

Gastronomic GRENADA



I would travel back to Grenada in a flash for fish Friday, the beaches and the food. Oh, and the people, and the crystal clear water - perfect for boating, snorkeling and scuba diving. Grenada and the sister islands of Carriacou and Petit Martinique are a boater's dream, with white sandy beaches, picturesque anchorages, safe harbours and friendly, seafaring people.

Located in the southeastern Caribbean just north of Trinidad and Venezuela, Grenada occupies 310 square kilometres. The lush tropical mountains boast an abundance of waterfalls creating a dramatic backdrop to the anchorage around the island.

Forty-five white sand beaches and nine black sand beaches ring the island. Grand Anse beach, the island's signature beach, stretches over three kilometres and is home to several resorts and luxury hotels. Grenada draws those who worship the sun and everything that comes with it - beaches, sports, hiking and Caribbean culture.

The island was a British colony for nearly 200 years before achieving independence in 1974. And one can understand the number of people who have abandoned England's pitiful climate for Grenada's tropi-

*Story and Photographs
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cal warmth. With a population of just 109,000, it is small enough to retain a modest, sociable atmosphere yet special enough to attract celebrities. The tourism industry in Grenada is small compared to other Caribbean islands, so thankfully it lacks the standard tourist traps. The local children, however, are taught from an early age about the importance of tourism, which might explain partially the friendly nature of the

St. George's harbour, the capital of Grenada.

locals that go the extra mile. They are open, knowledgeable, hospitable and genuinely interested in ensuring that visitors have a memorable time.

The Grenada Sailing Festival kicks off the Caribbean regatta season, which takes place January 27-31, 2012. Camper & Nicholson's, one of the oldest internationally recognized yachting business names is the title sponsor of the event, which will run from the compa-



Local drummers at 'Fish Friday' held most Fridays in the town of Guave. Was started as a community project after Hurricane Ivan (NOTE: photo by Patricia Gajo).



Grand Anse Beach is the island's signature beach stretching over 3 km long.

ny's Port Louis Marina, Grenada's newest international class marina. The festival provides top quality racing for international yachts visiting the Caribbean for the winter as well as highly competitive crews based in the region. The ever-popular, four-day event is now in its 19th year. Follow the example of Christopher Columbus who sailed to Grenada in 1498; consider crewing on one of the many yachts entered.

For the less competitive spirit, however, you can happily discover Grenada through its many diverse eating venues.

Nearly every Friday evening, the north-western fishing village of Gouyave lets its hair down and turns over a street to host this popular weekly event. Established after hurricane Ivan in 2004 as a community project to generate income, the streets are filled with stalls selling lobster, shrimp kebabs, fish pizza, grilled marlin with a side of pumpkin and carrots, local rum and beer with local steel pan drummers entertaining you in the background. This event was never designed for tourists, but plenty go. You see 'real Grenada'. No frills, but meticulously clean and wonderfully welcoming like a little town winding down for the weekend. The street is narrow and uneven,

and there is not always seating for all, so get friendly, and share a table.

If you are looking for a hands-on cooking 'local fare' experience, visit the Maca Bana Villas, in Point Salines. Learn how to prepare a meal, such as Callaloo soup, pan-fried grouper and locally grown sweet potatoes and stay for lunch at the Aquarium Restaurant, part of the Maca Bana resort.

The Vastra Banker at Le Phare Bleu Marine and Resort is a lighthouse ship from 1900. Its recently imported British chef has a special flare with local vegetables, fruits

and spices. For high tea, visit Spice Island Beach Resort, on Grand Anse Beach.

Spices play a key role in the bustling, noisy market in Grenada's capital, St. George's. The colourful stalls are crammed together, and particularly busy on Friday and Saturday mornings, the main market days. The vendors are friendly and will even offer cooking suggestions if you ask. Apparently, Martha Stewart has been known to pick up a few tips here.

For the chocolate lovers among us, a visit to Dougalston Spice Estate is a must. The historic cocoa-processing station makes this estate well worth a stop. The main wooden building, known as the boucan, has displays of cocoa and spices. Beneath the boucan are large cocoa-drying trays that are pushed out manually along iron rails to allow the cocoa to dry naturally in the sun. You can also see the wooden fermentation bins used for the first stage of the cocoa process. The historic cocoa-processing station makes this estate well worth a stop.

But Grenada is more than a mecca for foodies. 🍴

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To walk off all the gastronomic delights that Grenada has to offer, why not take a hike to Seven Sisters Waterfall with Telfor Bedeau, a 72-year-old guide who hikes about 20,800 kilometres every year.