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MY CROSS CULTURAL EXPERIENCES



WHERE AM I FROM?

I COME FROM AN ISLAND SURROUNDED WITH VIBRANT COLOURS, RYTHMETHIC MUSIC(HOME OF THE STEELPAN) AND DELICIOUS COMBINATIONS OF FOODS WITH A LARGE EXPOSURE TO BOTH AFRICAN AND INDIAN DELICACIES. CREOLE COOKING IN TRINIDAD IS FAMOUS AND RESULTS FROM AFRICAN INFLUENCES. SOME POPULAR CREOLE FOODS STILL PRACTICED AND COOKED IN TRINIDAD INCLUDES: CALLALOO(CREAMY SPINIACH), PELAU (CHICKEN, PEAS AND RICE) AND IPROVISIONI (SWEET POTATO, CASSAVA). ON THE OTHER HAND, THE INDIAN INFLUENCERS INTRODUCED CURRY, SPICES AND ROTI, JUST TO NAME A FEW AS PART OF TRINIDAD'S CULTURE. ADDITIONALLY, OUR CULTURE IS RECOGNIZED AND REFLECTED BY OUR FAMOUS CARNIVAL AND LARGE RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS SUCH AS DIWALI WHERE JUST LIKE INDIA, MANY WHO FOLLOW THE HINDU RELIGION LIGHTS DIYAS AND COOKS VEGETARIAN FOOD INVITING FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO PARTAKE IN THE CELEBRATION OF LIGHT.

MY FAMILY

I grew up in a nuclear household where I had the privilege of having both my parents and all 5 of my siblings live together. Coming from a third world country, we were considered “less fortunate” and many of my cross cultural experiences derived after I left my home and family and migrated to the United States. Being the only one from my immediate family who ever crossed waters and lived in a different land while haing the honor to visit different countries, my perception and views of cultures changed as I was now able to see the world through different lens. Here is a picture of my beautiful family.



A CULTURE SHOCK

I moved to the United States 15 days before all borders were on lock down due to Covid. Clusterphobic is how I felt. The “American Dream” soon turned into an “American Nightmare” and I just wanted to get out. Some of the people were rude, the food was different and even the water made me sick. Whilst living in a tiny apartment and paying rent soo expensive in Queens, NY, it was definitely not like the stories I was told. However, after things cleared up and tough restrictions were raised, I was finally able to go out and experience more of the American Culture. It turned out to be a mixture of soo many beautiful traditons and cultures which boiled down into one big melting pot. Here is where my new journey began.

LOCKDOWN

COVID-19



THE PLACE I NEVER WANTED TO LEAVE!

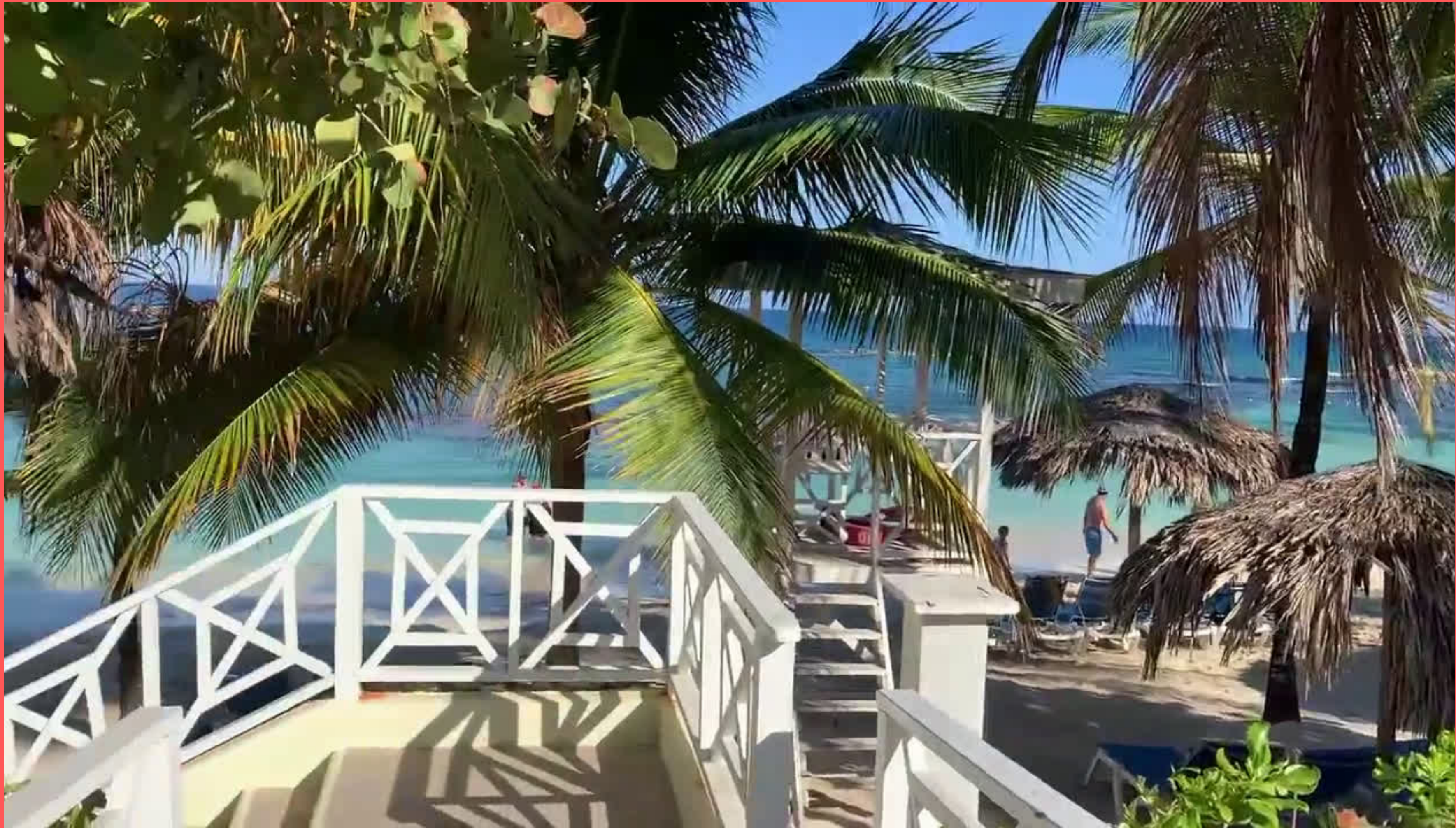
Blue waters, clear skies, perfect weather temperature, humble people, great food and exceptional customer service was exactly what I got EVERYWHERE that I explored when I visited Jamaica. We danced to the reggae and ate jerk everything. Jerk chicken, jerk pork, they even had curry chicken like home but what surprised me was their fried dumplings as it was a new encounter I had with eating wheat, and their Bar B Que KFC. There were fire shows and everyone was so inclusive. The experience to me was what paradise would be if one existed on earth. While on my visit to this amazing island I felt at home. It was so colorful and visual and verbal expression of the people exhilarated with such a happy and vibrant culture. I never wanted to leave. On one of my excursions in Jamaica, I even learnt a little Jamaican Patois. Attached are some activities I did when I visited Jamaica.





English vs Patois	
Jamaican language 	
Leave me alone	Lef Mi
Take care	Walk good
Look at that	Coo Deh
Thank you	Tanks
Children	Pickney
Where are you from?	Weh u come fram?





THERE WAS A MAFIA PROTEST!

MY VISIT TO CANCUN

In 2023 I had the pleasure of visiting the beautiful Cancun Mexico. They spoke Spanish and their national Dish was mole Poblano. Before going, I was warned not to drink the tap water and beware of the mafias. It didn't stop me. The second day after visiting this amazing place, I went out for a Tacos and Tequila tasting. Their tacos were amazing, nothing like what I have eaten in the USA and for the tequila, I Did not even know that a tamrand flavor existed tequila together with chocolate and strawberry and Pinacolada and possibly every taste of tequila you could imagine. However this was cut short as our local driver insisted that we left everything and be on our way back to the resort due to a Taxi Mafia protest against normalizing uber in Mexico. We were 1.5 hrs away from our resort and it was a heartache with everyone trying ot get home safely before the protest began. People were being transported in the back of police jeeps and it felt a bit chaotic. Apart from this, my trip was also educational since i was honored to meet decendents of the ancient tribes in Mexico, particularly the Mayans and be part of their cleasing ceremony.





TikTok
@bndre laise



HISTORY ON WHEAT

Throughout my travels, I explored various dishes that I had at different parts of the world. In my home country, Trinidad Roti was a staple. In Jamaica, I had fried dumplings which was fairly new to me, in Cancun Mexico, I had wheat Tacos and throughout my time in America I explored many dishes deriving from wheat in different cultures who used the grain to make unique dishes. Cultivated for 10,000 years, wheat is one of the world's most important plants. Today, U.S. farmers grow about 50 million acres of wheat, providing food for hundreds of millions of people at home and abroad. They support jobs in rural communities as well as mills, bakeries, grocery stores and restaurants. Wheat helped our ancient ancestors realize they could grow food as well as follow herds and hunt it and since then, the plan has been used all around the world in various dishes. This proves that even though we come from different background and cultures, we are still connected and wheat is just one way which proves that connection.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, even though I started out with implicit bias of my own that I was not aware of due to many factors, I have come to the understanding that we are all connected even though we may come from different places and the only way you can truly know this is from experiences. So if you have the opportunity to, visit new places, try new foods and give people the chance to express themselves and try to understand their perspective, you will eventually realize that we are closer to each other and more connected in more ways than we may have thought. Thank you