

# My Cross Cultural Experience.



By: Jordan Antoine

## Background:

My name is Jordan Antoine. I am a Haitian American. My family is from Haiti, but made their way to New York City in the late 1960's. My grandmother and my grandfather came to New York for a better living where they would later have my mother and her three other siblings who are my two aunts and my uncle. My grandparents could both speak creole fluently and so can my mother. However, my aunts and uncle never learned to speak creole. Both of my parents could speak creole fluently as well, but they never taught me to speak the language unfortunately. I was born, grew up, and still reside in Queens, New York. I grew up surrounded by my aunts and uncle and their children who are my cousins, my mother and grandmother and would eventually meet other family members along the way and as the years gone by. Sadly, my grandfather passed away before myself and cousins were born.

## Most Popular Music in Haiti:

Some of Haiti's most popular music genres consist of Compa's, Rara, Konpa, and Zouk. Compa's is known as the most popular music genre in Haiti, originating back in the 1950's. It is a mix of African rhythms, french ballads, and Caribbean beats. Compa's is known for its fast paced, upbeat music and dance style. Rara originated in Haiti and is primarily played during the carnival season. The music is characterized by the use of horns, drums, and other percussion instruments.

Konpa is the subgenre of Compa's music that is slower in tempo and delivers a romantic theme. Konpa gained popularity in the 1960's and is still popular today, especially towards the younger generation. Lastly, Zouk is a popular music genre in Haiti that originated in the French Caribbean. It is a mix of Compa's, calypso, and african rhythms. Zouk is known for its romantic and sensual themes.

## Haitian Cuisine:

One of Haiti's most known dishes are known as Griot, djon djon, and soup joumou. Griot is a dish in Haitian cuisine. It consists of pork shoulder covered in citrus, which is braised and then fried and ultimately simmered until it's tender before being fried crisp and brown. Djon Djon is a haitian cuisine known as black rice with mushrooms. The mushrooms are soaked and boiled in chicken broth to extract flavor, then cooked in rice and implement lima beans. Finally, the mushrooms turn the rice a dark brown, or black. Lastly, Soup Joumou, a puree of soft, mild caribbean pumpkin cooked with beef stock along with cabbage, pasta, carrots, plantains, root vegetables, celery, and various cuts of beef are part of what makes the dish enjoyable and one of the most important haitian cuisine staples.



## The Interviewed Family Member: My Mother

My mother was born in Brooklyn New York. She is the only one out of her siblings who can speak creole. My mother learned creole as a baby by hearing my grandmother and grandfather communicate. She had visited haiti a couple of times as a kid where she met other family members and got a chance to experience and understand where she came from. Although she was not born and raised in haiti, she is very knowledgeable of the country's contributions and efforts. This is where her parents were born and met as well as where her aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents were born as well.



## My Cultural Experience in Haiti:

Unfortunately, I was never able to visit Haiti and experience the country and all its glory. Sadly, I have only been able to experience through television what the people in Haiti have been enduring for years and the struggles they still encounter til this day. It hurts my heart to see what the people in Haiti have to deal with, the dangers they face in their everyday life, and the continued neglect of the country. It is still a dream one day to step foot in Haiti and I'd like to pursue that goal one day, hoping someday the circumstances are situated and is safer to enjoy not just for visitors, the ones who live there as well so everyone can come together as one and enjoy each others presence.

## Family Progression:

When my grandparents migrated from Haiti to New York, they were able to attain their first apartment where they raised my mother and her siblings. My grandparents were hard workers. My grandfather on the other hand owned businesses, was able to purchase new vehicles, and was able to provide for his household at all times. After all of my grandparents children were born, they were able to purchase their first home in Queens, NY where they continued to raise their children. Later in life, my mother and her siblings were able to finish their education and attain good jobs that allowed them to help raise their children and take care of themselves as well. Having positive examples like these have helped me to continue to work hard and never give up on what I set my eyes on.



The End



Thank you!