

THE BLOG

Bay Gardens Resorts



Jounen Kweyol

Saint Lucia is a picturesque paradise located in the Eastern Caribbean famous for its friendly people, mountainous topography, beautiful crystal-clear waters, and world heritage sites such as the Twin Pitons and Drive-In Volcano.

The island was first inhabited by the Amerindians (the Ciboney, Arawaks and the Carib or Kalinago). In 1650 the French purchased the island from the Caribs and settled there in 1651. The French were able to defend attacks by the Caribs and the colony developed. In 1659, the English arrived and tried to take over the island with claims of entitlement from their earlier attempt at colonization.

They were eventually defeated which started a war begin the between the French and the British which lasted 150 years. During that period Saint Lucia changed hands fourteen times; seven times British and seven times French. Saint Lucia was surrendered to Britain by the French in 1814.

As a result, Saint Lucia inherited a mixed culture of French, British, African, and Caribbean traditions. The African inhabitants of the island who arrived during slavery spoke different West African dialects and developed the French Creole language (which is a mix of mostly French vocabulary with West African grammar) to communicate amongst themselves. Similar French Antillean Creole is spoken in Martinique, Guadeloupe, Dominica and is related to Haitian Creole.

Observance of Jounen Kweyol started in 1981 when a group of French Creole linguists from the Caribbean and Indian Oceans decided to form an organization called Bannzil Kweyol devoted specifically to the study and promotion of French Creole languages.

In 1983, Bannzil Kweyol declared October 28 as International Creole Day and held its first international festival that same year on that day. Over the years, this festivity has grown into a month long of activities deemed, Creole Heritage Month. The celebration culminates on the last Sunday of October with the highly anticipated Jounen Kweyol festival in various communities throughout the island.

Jounen Kweyol which is sometimes considered as the island's second Christmas is a day filled with lots of folk music, dancing, authentic creole dishes, cultural shows, and highlights of traditional ways of living. Citizens display their national pride with creative outfits made from madras material or in full national dress, the Wob Dwyiet. Kweyol activists also pay homage to St. Lucians past and present who have contributed significantly toward preserving and spreading the culture.



Jounen Kweyol has always been a major celebration at Bay Gardens Resorts with two amazing activities. The Bay Gardens Beach Resort and Spa would host a Pre-Jounen Kweyol Brunch on the Sunday before the main event with the Bay Gardens Hotel's Creole Street Party at the Providence Centre Car Park on Kweyol Day. Both events feature, an array of delectable creole food, cultural entertainment, and attractive prizes to be won.

Although the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has limited the festivities for yet another year, Bay Gardens Resorts is paying homage to this unique celebration with a Creole welcome drink upon arrival for persons checking in during the month of October, Creole breakfast and lunch specials available all month-long such as our signature hot bakes and cocoa tea (bek ek dite kako), crab calaloo (kwab ek kalalou), stewed octopus (chatou wousi) and our National Dish, green fig and saltfish (fig ek hawanso).

*We're also sweetening the deal an exclusive **Creole Heritage Sale** with a Creole welcome basket inclusive of your favourite local confectionery such as ginger and coconut fudge, tablet, coconut turnover and drinks from peanut punch and spice rum.*

"Ki sa ou ka espewe, vini Bay Gardens, pou sa espeyans Jounen Kweyol, evek an difewans.... (What are you waiting for come to Bay Gardens to experience Creole Day with a Difference!)