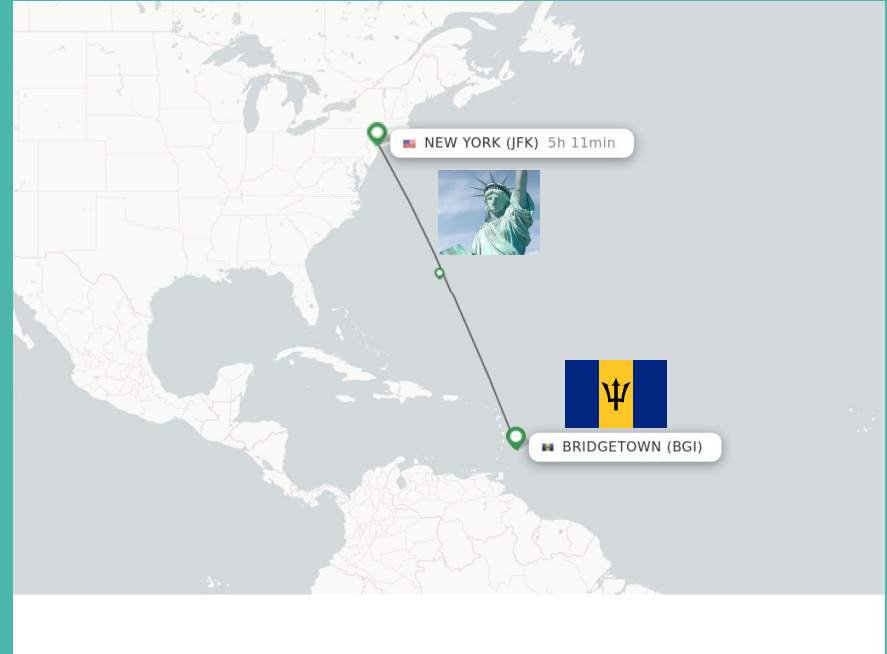

My Cross Cultural Experiences

— By Tiandra Browne —

BIM* -> NYC

The similarities and differences
I've found

*An acronym Bajans use to refer to Barbados, it stands for 'Beautiful Island of Mine'



Greeting Strangers

The first culture shock I experienced was how strangers interacted with each other. I came from a close knit kind of culture on a significantly smaller island to a city where everyday you encounter a new person and everyone kind of stays to themselves.

Barbados



We greet everyone we see as an indication of acknowledgement and politeness.

Especially when interacting with elders, it is rude to not say “Good Morning” when you see them.

New York City



In New York City we pass people everyday and don't interact with them.

Even I have now assimilated in this aspect, if I see someone that I don't know I just walk directly past them without saying anything.

Language

Like many Caribbean islands, Barbados for a long time was under British rule and as a result we use British English. After moving to New York City, I took me a while to get accustomed to the differences in language.

In School



BRITISH ENGLISH — AMERICAN ENGLISH



tyre



tire

grey



gray

analyse



analyze

theatre



theater

centre



center

The 2nd culture shock I faced was in writing in high school. The differences in spelling was a huge hurdle to overcome.

To this day, autocorrect still has to remind me that some words are considered incorrectly spelt because I used a “s” instead of a “z” or because I spelled a word with “ou” instead of just “o”.

In Conversation



Even in conversation the differences in language sometimes confuse others

I remember saying “Pardon” to a waiter because I hadn’t heard what she said and having a friend laugh because she never heard someone in America use the word.

I was so taken aback that the word “Pardon” seemed so foreign to someone.

It also took me a while to remember that in America, people say “french fries” instead of “chips”

Food

Food in the Caribbean mostly consists of a lot of ground provisions like sweet potatoes, pumpkin, cassava in addition to a few others. Also unlike America or its states, every Caribbean island has its own national dish.

Barbados



Macaroni Pie

Similar to what Americans call “Baked Mac n Cheese”

It is made by cooking macaroni, mixing it in a cheese sauce and then baking it



Cou-Cou & Flying Fish

This is the island’s National Dish.

It is made by cooking corn meal, mixing it with boiled okra and serving it with gravy.

Barbados



1, 2, 3

Considered a poor man's meal on the island, the name derives from it only consisting of 3 main ingredients.

It is made by cooking macaroni, potato and then mixing corned beef in to finish it off



Conkies

Popular around Independence time

It is made by wrapping and steaming a mixture of sweet potato, pumpkin and coconut in banana leaves.

Barbados



Roast Breadfruit

A popular Saturday Afternoon dish, if someone you know goes and picks a breadfruit tree.

The breadfruit is roasted, cut in half and used as the bowl.

Usually eaten with butter, hot sauce and some kind of canned fish, often tuna bought from a nearby shop.

New York City



Cheese Slice



Bacon, egg & cheese

These are some of the foods that New York City is known to be 'famous' for. It's dollar slices and a bacon, egg and cheese from the deli.

New York City



Food Carts



Crown Fried Chicken

Popular for their convenience and accessibility are the 'chicken spots' that are open late and the food carts we find all over the city.

New York City



Acknowledging that New York City is a melting pot, there are some Caribbean owned restaurants like the ones above.

Fisherman's Cove (Jamaican), A&A Bake & Doubles Shop (Trinidadian), Culpepper's (Bajan)

Festivals

The Caribbean is known for its festival seasons and celebrations. Most islands have theirs at different times. Barbados specifically has what we call Crop-Over season around July-August. Unlike Barbados, New York City has a single day where they celebrate similarly to the islands with a big costume parade and music trucks.

New York City



Jouvèrt, a celebration involving power, water, music and dance. It takes place early in the morning before the Labor Day Parade.

New York City



The Labor Day Parade, where everyone comes out in costumes to celebrate heritage and community through dance and music.

Barbados



Similar to Jouvvert, we call it Foreday Morning since it happens in the early hours before our Grand Kadooment.

Barbados



Similar to the Labor Day Parade, we call it Grand Kadooment where everyone celebrates in their costumes. It marks the end of the Crop Over season.

Barbados



Kiddie's/Junior Kadooment, where the younger ones get their chance to wear their costumes and parade with dance and music.

THANK YOU!

Through my cross-cultural travels I've learned that there are many differences but also lots of similarities between cultures that exist far away from each other. Culture shocks are inevitable, but ultimately learning about different cultures is a great experience overall.