



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nourishment and Healing the Jamaican Way *Afro-Jamaican Herbs & Food used for Nourishment and Healing.*

Kingston, February 18, 2021: - The National Museum West (NMW) in celebration of Black History month will be having a virtual panel discussion titled Nourishment and Healing: The Food and Herbs from Afro-Jamaica on Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 10 am on the National Museum Jamaica YouTube page. The discussion will feature panellists: Dr. Diane Robertson, Pharmacist; Colonel Wallace Sterling, Colonel of the Moore Town Maroons and Charmaine McKenzie, Coordinator for Office of Online learning, The UWI Mona.

Option 1: It is often times speculated, why do Jamaicans religiously cook rice and peas on a Sunday versus Soup on a Saturday? This is one of the most frequently asked questions when discussing the history of food and its importance in the Jamaican culture. The panellists will be sharing on this topic as well as the importance of herbs and foods on the Jamaican cuisine, foodways and healthcare.

Option 2: The discussion will also highlight the introduction and historical experience of foods and herbs that came from Africa to Jamaica, such as: okra, ackee, yam, tamarind, bizzzy, cerasee, castor nut, and sorrel. The roles that these items play in the Jamaican cuisine whether it be for their tasty flavour or their medicinal qualities will also be presented.

Black History month is used to celebrate the contribution of the Black African community on the world in various fields including music, art, literature, film, medicine and more. With this particular topic, NMW wishes to highlight the contribution of the African community on the practices and use of food and herbs in Jamaica. Among the topics of discussion are the impacts that these foods have had on the lives of Jamaicans, their nutritional and economical benefits, myths around certain herbs, and dangers that might be associated with them.

Organizer of the event and Curator at the National Museum West, Sharifa Balfour shares why it's important to discuss this particular topic, "*we are used to the more popular contributions to Jamaica culture being discussed such as music, fashion and the people, but we also wanted to focus on a big part, the food and the herbs. Why we jokingly say a cup of tea can cure anything or why the Trelawny yam is credit for Usain Bolt's prowess on the track is why a topic like this is important*".

Audiences are encouraged to tune in for an enriching discussion and come prepared to share their thoughts and opinions on the topic. The NMW continues to introduce programs and open discussions on topics that facilitate the preservation of the various cultural practices in Jamaica. Nourishment and Healing: The Foods and Herbs of Afro-Jamaica is an integral part of the cultural preservation process and it is the hope that this will be the beginning of fostering conversations on Afro-Jamaican herbs and food.

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The National Museum Jamaica is the national agent for the collection, preservation and documentation of Jamaica's material culture and aims to stimulate serious research and reflection on Jamaica's history and contemporary life.

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