmer and cook for 8-10 minutes ~~and~~ until it begins to thicken slightly. Remove from heat.
6. With a wooden skewer, poke holes throughout the cake and slowly pour the syrup over it, a quarter cup at a time, allowing it to absorb until all the syrup has been applied.
7. Cover the pan loosely with plastic wrap and let it sit at room temperature for 6-8 hours.
8. When ready to serve, gently slide a thin knife between the cake and the edges of the pan to loosen. Cover the cake with a cake plate and carefully flip. Once your cake has released, remove pan.
9. Mix the glaze ingredients starting with 1 1/2 cups of powdered sugar, 2 tablespoons of pineapple juice, and rum. Whisk and add more powdered sugar or juice to reach your desired consistency. It should be very thick, yet still be able to slowly drip down the sides of the cake.
10. Toast the coconut in a small dry skillet, over medium heat. Stir until the coconut is golden. Then sprinkle on top of the glaze.