



Culinary Institute  
of America

# Caribbean Cuisine: The Lesser Antilles

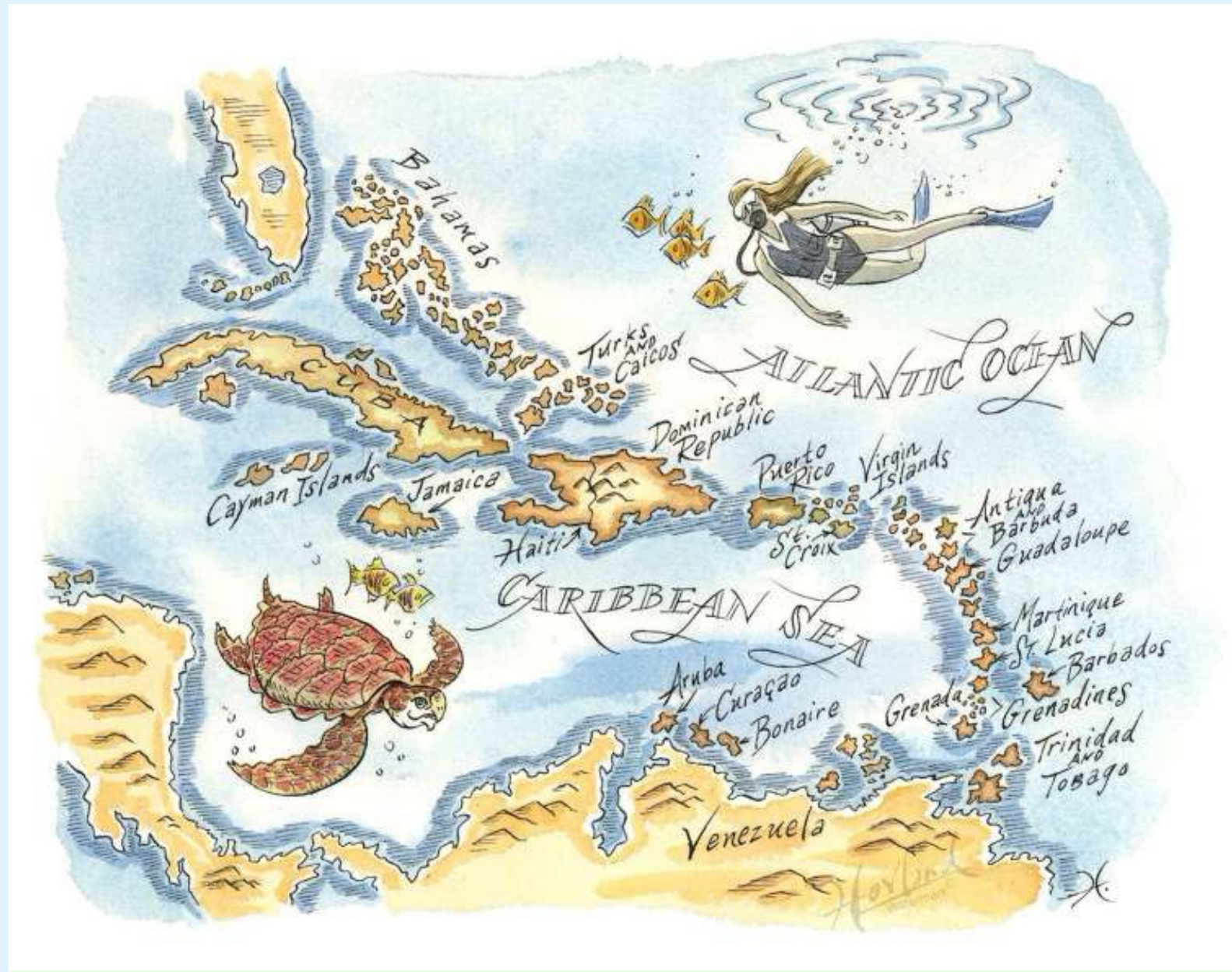


# Learning Objectives

- Identify the geographical boundaries of the Caribbean and Lesser Antilles.
- Identify the populations of the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean.
- Understand the impact of immigration, colonization, and the slave trade on Caribbean cuisine.
- Identify common ingredients and cooking methods in Lesser Antillean cuisine.
- Distinguish the culinary traditions of Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, St. Lucia, Grenada, and Aruba.
- Prepare Caribbean-style dishes using standardized recipes.

# The Caribbean

- 10° north of the Equator to the Tropic of Cancer
- From Trinidad to Cuba
- Complex of Islands and small cays surrounded by reefs



# The Lesser Antilles

25+ small islands, separated into 4 categories by geography

## **Leeward Islands**

- Anguilla
- St. Martin
- St. Barthelemy
- St. Kitts & Nevis
- St. Eustatius
- Antigua & Barbuda
- Montserrat
- Guadeloupe

## **Windward Islands**

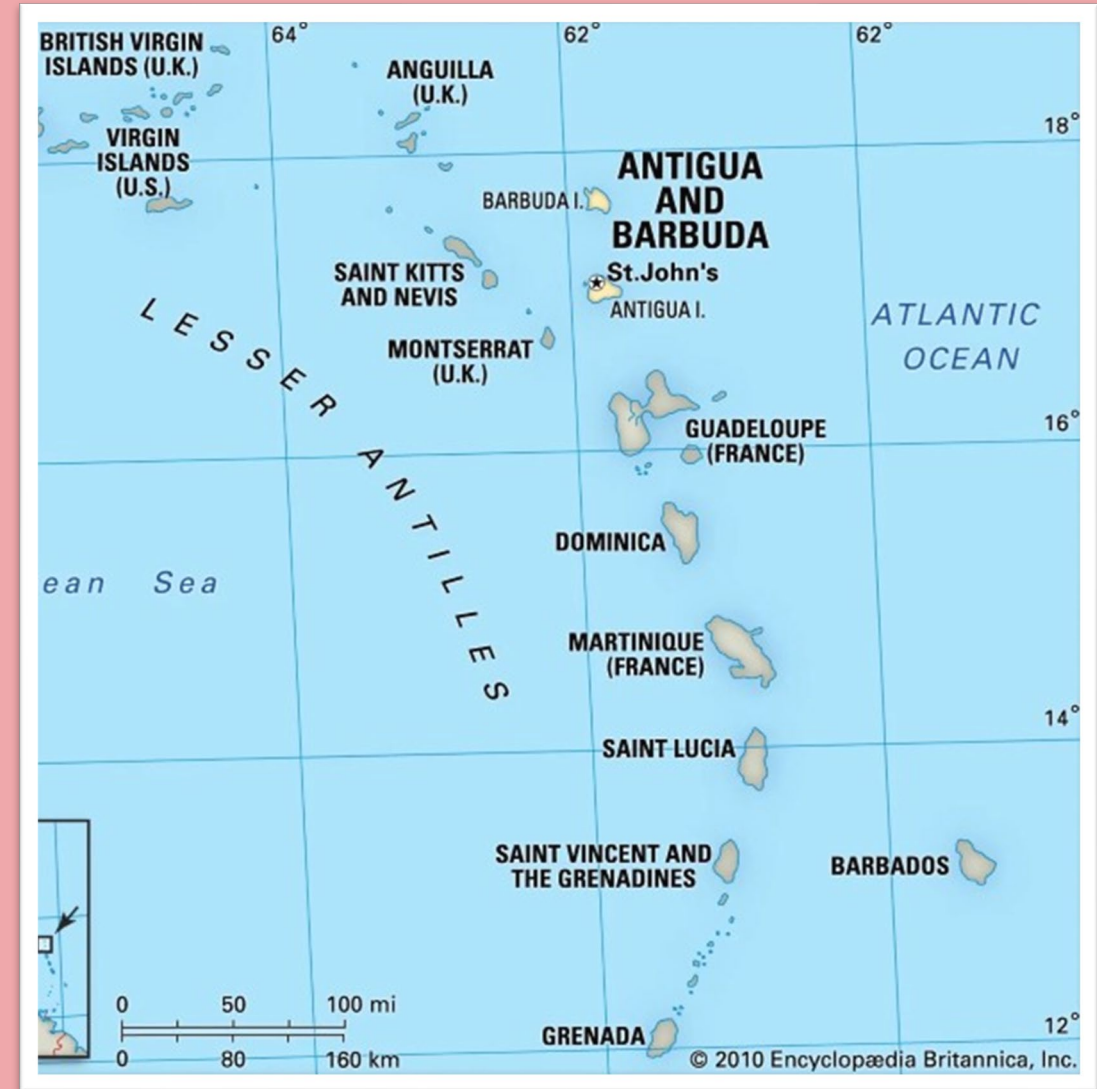
- Dominica
  - Martinique
  - St. Lucia
  - St. Vincent
  - Grenada
- ### **Isolated**
- Trinidad & Tobago
  - Barbados

## **Leeward Antilles**

- Aruba
- Curacao
- Federal Dependencies of Venezuela
- Nueva Esparta

# The Lesser Antilles

- East of Puerto Rico to the Venezuelan coast
- Greater Antilles + Lesser Antilles + Lucayan Archipelago = West Indies
- **Languages:** regional creoles/ patois, combining European, African, and Asian words
- **Diet:** local seafoods/ meat, root vegetables
- Traditional ingredients, cooking methods, influenced by various cultures



# Indigenous Peoples

- Cultures vary across islands
- **Taino (Arawak)**
  - Fishing
  - Harvested maize, peanuts, beans, tomatoes
- **Kalinago (Caribs)**
  - Have a reserved territory in Dominica
  - Most dominant in Trinidad & Tobago, Dominica, Barbados



# Culinary Influences

Influenced by regions all over the world due to slavery, colonization, and immigration

## **West Africa:**

- Enslaved people
- Brought foods, cooking methods

## **Europe:**

- Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English colonizers
- Introduced crops, livestock

## **Asia:**

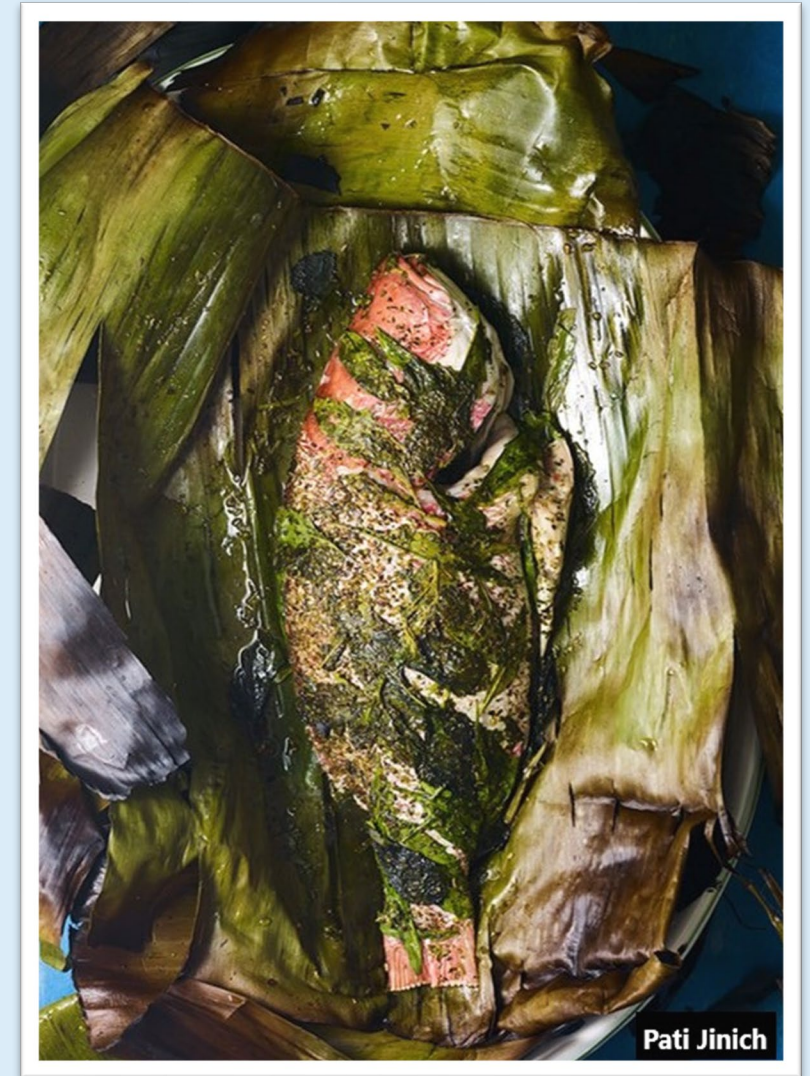
- Chinese/ Indian immigrants
- Introduced new dishes, spices, cooking methods

## **Middle East:**

- Syrian/ Lebanese immigrants
- Brought spices and cooking methods

# Cooking Methods

- Steaming in banana/ plantain leaves
- Cooking outside over open flame and charcoal
- Grilling meats, seafood
- Currying meat common in islands with Indian influences
- Meat/ seafood stews
- Large fish (snapper, porgy) often fried



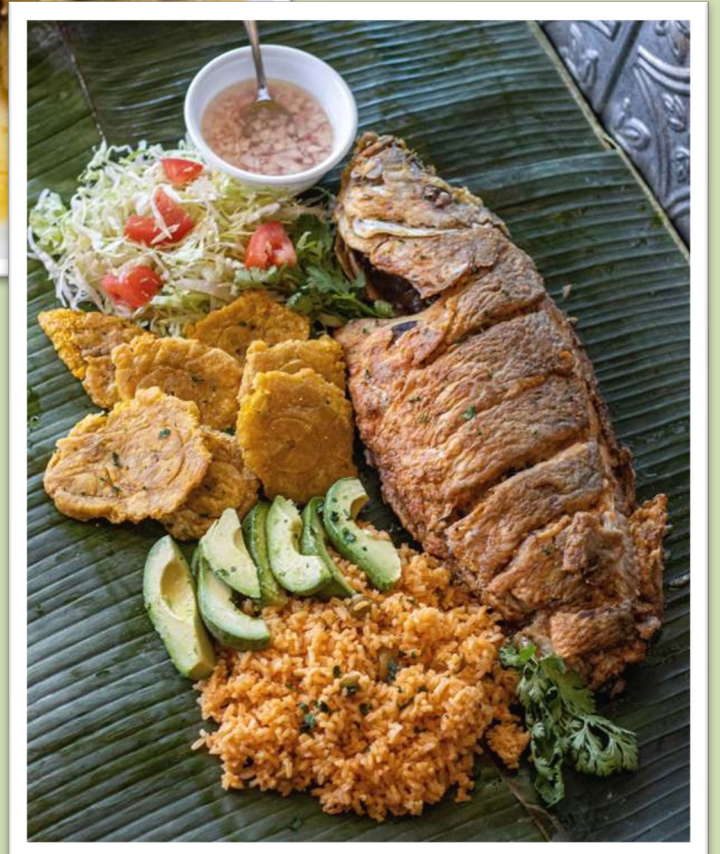
# Queen Conch (*Lambi*)



- **Eaten in:** St. Lucia, Barbados, Curacao, Aruba, Antigua
- **Served:** in soups, stews, ceviche, fritters, or pan fried
- **Flavor:** firm, chewy meat with a sweet, briny flavor
- Served on special occasions
- Symbolizes abundance, hospitality
- Harvest crucial for small Caribbean economies, but is being overfished

# Fish

- Type of fish eaten depends on location
- **Seafood:** crab, shark, shrimp, lobster
- **Fish:** red snapper, grouper, flying fish, mackerel, sea bass, porgy, cod
- **Cooking methods:** fried, steamed, grilled, cured



# Saltfish



- Introduced through trade in the 1500's
- Staple cuisine in most Caribbean islands
- Excellent protein/ salt source for plantation workers
- Doesn't spoil quickly
- Dried cod, mackerel, pollock, shark
- **Flavor:** natural umami flavor, rich, chewy, savory
- **Cooking methods:** sautéed, made into fritters, stewed

# Ackee

- Tropical fruit native to West Africa
- Eaten throughout the Caribbean
- Soft, vibrant yellow color, resembles scrambled eggs
- **Flavor:** buttery, slightly nutty, mild sweetness
- Ackee & saltfish is the national dish of Jamaica
- Poisonous when prepared incorrectly or unripe



# Sea Turtle



- Eaten since the 17th century
- Threatened species since 1978
- Considered a delicacy-- still eaten on many islands
- The national dish of the Cayman Islands
- Harvesting government regulated through turtle farms
- **Flavor:** silky, chewy, tastes like chicken/ veal

# Spiny Lobster

- Most eaten lobster species
- Exports an important income source
- Currently being overfished
- **Flavor:** not as sweet as Maine variety, fishy, firmer texture
- **Cooking methods:** grilled, steamed, roasted, stewed, made into fritters



# Trinidadian Cuisine

- Blend of East Indian, West African, Chinese influences
- Tangy, richly spiced flavors from aromatic herbs, spices
- **Seasoning:** Culantro
- **Popular dishes:**
  - Fried dough & channa (*doubles*)
  - Roti
  - Green mango chutney (*kuchela*)
  - Potato (*aloo*) pie



# Grenadian Cuisine



- Blend of West African, British, Indian, French influences
- Salty, sweet, spiced flavors from seafood, coconut milk, herbs
- **Spices:** nutmeg, mace, pimento, cloves, browning
- **Popular dishes:**
  - Meat & breadfruit stew (*oil down*)
  - Stewed rice & beans (*pelau*)
  - Grenadian polenta & okra (*cou-cou*)

# Bajan Cuisine

- Blend of African, Portuguese, Indian, Irish, British influences
- Flying fish more popular than saltfish
- **Popular dishes:**
  - Cou-Cou & flying fish
  - Blood sausage + pickled pork (*pudding + souse*)
  - Meat/ vegetable pepperpot stew
  - Bajan tamales (*conkies*)



# St. Lucian Cuisine



- Blend of British, French, African, Indian influences
- Salty, smoky flavors from fish, spices, cooked over open fire
- **Popular dishes:**
  - Conch stew (*lambi*)
  - Green bananas & saltfish
  - Saltfish fritters (*accra*)
  - Meat stew (*bouyon*)
  - Stuffed, fried bread (*dahl*)

# Aruban Cuisine

- Blend of Dutch, Caribbean, Latin American influences
- All types of seafood: conch, shark, white fish
- **Popular dishes:**
  - Meat stew (*stoba*)
  - Seafood casserole (*keshi yena*)
  - Deep-fried pastry (*pastechi*)
  - Aruban gumbo (*yambo*)
  - Sauteed shark meat (*keri keri*)





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Any Questions?