

BREADFRUIT FESTIVALS IN THE CARIBBEAN – HERITAGE, LIVELIHOODS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Historical ambivalence in the acceptance of breadfruit as a food crop has contributed to its status as a neglected and under-utilised crop in the Caribbean.

Consumption was stigmatised because it was associated with poverty during enslavement and post-Emancipation continuing food crises.

Steps in the elimination of the 'poor man's food' stigma included

- recognition as a part of the national dish in several countries in the region
- designation as a super-food
- breadfruit festivals to showcase its cuisine

OBJECTIVE

To examine the potential of breadfruit festivals to promote greater breadfruit utilisation and commercialisation

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected using qualitative research methods at breadfruit festivals in St Vincent and the Grenadines (2006 and 2007); Montserrat (2006); Jamaica (2006 and 2018) and Trinidad and Tobago (2015 and 2017).

These methods included mainly interviews among organizers, participants and attendees, a focus group and participant observations at the events

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The invaluable inputs of the communities and the Institute of Jamaica which held breadfruit festivals at Bath, Jeffrey Town, Kingstown Jamaica, at Chateaubelair and Marriaqua, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in Montserrat, and those in Trinidad and Tobago and elsewhere in the Caribbean who participated in the Breadfruit Festival and Exhibition held at UWI, St. Augustine, facilitating agencies, sponsors and the UWI are gratefully acknowledged.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Breadfruit festivals and Emancipation

Breadfruit festivals are associated with Emancipation. *Fig1*. They are community driven:

A. Innovation

1. Cuisine:

- Traditional breadfruit dishes in new ways e.g. Oil Down with Fish (TT) *Fig 2*.
- Breadfruit as alternative in traditional dishes e.g. patties *Fig 3*.
- New dishes/recipes – breadfruit liqueur *Fig 4*.
- Processed products – frozen, baked slices (Jamaica); granola (St. Lucia) *Fig 5*.
- Flour

2. Equipment

Chip maker; chataigne peeler *Fig 6*.

3. Other cultural products

Craft items – prints, handbags *Fig 7*, jewellery (TT), songs

B. Income-generation/livelihood

- Sales before and during the festivals
- Small-scale entrepreneurs e.g. food outlets, processing *Fig 8*.

C. Markets

- Annual events on food tourism calendar
- local and overseas consumer interest;
- Increased local and overseas demand for products.

D. Community Development

- Capacity building - leadership
 - Cooperative (Jamaica; SVG)
 - School-feeding programme (Jamaica)
- Traditional knowledge - history, skills *Fig 9*.
Youth in innovation and enterprise *Fig 10*.

E. Public and private sector engagement

Sponsorship required *Fig 11*.

Information – propagation, health
Policy environment often difficult



Fig 1. Breadfruit festivals represent emancipation (SVG, 2006)



Fig 2. Stuffed baked breadfruit (SVG, 2007)



Fig 3. Jamaican patties with breadfruit crust (Jamaica, 2006)



Fig 4. Breadfruit Liqueur (Montserrat)



Fig 5. Breadfruit products from Jamaica, St. Lucia and Mauritius at UWI



Fig 6. Chataigne (breadnut) shredder designed at UWI, (TT, 2015)



Fig 7. Handicraft maker (St. Vincent, 2007)



Fig 8. A chef interacts with visitors and promotes her recipe book (TT, 2015)

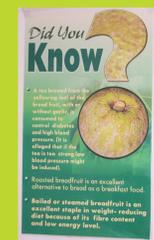


Fig 9. Medicinal information (Jamaica, 2006)



Fig 10. Youth involvement through 4-H in product development (Jamaica, 2018)



Fig 11. Local, regional and international public and private sector support (TT, 2015)

CONCLUSIONS

1. Breadfruit festivals represent an effective, community-led approach to remove stigma and promote increased utilisation and commercialisation.
2. They allow youth involvement which is key to sustainability
3. Current public and private sector support needs to be increased to ensure long-term effectiveness of these festivals.