

IslandVibes NY Magazine

ISSUE 01
WINTER 2026
FREE

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Eastern Parkway, Labor Day Monday

Carnival Around the World
Trinidad, London, Toronto, Miami, Barbados

Barbados at 60
Where to eat Bajan and celebrate in Brooklyn

The Caribbean Christmas Table
Black cake, sorrel, pastelles, pepperpot

Soup Joumou on January 1
The bowl that means freedom

Cover: Sashimi-b, CC BY 4.0

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01 · FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to Issue 01

I'm from East Flatbush. Growing up, the best of the culture was never in one place: it was in the basement parties, smelling the curry in the kitchen. I started IslandVibes.nyc to put it all in one place: the food spots, the fetes, the DJs, the radio, the businesses.

This magazine is the season in one place. Four times a year we'll bring you the parties that are coming, the food that belongs to the time of year, and the people keeping it all going. This first issue covers Carnival, Barbados turning 60, the Christmas table, and the soup Haitians eat every New Year's Day.

And it's yours. Every issue will carry photos from readers. Post your pictures on the Carnival & Fete Wall at islandvibes.nyc/wall, and the best ones may run in these pages.

— Lamont, Founder, IslandVibes.nyc

02 · CARNIVAL 2026

Labor Day on the Parkway

On Monday, September 7, the West Indian American Day Carnival took over Eastern Parkway again, from Crown Heights to the Brooklyn Museum. Feathers, flags, and every island represented.



Orange and gold, built to be seen from a block away. Sashimi-b, CC BY 4.0



Flags up. Sashimi-b, CC BY 4.0



A red section takes the road. Sashimi-b, CC BY 4.0



In front of the Brooklyn Museum. Sashimi-b, CC BY 4.0


Green and gold, Carnival 2024. Theklan, CC BY-SA 4.0

Were you on the road? Your photos belong here. Post them on the wall.

03 · CARNIVAL AROUND THE WORLD

Wherever We Went, We Built a Road

Eastern Parkway is one stop on a circuit. The tradition came out of Trinidad, and everywhere the Caribbean settled, from London to Toronto to Miami, it built a carnival of its own. Here's the 2026 season, and what's next.

Trinidad and Tobago

Next up: Feb 8–9, 2027

The one they all come from. Carnival Monday and Tuesday fill the streets of Port of Spain, after Dimanche Gras on Sunday, February 7. It's also the home of the steelpan.



Parade of the Bands, 2015. Idobi, CC BY-SA 4.0



Carnival Tuesday, 2015. Idobi, CC BY-SA 4.0



Steelpan. Kip1234, CC BY-SA 4.0

London: Notting Hill Carnival

Aug 30–31, 2026

One of Europe's biggest street festivals, on the August bank holiday weekend. Sunday is family day and J'ouvert; Monday is the main parade. Panorama, the steelband competition, is the Saturday night before.



West London, 2023. Scalondonuk, CC BY-SA 4.0



Notting Hill, 2019. David Sedlecký, CC BY-SA 4.0



Notting Hill, 2018. David Sedlecký, CC BY-SA 4.0

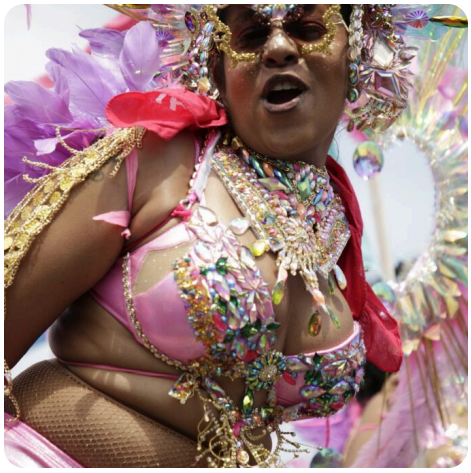
Toronto Caribbean Carnival

Grand Parade: Aug 1, 2026

Caribana to most people. The Grand Parade leaves Exhibition Place and runs along Lake Shore Boulevard West, the high point of a festival weekend that ran July 30 to August 3 this year.



Grand Parade, 2026. Danielle G. Campbell, CC BY-SA 4.0



Grand Parade, 2026. Danielle G. Campbell, CC BY-SA 4.0



Grand Parade, 2026. Danielle G. Campbell, CC BY-SA 4.0

Miami Broward Carnival

Oct 3–11, 2026

South Florida's carnival went to two weekends this year, with J'ouvert on Saturday, October 10, and the parade and fete on Sunday, October 11, at Central Broward Park in Lauderhill.



Miami Broward Carnival, 2014. Kwan Wallace, CC BY-SA 2.0



Miami Broward Carnival, 2014. Kwan Wallace, CC BY-SA 2.0

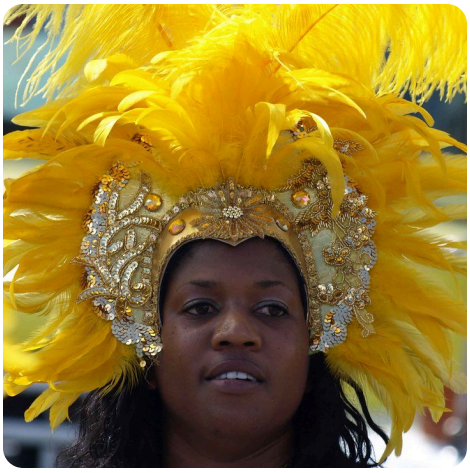


Miami Broward Carnival, 2014. Kwan Wallace, CC BY-SA 2.0

Barbados: Crop Over

Grand Kadooment: Aug 3, 2026

Crop Over began as the celebration of the end of the sugar-cane harvest. It ends with Grand Kadooment on the first Monday in August, when the bands leave the National Stadium for Spring Garden Highway.



Kadooment. alfback2003, CC BY-SA 2.0



Kadooment. alfback2003, CC BY-SA 2.0



Kadooment. alfback2003, CC BY-SA 2.0

04 · BARBADOS AT 60

Sixty Years of Bajan Independence

Barbados became independent on November 30, 1966, and a republic in 2021. This November it turns 60, and central Brooklyn, home to New York's Bajan community for more than a century, is celebrating.

Eat: Culpepper's

1082 Nostrand Ave, Crown Heights

The flagship Bajan kitchen in New York. Come for the national dish, flying fish and cou-cou, plus fish cakes and macaroni pie, and pudding and souse on weekends. Order a peanut punch.

See the listing →

Party: Bajan Broughtupsy

Saturday, November 7 · 5–10 pm · Medgar Evers College, 1650 Bedford Ave

The 12th annual pre-Independence cultural concert, billed as a Diamond Jubilee celebration. Food and vendors from 5, concert at 6. Tickets $40–$50 on Eventbrite.

What to order

Flying fish and cou-cou: cornmeal and okra cooked into a smooth round, under fish in tomato-and-onion gravy. **Pudding and souse:** grated sweet potato pudding with lime-pickled pork, the Saturday plate. **Fish cakes** with Bajan pepper sauce, which is mustard-yellow and hotter than it looks. And for Independence, **conkies**: cornmeal and pumpkin steamed in a banana leaf.

More Bajan food in NYC →

05 · THE CHRISTMAS TABLE

The Caribbean Christmas Table

Every island sets it a little differently, but some things show up everywhere: black cake soaked in rum for months, a pitcher of sorrel, a glazed ham. Here's what's on the table, and where to get the part you're not making yourself.

Black cake

Dried fruit soaked in rum and wine, sometimes since the summer, baked with burnt-sugar browning until the cake is nearly black. Jamaicans, Trinis, Guyanese, and Bajans all claim it. Most families have one aunt who makes it; everyone else orders early, because bakeries fill up in December.

Sorrel

Deep red, made from dried hibiscus steeped with ginger, cloves, and sugar, often with a splash of rum. You'll find the dried sorrel at Caribbean grocers and bottled sorrel at bakeries all season.

Pastelles and pepperpot

In Trinidad, Christmas means **pastelles**: cornmeal stuffed with seasoned meat, folded into banana leaves and steamed. In Guyana, Christmas morning means **pepperpot**, a dark stew of meat slow-cooked in cassareep, eaten with plait bread.



Pastelles. Grueslayer, CC BY-SA 4.0



Pepperpot. Simon Abrams, CC BY 2.0

Where to get your black cake

Allan's Bakery

1109 Nostrand Ave, Prospect Lefferts Gardens

A Brooklyn institution for more than 60 years, known for rum cake, hard dough bread, and bun. Expect a line for Christmas orders.

See the listing →

Back Home Bakery

3524 Church Ave, East Flatbush · (718) 287-3031

An East Flatbush bakery with a reputation for its black cake.

The Black Cake Company

Brooklyn Navy Yard · ships nationwide · blackcake.com

Barbados-born Angela Price has been baking black cake in Brooklyn since 1987 and mailing it to people who can't get home for Christmas.

Call ahead

Holiday cakes sell out and order deadlines move every year. Call before you go, and order by early December.

Browse Caribbean bakeries →

06 · JANUARY 1

Soup Joumou: The Bowl That Means Freedom

On January 1, 1804, Haiti declared its independence, the first nation founded by people who freed themselves from slavery. Haitians have marked the day with soup joumou ever since.



Soup joumou. Aliceba, CC BY-SA 4.0

Under French rule, the enslaved cooked this squash soup but were forbidden to eat it. After independence it became the soup of the free. It's made with joumou (a winter squash), beef, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, and pasta, and families eat it together on New Year's Day. In 2021, UNESCO added soup joumou to its list of the world's intangible cultural heritage.

Where to find it

Many Haitian kitchens in Flatbush and East Flatbush make soup joumou for New Year's Day, and some community groups have given it away free. Menus change year to year, so call ahead. Places to check:

- Lakay Venus Restaurant, 637 Rogers Ave
- Lakou Cafe, 195 Utica Ave
- BunNan, 2123 Caton Ave

07 · WINTER CALENDAR

November Through February

Tue Nov 3	Dominica Independence Day
Sat Nov 7	Bajan Broughtupsy Medgar Evers College, 1650 Bedford Ave · 5–10 pm · $40–$50
Mon Nov 30	Barbados Independence Day: 60 years
Dec 25–26	Christmas and Boxing Day Order the black cake early
Fri Jan 1	Haitian Independence Day Soup joumou across Flatbush
Wed Jan 6	Three Kings Day Parade El Museo del Barrio, East Harlem · free · listing
Sun Feb 7	Grenada Independence Day Also Dimanche Gras in Port of Spain
Feb 8–9	Trinidad Carnival Carnival Monday and Tuesday in Trinidad and Tobago. Watch for road-march fetes in Brooklyn and Queens.
Mon Feb 22	St. Lucia Independence Day
Tue Feb 23	Guyana Republic Day (Mashramani)
Sat Feb 27	Dominican Republic Independence Day

Throwing something this winter? Send it to us and we'll add it to the calendar.

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08 · GET IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Spring 2027 Is Yours

Post your party, fete, and carnival photos on the wall. The best ones run in the next issue, with your name on them.

Post your photos | Get the Thursday email

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