



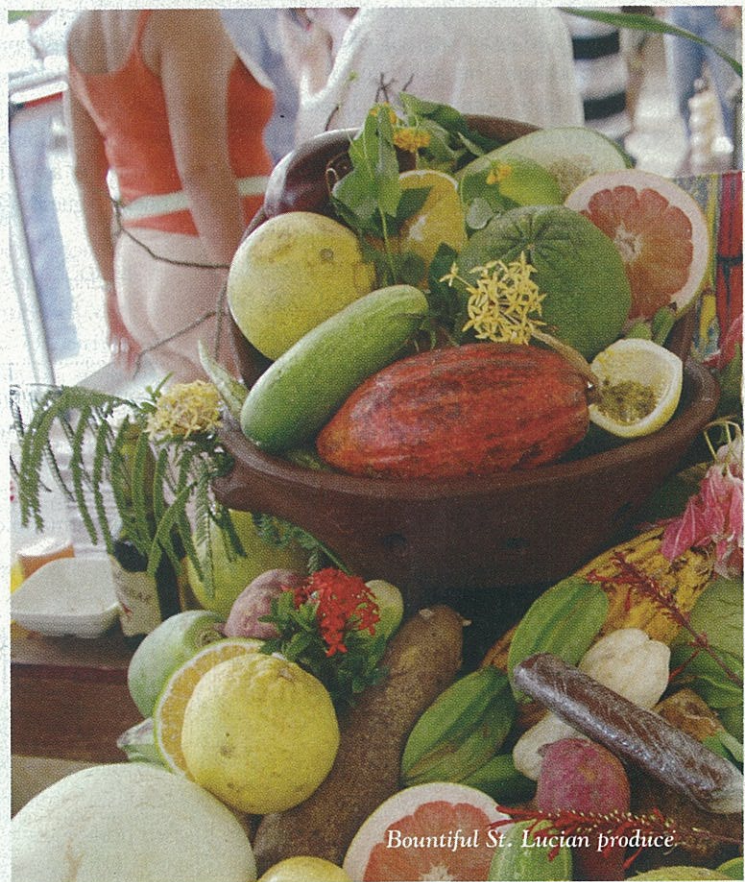
the taste of *Paradise*

ST. LUCIA'S FIRST FOOD AND RUM FESTIVAL BRINGS TOGETHER
CHEFS AND EATERS TO CELEBRATE ISLAND FLAVORS

By Glenn Kaufmann

What is the culinary equivalent of an island paradise? Is it a gourmet dish like banana-stuffed chicken breast—succulent and juicy inside, crisp with salty fried plantain crumbs on the outside? Or a plateful of street food like rough-hewn roti—chewy, fragrant bread wrapped around richly spiced potatoes, chicken and onions? Visitors to the first St. Lucia Food and Rum Festival found themselves in the delicious position of eating at both ends of the spectrum from upscale to rustic, and washing it all down with world-class rum. If that's not an island paradise, what is?

Lying far south in the Windward Islands, the easternmost chain of Caribbean islands, St. Lucia boasts lush green forests leading down to waters teeming with fish and shellfish. Its natural resources and location made the island a desirable colony—so much so that the British and French fought bitterly for it, passing it back and forth 14 times. As a result, British, French, Creole, African, Arawak, Carib and Asian influences can be found in the island's cuisine. At St. Lucia's massive open-air market, just off the docks in downtown Castries, you'll find stall after stall of fresh produce, aromatic spices, saltfish, and vendors hawking street foods like roti and doubles. There are piles of the ubiquitous dasheen root, still topped with tender greens, and heaps of green and red seasoning peppers—tasty, mild chiles that are used in nearly every dish on the island. With such a setting, St. Lucia was an obvious choice for a culinary festival.



Bountiful St. Lucian produce

Roger Skeete

Allen Chastanet, co-producer of the festival, says, "We West Indians aren't good at visualizing. We need to touch and feel things." By bringing together some of the most respected Caribbean chefs, rum distillers, musicians, food-lovers, and locals, Chastanet and festival co-producer Neysha Soodeen guaranteed that festival attendees would thoroughly absorb the visual, auditory and even tactile pleasures of St. Lucia—a crossroads of food, spirits, and culture in the Caribbean. At the festival's main pavilion those pristine local ingredients were transformed into West Indian dishes, which were served alongside premium rums hailing from everywhere from Barbados and St. Lucia to Suriname and Guyana.

On the cooking demonstration stage, Chef Orlando Satchell, of Ladera Resort, encouraged the audience to touch, smell and taste some of St. Lucia's freshest ingredients. Satchell takes his own advice to heart, creating sensual dishes with local ingredients that he refers to as "sexy cuisine." At the festival, he prepared Crystal Lime Shrimp—plump shrimp served with a lobster salsa, enlivened with lime rum and a healthy dose of chiles. Nibbled with El Dorado, a Guyanese aged rum, it was sexy, indeed.

Raised in Barbados, and having worked throughout the Caribbean, Chef Paul Yellin brought his bold style of inventive, cheerful Caribbean fare to the festival

table; the same cuisine garnered him first place in the the 2001 Jamaica Spice Food Festival. Dishes like Jerk Pork Tenderloin over a Sweet Potato and Crab Cake with Roasted Red Pepper Coulis, plus that luscious banana-stuffed chicken showcase Yellin's skill at bringing panache to traditional Caribbean favorites.

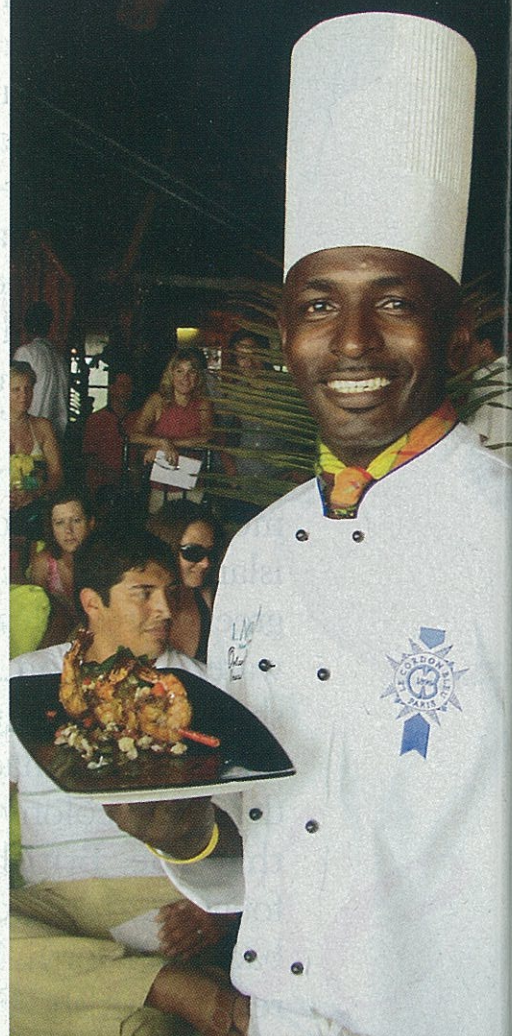
For Trinidadian-born Richardson Skinner, executive chef at the Coco Palm Resort's Ti Bananne, the magic of the Caribbean is that all of the best ingredients are found on all of the islands, but every island uses them in their own way. His Orange and Golden Apple Pepper Jelly is a twist on traditional Trinidadian pepper jelly, with fresh fruit, ginger, garlic, and brown sugar. It lends Caribbean flair to any dish.

New question: how many chefs does it take to make a culinary paradise? With its lush produce and global culinary influences, St. Lucia is doing just fine on its own. But throwing a party—and inviting a few talented guests—is never a bad idea.

For more information on the festival and plans for next year, visit foodandrumfestival.com

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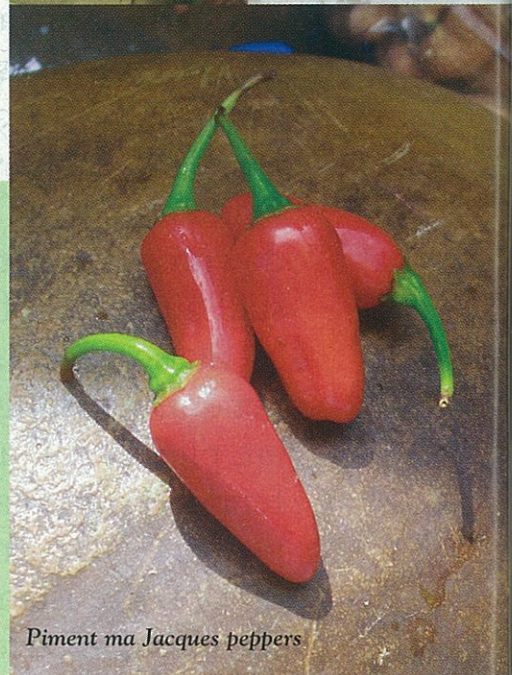
Chef Orlando Satchell



by any other name

In St. Lucia, a single pepper may go by many different names. Given the country's diverse cultural background, it's not surprising that in the Castries market, peppers often have two or three English names, and several variations in the local patois. The tiny red firebombs known by some as Jacques peppers are referred to as piment ma Jacques by many, and are sometimes called Madame Jeanettes. There is a sweet red pepper that many locals refer to as a jalapeño. With all of these variations, it's important to ask questions, taste, smell, and shop around when buying St. Lucian peppers.

Seasoning peppers are a ubiquitous St. Lucian ingredient. While there is some debate as to which pepper constitutes this varietal, they are everywhere. You'll find them at the market, lying in big heaps, or bundled in clear plastic bags selling for about 38 cents.



Piment ma Jacques peppers



Jerk Pork Tenderloin over a Sweet Potato and Crab Cake with Roasted Red Pepper Coulis

Yield: 2 servings • Zest Factor: Medium
Adapted from Chef Paul Yellin. You'll have extra Sweet Potato and Crab Cakes left over—tuck them into a sandwich with the Roasted Red Pepper Coulis for a lunch treat.

- 1 (5-ounce) bottle of Jamaican jerk seasoning, such as Walkerswood
- juice of 2 limes, divided
- 1 teaspoon ground star anise
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground clove
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- 1 (8-ounce) pork tenderloin, trimmed
- 2 pounds sweet potatoes, washed
- 1/2 pound lump crabmeat
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 Scotch bonnet chile, stemmed, seeded and diced
- 2 tablespoons sugarcane brandy, such as Mount Gay
- 2 medium onions, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, diced
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 4 tablespoons canola oil, divided
- Roasted Red Pepper Coulis (see recipe, this page), to garnish

In a large mixing bowl, stir together the jerk seasoning and juice of 1/2 a lime. Whisk in the star anise, cinnamon, clove, thyme, allspice, pepper, paprika, curry powder and brown sugar. Whisk well, making sure that all ingredients are combined. Add the pork, and turn it several times, to coat all sides with seasoning rub. Cover, and allow to marinate in the refrigerator, at least 1 hour, preferably overnight.

Heat oven to 375°. Roast sweet potatoes in the oven until tender, about 40 minutes. Remove, and allow to cool for ease of handling. Remove the skins, and coarsely grate the flesh into a large bowl. Stir in the crab meat, eggs, chile, brandy, onion, garlic, cream and remaining lime juice. Prepare a

sheet pan, and form mixture into cakes about 3 inches across, setting each cake on the pan. Refrigerate cakes until firm, about 1 hour.

Heat the oven to 350°. In a large frying pan over medium heat, warm 2 tablespoons of the oil, and cook the sweet potato crab cakes until warmed through and browned on both sides. If working in batches, keep cooked cakes warm in the oven while cooking the others.

Meanwhile, in an ovenproof sauté pan over medium-high heat, warm the remaining oil. Sear the pork on all sides, and place in the oven for about 8 minutes. Set aside, and allow to rest for about 5 minutes. Slice into medallions.

To serve, place two cakes on each plate, and divide the pork slices among the two plates. Drizzle the Roasted Red Pepper Coulis over and around the pork and cakes, and serve while hot.



Roasted Red Pepper Coulis

Yield: about 1 cup • Zest Factor: Mild
Adapted from Chef Paul Yellin. This kind of simple sauce begs for experimentation, so, if the spirit moves you, add a pinch of any type of ground chiles you like—ground habanero would be super.

- 3 large red bell peppers, roasted, seeded and peeled
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- juice of 1/2 lime
- 2 teaspoons rum
- salt and freshly ground pepper

Combine all ingredients in the base of a food processor. Blend until smooth.



Banana-Stuffed Chicken Breast with Toasted Plantain Crumbs

Yield: 2 servings • Zest Factor: Medium
Adapted from Chef Paul Yellin. Note that you need to start this recipe the night before so that the chicken has time to marinate. The plantain crumbs can be made with commercial plantain chips, or you can substitute panko (Japanese bread crumbs) or dry bread crumbs.

- 2 chicken breasts
- 1/3 cup coconut rum
- 2 tablespoons dry jerk seasoning, such as Caribbean Specialty Foods
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice
- salt and freshly ground pepper
- canola oil, for frying

5 green plantains, sliced thinly

- 1 heaping tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 banana, sliced in half lengthwise from top to bottom

1 egg

2 tablespoons cream

2 tablespoons butter

Spicy Coconut Rum

and Pineapple Curry

Sauce (see recipe, page

64)

Citrus Steamed Rice (see recipe, page 64)



Create a pocket in each chicken breast by inserting a knife in the top, thick end of the breast toward the bottom. Do not tear the sides of the breasts. In a mixing bowl, combine the coconut rum, jerk, garlic and lime juice, and season with salt and pepper. Submerge the chicken in the marinade, cover, and keep in the refrigerator overnight.

Meanwhile, make the toasted plantain crumbs: Preheat the oven to 250°. Into a large, heavy-bottomed skillet, pour oil to a depth of about 1 inch. Heat oil to 350°, consulting an instant-read thermometer. Fry plantains in batches, until crisp and golden. Place plantain chips on a sheet pan, and dry in the oven for 10 minutes. Allow to cool, and place in a food processor. Add the brown sugar, and pulse until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Pour into a bowl and set aside.

Preheat oven to 350°. Remove chicken from marinade, and insert one banana half into the pocket of each breast. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg and cream. Submerge chicken in the egg mixture, then roll in the plantain crumbs.

In a large sauté pan over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the chicken, and brown on both sides. Place in the oven for about 8 minutes, or until cooked through. Serve on a bed of Citrus Steamed Rice, with Spicy Coconut Rum and Pineapple Curry Sauce.

hot and cold

With distilleries on nearly every island in the Caribbean, and many of the mainland countries of South and Central America, rum comes in as many shades, flavors and strengths as peppers. In fact, according to London-based rum expert Ian Burrell, rum is so pervasive on the islands that Caribbean children often learn a verse that lays out the perfect proportions for most mixed drinks:

One of sour, Two of sweet, Three of strong, Four of weak

Burrell believes that the world of rum holds unparalleled promise for all spirits drinkers. Knowledgeable bartenders, he explains, can point bourbon, scotch, and cognac drinkers to a slate of good aged rums; and in the next breath make someone's day by substituting good white rum for vodka or gin.

As with other clear liquors, white rums lend themselves to mixed drinks like rum punch, daiquiris and the like. Darker, aged rums can and should be enjoyed neat or over ice as you would a good scotch, bourbon or whisky.

With so many peppers and so many rums wandering the islands, it was just a matter of time before the two got together. And, fortunately, the union is a happy one. The sugary burn of rum is a natural foil for the fiery heat of the pepper. As with all good marriages, sometimes they keep each other from going too far, and at other times they test each other's limits.

Want to experiment with chiles and rum? First, make a mojito, leaving a bit of room in the glass. Then, take a medium heat chile, like a jalapeño, and flambé it in a bit of overproof rum (rum with more than 50% alcohol—over 100 proof). Just before the rum completely cooks off, slide the remaining rum and the pepper onto the top of the mojito.

Or, prick a Scotch bonnet all over with a knife, and place it in a saucepan with two cups of sugar and one cup of water. Bring this concoction to a boil and stir as the sugar syrup reduces. Remove the chile after a few minutes, but continue cooking until the sugar thickens. The longer you leave the pepper in, the spicier the syrup will become. Don't leave it in too long, or the syrup will turn bitter. Now use that sugar syrup to sweeten your favorite drink—and presto, you're in chile-rum paradise.



Spicy Coconut Rum And Pineapple Curry Sauce

Yield: about 4 cups • Zest Factor: Hot
Adapted from Chef Paul Yellin. You'll have extra sauce left over—it's delicious over chicken or fish.

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 clove garlic, diced
- 1/2 red bell pepper, diced
- 1/2 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 Scotch bonnet chile, stemmed, seeded and diced
- 2 medium onions, diced
- 1/2 fresh pineapple, diced

- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1/3 cup coconut rum
- 3/4 cup coconut cream
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice
- 3/4 cup pineapple juice
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- salt and freshly ground pepper

In a large sauté pan over medium-high heat, melt the butter. Add the garlic, bell peppers, chile, onions and pineapple, and



Throughout the festival, cooks enticed visitors with Caribbean treats

sauté, stirring. Add the curry powder, paprika, tomato paste and flour, and whisk, forming a thick paste. Pour in the rum, coconut cream, lime and pineapple juices and heavy cream. Bring to a simmer, and allow to thicken slightly. Season with salt and pepper.



Citrus Steamed Rice

Yield: 2 servings

Zest Factor: Mild

Adapted from Chef Paul Yellin.

- zest of 1/2 lemon
- zest of 1 orange
- 1/4 cup uncooked rice
- salt

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan, and pour in 1/2 cup water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover pot, and simmer until water is absorbed and rice is tender. Discard zest before serving.



Crystal Lime Shrimp

Yield: 2 servings • Zest Factor: Medium

Adapted from Chef Orlando Satchell of Ladera Resort. If you can't find lime rum, substitute 3 tablespoons white rum plus 1 tablespoon lime juice.

- 1 teaspoon diced ginger
- 1 teaspoon diced celery
- 1 teaspoon diced garlic
- 1 teaspoon diced chives
- 1 teaspoon St. Lucian seasoning pepper or banana chile
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- salt and pepper
- 6 large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 small lobster, boiled, meat diced
- 1 small red onion, diced
- 1 small red bell pepper, diced
- 1/4 cup lime rum, such as Crystal Lime or Bacardi Lime
- 1 cup Bibb lettuce, washed and roughly torn

In a mixing bowl, combine the ginger, celery, garlic, chives and pepper. Stir in the olive oil,

season with salt and pepper, and combine well. Add the shrimp, and toss to coat. Allow to marinate in the refrigerator, at least 1 hour, preferably overnight.

In a sauté pan over medium heat, warm the canola oil. Shake off marinade, and sauté the shrimp briefly, until just cooked through, about 4 minutes total. In a separate bowl, gently mix together the diced lobster meat, onion, bell pepper and rum.

To serve, place a bed of lettuce in the center of each plate. Divide the shrimp between the two plates, and fan them out across the lettuce. Spoon the lobster mixture around and on top of the shrimp and lettuce, and serve.



The Passion Killer

Yield: 2 cocktails • Zest Factor: Mild

Adapted from mixologist Ian Burrell. Prepare simple syrup by heating 2 parts sugar with 1 part water, and stirring until dissolved. Passion fruit syrup can be found at freshcoffee.net.

- pulp of two passion fruits
- juice of 1/2 lime
- 2 teaspoons passion fruit syrup
- 2 tablespoons simple syrup
- 1 banana chile
- 5 mint leaves
- 4 tablespoons premium white rum

In a cocktail shaker, combine passion fruit pulp, lime juice, passion fruit syrup, simple syrup, chile and mint. With a spoon or pestle, muddle ingredients together. Add the rum, and fill shaker with ice cubes. Shake vigorously.

Strain cocktail into two chilled martini glasses.



Orange and Golden Apple Pepper Jelly

Yield: 3 cups • Zest Factor: Hot

Adapted from Chef Richardson Skinner. Golden apples, or prune de ceytre, grow on St. Lucia. Substitute slightly under ripe Golden Delicious apples if you can't find St. Lucian golden apples.

- salt
- 2 Scotch bonnet chiles
- 6 St. Lucian seasoning peppers or banana chiles
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 jalapeño
- 1 cup orange juice
- 6 green golden apples, peeled and grated
- 2 tablespoons minced ginger
- 2 tablespoons chopped garlic
- 1/4 cup brown sugar

In a large stockpot, boil about 8 cups of salted water, and blanch the Scotch bonnets, seasoning peppers, bell pepper and jalapeño for 1 minute. Remove, and let cool for ease of handling. Stem, seed and chop all peppers.

In a saucepan, combine all remaining ingredients, and bring to a boil. Cook for 5 minutes. It should thicken to a jelly-like consistency. Remove from the heat, and stir in the chopped peppers. Let cool completely. Season with salt to taste.

