

The  
**GARIFUNA**  
*Journey*

A stylized white illustration on a black background showing a boat with several figures inside, representing a journey.

## **Study Guide**



**Celebrating the resiliency  
of the Garifuna People and their traditions.**

A documentary and archiving project produced by Leland/Berger Productions  
in collaboration with the National Garifuna Council.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	Page 2
<b>Teachers' Study Guide Title Page.....</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
Teachers' Guide .....	Pages 4–10
<b>Supplementary Information Title Page.....</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
Facts About the Garifuna .....	Page 12
Map .....	Page 13
Timeline . .....	Pages 14–15
Poems .... ..	Pages 16–18
Drums of My Father .....	Page 16
Our Children Must Know .....	Page 16
Pelican .....	Page 17
Kalifornia .....	Page 18
Garifuna Proverbs .....	Page 19
<b>Video Documentary Title Page .....</b>	<b>Page 20</b>
Garifuna Settlement Day.....	Pages 21–22
Demand Our Place, Our History.....	Pages 23–28
Our Language .....	Pages 29–30
Our People, Our Culture .....	Pages 31–38
Life in Central America .....	Pages 31–33
Life in North America.....	Pages 33–34
Music, Song and Dance .....	Pages 35–37
Garifuna foods.....	Pages 37–38
Cassava .....	Pages 39–41
Our Ancestors.....	Pages 42–44
<b>Resources Title Page.....</b>	<b>Page 45</b>
Resources.....	Page 46
Bibliography for Teachers .....	Page 47
Bibliography for Students .....	Page 48
Acknowledgements .....	Page 49



# INTRODUCTION

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

Garifuna tradition bearers, artists, and technicians collaborated with filmmakers Andrea E. Leland and Kathy Berger in producing *The Garifuna Journey*, a documentary focusing on a remarkable story of resistance and continuity of culture in the face of overwhelming odds. The National Garifuna Council of Belize recognized this project would help them fulfill their goals in their cultural retrieval efforts. To date, little had been documented and collected for their own archives.

With direction from tradition bearers in Belize, over sixty hours of video footage and audio taped oral histories were collected, transcribed, and returned to the community in Belize. *The Garifuna Journey* documentary was produced from the collected materials, and a traveling exhibition was mounted. Although there are higher concentrations of Garinagu in Honduras, New York and Los Angeles, we worked primarily with the Garifuna community within Belize in the collection of archival videotape footage. This project predominately reflects the Garifuna experience in Belize.

The Garifuna story is told from the "insider" Garifuna point of view, with little if any "outside" perspectives. Even the narration for the documentary was written and narrated by a Garifuna woman. Because of the first voice nature of the project Cultural Survival, an indigenous rights organization, sponsors *The Garifuna Journey* as part of their "Special Projects." All unedited audio and visual material collected for this project has been placed in the library at the Center for Black Music Research in Chicago. This material will be kept in archival condition and is available to the public.

This study guide was developed to accompany the traveling exhibit and the video documentary *The Garifuna Journey*, in order to build and enhance teachers' and students' knowledge of the Garifuna people. It is interdisciplinary, and may be used within any cultural studies program. Easily adapted for use at different grade levels, this study guide is particularly appropriate for students in grades eight through college.

## WHY STUDY THE GARIFUNA? WHAT CAN ONE LEARN FROM THIS STUDY?

The study of the Garifuna provides insight into a people whose history has been one of struggle and determination to survive at a time when very few peoples, or nations, were able to resist the onslaught of colonialism and slavery. Despite exile and subsequent Diaspora, their traditional culture survives today. It is a little known story that deserves its place in the annals of the African Diaspora.

*The Garifuna Journey* can be used as a tool for teaching tolerance, culture, identity, and community. Events in history shape a person's beliefs, values, and cultural practices. No culture remains static. Culture must continually reinterpret, adapt, and synthesize in order to survive. The study of the Garifuna is a perfect demonstration of a culture in transition.



# TEACHERS' STUDY GUIDE





# TEACHERS' STUDY GUIDE

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The materials presented in this study guide seek to expand upon the information which is presented in the video. We have posed questions and activities for each section. **You may want to introduce your own questions and exercises, taking into account your student population and geographical location. This is particularly important for teachers outside of the United States.**

The study guide tracks the progression of the video. We have placed ⌚ **time code or minute counter** next to the beginning of each section as well as next to other pertinent parts. If you zero-out the minute counter on your VCR, it will correspond to the time code we have provided for you. This will enable you to pick and choose sections of the tape if you would like to use them separately. Under the time codes, we have provided visual and audio cues to help you identify the sections.

To the right of the primary text, we have included **sidebars** to add a slightly different dimension to the text. The sidebars can be used as a tool to encourage the students to think critically about the material presented. Sidebars include quotes, drawings, photographs, recipes and other interesting information.

## EDUCATIONAL GOALS

1. To explore the forces that influence a culture.
2. To look at the ways in which one culture borrows from another in order to survive and prosper.
3. To demonstrate the resiliency of a minority culture who overcame great odds.
4. To look at the universal theme of cultural identity and the challenges minority cultures face in maintaining that identity.



*Garinagu Children*



## SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### GARIFUNA POEMS (See pages 16–18)

#### *“Drums of My Father”*

*Note for teachers: This poem is printed exactly as it was written by the poet.*

#### Activities:

1. Before viewing the video, have students read the poem “Drums of My Father”. Ask students to bring images and ideas to the words. What do they think this poem is about?
2. After viewing the video, compare students’ new understanding with their earlier thoughts.

#### *“Our Children Must Know”*

1. Have students write a poem about their own ethnic history.

#### *“Pelican”*

1. Ask students to write what this poem means to them.
2. Ask students to describe to whom or where they would fly if they had the freedom of a bird.

### GARIFUNA PROVERBS (See page 19)

*Definition: A proverb is a short saying in common use that strikingly expresses some obvious truth or familiar expression.*

#### Activities:

1. Ask students to write expressions commonly used within their own culture or proverbs they are familiar with.
2. Ask students to interpret Garifuna proverbs and find equivalent sayings in their own language.
3. Conduct a literary festival. Have students collect Garifuna Folktales, and proverbs and present them with their own ethnic and family proverbs, poems, and stories.



## SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### MAP (See page 13)

#### ? Questions:

1. How might St. Vincent's geographical location affect the culture of its inhabitants?
2. What natural resources are located in your community?  
How does this affect your lifestyle?

#### Activities:

1. Provide students with blank map of Belize, have them draw in topography, label rivers and other bodies of water, major cities, and bordering countries.
2. Describe Belize's location in relation to your home.
3. Determine the distance between your community and your family's country of origin.
4. Have students locate Belize on the map in relationship to Honduras, St. Vincent, the Orinoco Valley, and Africa.
5. Have students create a map of the Caribbean Sea identifying all the Caribbean and Central American nations that border on it. Have students locate older maps of the Caribbean and compare it with the modern map.
6. Research to find out which American state is similar in size and/or population to Belize?

### GARIFUNA SETTLEMENT DAY (See pages 21-22)

#### ? Questions:

1. What holiday does your culture celebrate that marks an important event?  
How do you celebrate it?
2. Can you think of other leaders who helped to mobilize a movement for the recognition of their people?
3. Can you think of other movements in history which helped to secure recognition for a group of people?
4. Are there common threads in history that produce these movements?  
What are they?



# TEACHERS' STUDY GUIDE...CONTINUED

## SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### DEMAND OUR PLACE, OUR HISTORY *(See pages 23–28)*

**Note to teachers:** As Gwen Nunez says in the video text “We weren’t the ones that wrote the book”. Recent scholarship suggests African presence in the Americas before Columbus. In addition, the Garifuna have recently conducted their own research resulting in an alternative view of history. See sidebar adjacent to African and European Presence section. Another resource can be found in the bibliography section, I. V. Sertima, *They Came Before Columbus*.

#### ? Questions:

1. What role does geography play in shaping the history and culture of a people?
2. How did colonialism affect the Garifuna people?
3. How has an historic event affected your ancestors and/or their culture? How did your ancestors reconstruct their lives? Has the history of your ancestors affected your life as it is today?
4. What was the result of the Garifuna’s resistance to slavery?
5. If slavery had never existed, how do you think the world would be different?
6. How is your ethnic history different or similar to the history of the Garifuna people?

#### Activities:

1. Pick the name of a person who is listed on the SS. Experiment, reenact a scene (using pictures or words) from the boat as it left, during the passage, and its arrival in Honduras or Belize.
2. Make a mural/timeline of the key events in the Garifuna Journey.
3. Give students a map of the area and have them track the journey.
4. Make a picture book that explains this story of migration to a much younger audience. Choose ideas and events appropriate for each age level.
5. Have students discuss how their knowledge of their own ethnic history differs from what they may have read in school text books or any other book.

### OUR LANGUAGE *(See pages 29–30)*

#### ? Questions:

1. Why are the Garifuna emphasizing the importance of the language to their children?
2. What role does language play in sustaining a culture?

#### Activity:

1. Have students share a poem, a proverb or words they know from their own native language if it is other than English. Discuss where their language came from and where it is currently spoken.





## SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### OUR PEOPLE, OUR CULTURE *(See pages 31-38)*

#### *Life in Central America (See pages 31-33)*

#### ? Questions:

1. What defines a culture?
2. What influences a culture?
3. What helps to cement a culture?
4. What impact has mass migration from Central America had on the Garifuna culture?
5. What does assimilation mean and how is it happening to the Garifuna and other cultures?
6. What are the various cultures you see around you in your community?

#### Activities:

1. Have your students use the internet to contact some Garifuna organization in the United States or Central America. Encourage them to establish a pen-pal relationship with a Garifuna peer through the internet.
2. Have your students research and make contact with a nearby Garifuna community. Have the students record on audio or video, an oral history of a family within that Garifuna community.
3. Have students make a diorama of a coastal community. This diorama should reflect the traditional and modern way of life. Include depiction's of boats, housing, cooking etc.
4. Develop a list of questions you would ask if you were trying to find out about a culture you were unfamiliar with? If you live in a multicultural community, ask these questions to a classmate or neighbor who is from a different culture than you. Organize a field trip to an ethnic museum and discover the answers there through inquiry and observations.
5. Have students write a story, or make a drawing of their own families journey to this country. Include oral history of a family member (if available) who remembers the experience.
6. Using the internet, research the weather patterns affecting Garifuna coastal communities in Central America. Discuss what effects the weather might have on the development of housing, the fishing industry, farming , historic preservation of artifacts etc.?



## SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### *Music, Song and Dance (See pages 35-37)*

#### 🔍 Questions:

1. What is the music of your culture?
2. How is music used within a culture?

#### Activities:

1. See if you can find some Garifuna musicians to come to your class and teach students about music, drumming, and dance.
2. Have students make a drum and compose their own music.

### *Garifuna Foods (See pages 37-38)*

#### 🔍 Questions:

1. Garifuna children learn to prepare traditional foods from their mothers by staying nearby while she is cooking. Have you learned something about your culture from another family member?
2. What foods can you prepare specific to your culture and how did you learn to make it?

#### Activities:

1. Have the students pound plantain with a mortar and pestle.
2. Have the students share a recipe that reflects the food of their culture.
3. Have students present a food fair. Students could bring a dish that is special to their own culture and give a presentation on why it is important, how it is prepared and what nutritional value it holds.
4. Organize a field trip to an ethnic restaurant in your neighborhood. Before going, research how and when the foods are eaten.

### *Cassava (See pages 39-41)*

#### 🔍 Questions :

1. How does the process of making cassava hold the community together? What effect does this have on the Garifuna culture.
2. Is there a ceremonial food used in your culture? How is it used.
3. In the documentary, a motorized grater and an iron plate was used in the cassava preparation process. Describe how the entire process of growing, harvesting, and preparing cassava could possibly be accomplished relying only on natural resources.
4. How do you interact with the natural resources in your community?

#### Activity:

1. Construct a ruguma with materials of your choice. Purchase one (or two) cassava at a market, peel it, grate it, and using the ruguma you constructed, strain it. What did you learn?



## SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### *Our Ancestors* (See pages 42-44)

**Note to teachers:** There is limited information about the Dugu ceremony available in written text. For more information about Garifuna spirituality and the Dugu as told by the Garifuna themselves, go to the Garifuna Web site at [www.garifuna-world.com](http://www.garifuna-world.com).

#### ? Questions:

1. How can we promote respect for the religions of others?
2. How do religions bring people together and also separate them?
3. How is religion an evolving belief system?  
What influences its development?
4. What role does religion play in the life of the Garifuna and other peoples?
5. The Dugu is a ritual ceremony that brings people in the community together.  
Can you describe an event that brings your community/family together?
6. Describe how your ancestors have influenced you or other family members?
7. Is there a way in which your family pays tribute to an ancestor?

#### Activities:

1. Write a poem or a story about your ancestors and their influence (or lack of it) on your life or the life of another family member.
2. Describe a ceremony or celebration you participated in. What are the similarities/differences between your event and a dugu?  
Were special foods prepared?  
Did it take place in a special place?  
Did you have to prepare for it?  
Who else was there?  
Why is it important?  
Did it mark a special event?  
Make an audio-visual presentation about your ceremony.





# SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION





# FACTS ABOUT THE GARIFUNA NATION

## **Names:**

Garinagu, Garifuna, Black Caribs and Karaphuna

## **Ethnic Heritage:**

Arawak Indian, Carib Indian, and West African

## **Location of Garifuna Communities:**

**Central America:** Belize, Honduras, Guatemala and along the coast lines of Nicaragua, Colombia, and Venezuela

**Caribbean:** Islands of Dominica and St. Vincent

**North America:** In major urban areas of the United States and Canada such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Houston, Miami, Toronto, and Montreal.

**Europe:** Primarily in England.

## **Land Distribution:**

As an indigenous population in Central America, the Garifuna have had to struggle to obtain official rights to land occupied by their people for generations.

## **Population Estimates:** (approximations)

Figures are not available for Colombia, Venezuela, or England

Belize: 15,400

Guatemala: 3,000

Honduras: 100,000

Nicaragua: 1,000

St. Vincent: 7,500

Dominica: 6,000

United States: approx. 90,000

## **Common Language:**

Garifuna

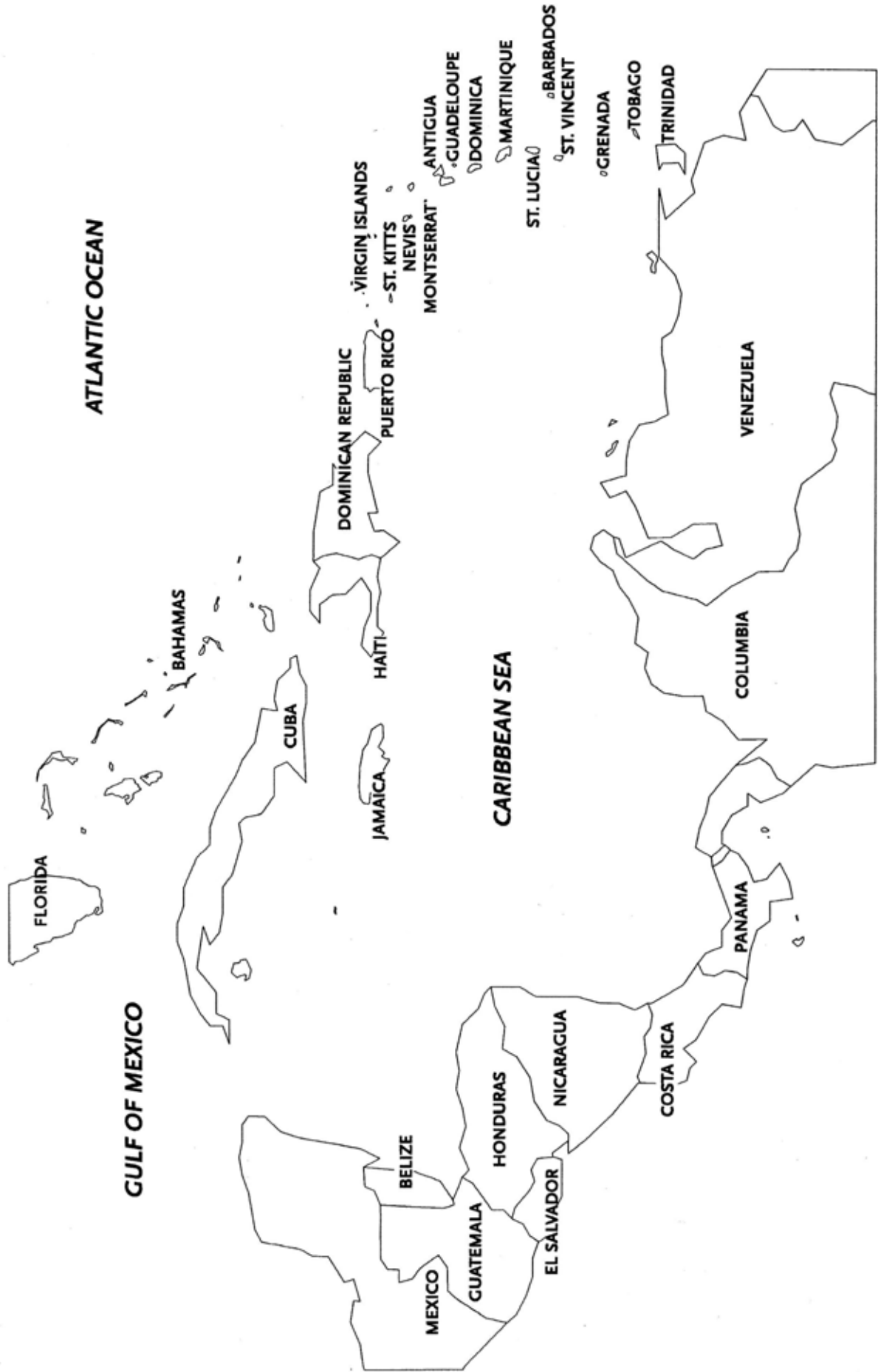
## **National Garifuna Council:**

A grassroots organization which was formed in 1981 representing the Indigenous Garifuna nation of Belize. Headed by National President and Board of Directors elected every two years at a convention. Secretariat/Coordinator acts a liaison with Garinagu at home, abroad, and with both government and non-governmental organizations. Organizations similar to the National Garifuna Council exists wherever Garifuna communities are located.





# MAP OF CARIBBEAN





## TIMELINE

- 1311** Abubakari II, Emperor of Mali (Africa) led an expedition to the west with over 2,000 ships.
- 1635** Spanish slave ships sink, Africans rescued by the Carib Indians on the east coast of Bequia Island near St. Vincent.
- 1660** The English and French sign a treaty by which the Caribs (Garinagu) were left in possession of St. Vincent.
- 1763** The British annex St. Vincent signaling the influx of land-hungry English settlers.
- 1767** Act passed in St. Vincent forbade slaves to sell sugar, cotton, or rum without their owner's written permission or to plant sugar, cocoa, coffee, cotton, or ginger under pain of the articles being deemed stolen goods. Free Negroes and mulattos were limited to ownership of eight acres of land and in no case were to be deemed freeholders which carried political privileges. All free Negroes and mulattos required "to choose some master or mistress to live with that their lives and conversations may be known and observed."
- 1768** Joseph Chatoyer was chosen the Paramount Chief of the Garinagu (Black Caribs) on the island of St. Vincent.
- 1772** Two regiments were ordered from North America to join British forces from the neighboring islands to subdue the Caribs. The commander was not able to subdue the Caribs until February 1773.
- 1773** British Government set up a commission of inquiry and ordered an end to the war campaign, offering honorable terms of peace to the Caribs. The terms of the treaty were printed in the St. Vincent gazette of 1773.
- 1783** Truce to the eighty year Anglo-French war in the Caribbean. Britain adds St. Vincent to its empire.
- 1795** War broke out between the British and the Garinagu for the control of St. Vincent.
- 1795** Joseph Chatoyer killed March 14. Garinagu surrender in July, 1796.
- 1797** 4,338 Garinagu rounded up for exile to Baliesau internment camps. 2,284 who survived camps embarked for Roatan in Central America. Only 2,026 survived the trip.



## TIMELINE...CONTINUED

- 1821** Company of Negro Actors formed in New York by William A. Brown. He is from St. Vincent and presumed to be a Garifuna. He staged a play based on the insurrection of the Black Caribs entitled "The Drama of King Shotaway."
- 1823** Garifuna delegation, Elejo Beni, Vicente Lino, Remauldo Lewis, Elias Martinez, and Alejo Lambey met with the British superintendent to discuss permission to settle on uninhabited southern coastline. Permission was granted.
- 1941** Garifuna Settlement Day, a holiday to celebrate the contributions of Garinagu to British Honduras was granted and celebrated on November 19, in the Stann Creek and Toledo Districts inhabited by Garinagu since 1823.
- 1975** Government of Belize honored Garifuna contributions to Belize by issuing a postage stamp depicting Garifuna Settlement Day.
- 1977** Garifuna Settlement Day becomes a National Public and Bank Holiday.
- 1985** Unveiling of a monument in St. Vincent to honor Joseph Chatoyer.
- 1990** Unveiling of a monument in Belize to honor Thomas Vincent Ramos.
- 1991** November 19 was proclaimed "Garifuna Day" in the City of New York by Mayor David N. Dinkins.
- 1993** Unveiling of the Garifuna Monument in Belize personifying and representing the "Arrival, Survival and the Prosperity" of the Garifuna people in Central America.








# GARIFUNA POEMS

## DRUMS OF MY FATHER

*But my spirit and my voice will not be quieted,  
will not be muffled  
for I am the hollowed, hallowed, haloed trunk,  
and the hills and vales and the streams and the soul of Africa,  
and the banks and the waters and the heart and the mind of the Amazon  
and the Orinoco  
and the wrinkled calloused hands dragged across the Atlantic  
and dumped on the golden studs and shores of the Carib-Being water.*

*Yet you must know, I was here before—before the paler faces came,  
and organ music, jukebox blaring hymns sung to Mary  
and the queens English shall not quiet the drums of my fathers rumbling in my bones  
drums of my fathers capturing of my mind  
drums of my fathers recapturing my soul  
or the words of my fathers tumbling from my mouth*


*Drums of my fathers, of my grandfather, of my ancestors, drumming in my psyche.*

 **Poem written by Roy Cayetano**

## OUR CHILDREN MUST KNOW

*Our children  
Must know the truth  
The truth about  
Their history and culture  
The truth about  
Alejo Beni  
Our Great Garifuna Leader  
The truth about  
Thomas Vincent Ramos  
The Father of Our Celebrations  
The truth about  
Joseph Chatoyer  
The Garifuna Paramount Chief  
The truth about his death  
Fighting for the cause  
of Garinagu  
The truth about our survival  
Guerrilla Warfare Style*

*We conquered the land and seas  
We must tell the children  
The truth  
That we were traders, craftsmen  
That we protected our women and children  
They must know  
The truth  
About themselves  
The truth about  
Our exodus  
From St. Vincent to Belize  
The truth that  
We were never enslaved  
Our children must know the truth,  
The truth  
About Garifuna*

 **Poem written by Rhodel Castillo**



## Marcella Lewis, a Woman of Words

Marcella Lewis is the first Garinagu women to write down her words and be published. Sitting in front of her small house in Hopkins, Belize, Marcella appears as a small, elderly woman with a warm smile and bright eyes. Watching her, it truly seems as if her aura is radiating.

Yet, when she reads her poems, magic happens. This small woman dressed in her house clothes suddenly becomes magnified. As the words flow out of her mouth, her hands move, her faced becomes animated, and her voice becomes powerful.



Marcella Lewis

Her writing, she explains, is a "real gift," a gift from God. It is a gift she says because when she dreams, she dreams of words and visions. In the morning when she wakes up, she simply writes them down. Everything in her poems just comes to her. She shares this gift with the children of the community in an effort to get them to appreciate their culture and maintain their language.

The words, which she writes in both Garifuna and English, are strong and powerful. They send the message that Garinagu must use their voice if they are to be heard. Her words are a challenge to the Garinagu to share their pride in their culture with others.

### PELICAN

*Pelican, you keep soaring in the sky  
You have such a good time  
How I envy you  
I wish I were like you.*

*Pelican, Whatever place  
You want to reach  
You will reach  
You don't need passage.*

*Give me your shape so I may  
Be like you.  
You are a good captain  
At sea and in the sky.*

*Give me passage;  
Take me under your wings;  
Throw me on the shores of Saint Vincent  
The home of our ancestors  
The home of Chatoyer and Alejo Beni  
I will be grateful to you.*


### YALIFU

*Yalifu, wireiguañaha buguya dúeirugu  
Mama lubuidu bidani  
Gimugatina bun  
Itara nuguya hamuga keisi buguya.*

*Yalifu, aüdü le ñei lumuti babusuera  
Bachülürü,  
Chülütibu,  
Mabusuerütibu paséi.*

*Rubei bufuruma nun itara námuga  
Kei buguya.  
Aban arünei builti buguya  
Baranaha keisi dúeirugu*

*Ruba paséi nun  
Barübana lábugien barüna  
Báguraname lubeya Yurumein  
Le hageira wayunagu,  
Lageria Satuye lau llehu Binéin  
Seremein nuba bun.*

 Poems written by Marcella Lewis



# GARIFUNA POEMS...CONTINUED

## CALIFORNIA

## KALIFÓNIA

*In 1989 I went to visit my grandchildren in California.*

*California must have wanted a poem about itself so it gave me a dream.*

One day  
 I went to the seaside in the States  
     To bathe in the sea  
 From afar I saw a change  
     In the sea  
 I stood and watched  
 There was a great calm  
     The sea shone  
     As far as the eye could see  
 I look  
     To the north  
     To the south  
     To the northwest  
     The to southwest  
     To the sky  
 The sky shone  
 Not a stain in the heavens  
 Not even birds flew  
 I could not bathe  
     For watching  
 Then I was touched  
     What is it  
 A voice from behind  
     Bathe  
 I turned around and saw two people  
     I did not know  
 I was frightened  
 "Do not be afraid Bathe"  
 They jumped into the sea before me  
     I followed them  
 I felt the pressure  
     Of the cold water  
 We swam to the southwest  
 Then I realized  
 There were five of us  
     Two ahead of me  
     Two behind me  
 How clear was the sea  
 I saw much in the sea  
     That I had never seen in my life  
 You would have been afraid  
 But here, giving me courage,  
     were my guardians along with me  
 Who were they?  
 I do not know.

Luagu aban weyu  
 Neíbuga laru beya Meriga  
     Lun nágawaha barana  
 Diseginian nihan aban sánsiguau  
     Baranaha  
 Nararama narágua  
 Nihan aban gáluma  
     Miriha barana  
     Dagá lumoun leben Barihi  
 Ariha nuguya  
     Núrurugun  
     Suedirugun  
     Nawestarugun  
 Sawestarugun  
     Dúreirugun  
 Mirigua dúeirugu  
 Nin murusun dáseiti  
 Nin dunuru máhamahatian  
 Siángili nagoun  
     Ariagua  
 Aba nadunrún  
     "Katei sa?"  
 Lian umalali,  
     "Bagawa"  
 Nagararagua, bian gürigia  
     Ibidietian nun  
 Aba nanufudedagun  
     "Manufudedaguaba  
     Bágawa"  
 Hadabura nubá  
     Nuguya hárigi  
 Sandinei laburuchagunina  
     Barana le lidili  
 Wáfuliha suédirugun  
 Nadeirarugua nungua  
 Seingüguadiwa  
     Bian nubá  
     Bian nárigi  
 Ma larugounga barana  
 Saragu narihi baranaha  
     Marihinágili lúmagien nibagari  
 Hanufudegua buguya hamuga  
 Añahan nugurasu, núniri,  
     úara numa  
 Kátaña la  
 Inhin

Poem written by Marcella Lewis



# GARIFUNA PROVERBS

## GARIFUNA PROVERBS

Le hanufudeti luei agu méigiti ichügü

**He who is afraid of eye does not eat the head.**

Makeinti gáwanü lábugua

**A copper will not make sound by itself.**

Móunigiruti gayu awasi

**Chicken will not watch corn.**

Ugunei múñeirügütu mafuredutu

**A dorey that stays anchored will not earn freight.**

Básuera iñun lábürüha bigibuagun

**You spit upwards it falls on your face.**

Marienguti óuchahati hingi la ladigi

**The fisherman does not say his fish stinks.**

Mintu wéyama badía

**Pumpkin does not bear watermelon.**

Mábouguaba lugudi bágasu lau duna furedeiti

**Do not cook cowfoot with borrowed water.**

Darita yamadi tidáü

**The pataki has found its cover.**

Sianta ligía baliha tanügü anüga, aba teweraha

**Once the suitcase can no longer take its load, it vomits.**

Lau luagu lidise wéibugu waranseraguei wanügü

**It is during the long journey that we rearrange our burden.**

Luagu lidise wéibugu wasandirei lihürü wanügü

**It is as we proceed on our journey that we feel the weight of our burden.**





# VIDEO DOCUMENTARY





# GARIFUNA SETTLEMENT DAY

🕒 **Time Code:** 2:14

👁️ **Visual:** Women dancing on the shore.

🔊 **Audio:** "The 19th of November, Garifuna Settlement Day, reenacts the arrival of Garifuna to Belize."

Although the Garinagu first came to Belize in 1802, the majority arrived under the leadership of Alejo Beni on November 19th, 1832. Every year on November 19, flags of yellow, black, and white wave proudly in the air while Garinagu reflect back on the arrival of their people to Belize and take pride in their cultural identity, resilience, and recognition of their role in history. During the celebrations, the Garinagu wave palm fronds, cassava branches, and other vegetation that their exiled ancestors brought with them to plant in their new environment.

The celebrations have evolved over the years. Initially, a man named Thomas Vincent Ramos gathered together Garifuna women in Dangriga to form a committee to whom he could teach Christian hymns in the Garifuna language, which he himself had translated.

*"Ramos said why don't we have our day to celebrate our arrival in Belize. And so he was toying with that idea and he rounded up the women. The women in the Garifuna culture are the bearers of the culture. So he along with the women began their parade. He would knock his little drum and then parade the streets of Dangriga. The people of the high society like the civil servants and the teachers would make fun of him, ridicule him for doing that. Later on, in 1941, Thomas Vincent Ramos, Domingo Ventura and Panteleon Hernandez approached the governor of the colony and asked him if he could grant the 19th of November Carib-Settlement Day. The governor liked the idea and so in 1941 the celebrations began in Dangriga alone. Then two years later in 1943 the celebrations was extended to Toledo."*

👤 Sebastian Cayetano,  
Garifuna traditions bearer

## F.Y.I.

*In 1977, the People's United Party of Belize established November 19 as a national holiday throughout the country in recognition of the Garifuna peoples' contribution, particularly in the area of education.*



## GARIFUNA SETTLEMENT DAY...CONTINUED

Each year in the weeks before Garifuna Settlement Day, a Ms. Garifuna Queen contest is held. This is not your typical beauty contest. The winner of this contest is selected based upon her knowledge and portrayal of Garifuna language, dance, and culture and serves as a role model for younger Garinagu children. The celebration itself traditionally begins on the eve of the 19th with a procession to the cemetery. With candles in hand, people make their way to the graves of their ancestors where they pay proper respect in song and prayer.

*"T.V. Ramos was strongly influenced by Marcus Garvey who came here (Belize) in 1921. Ramos was here earlier, that is he lived here, attended school and became a school teacher under the Methodist denomination. Later on, before he founded Garifuna Settlement day, he founded three other organizations. First, CDS, meaning Carib-Development society, the CIS, meaning Carib-International Society and Carib-Arrival fund. There were several Garinagu who come from Honduras and Guatemala and they had nothing, so he established that fund so they would have some money when they arrived."*

*Sebastian Cayetano,  
Garifuna traditions bearer*



*Reenactment of Garifuna's arrival in Belize on Garifuna Settlement Day.*





# DEMAND OUR PLACE, OUR HISTORY

- 🕒 **Time Code:** 5:36
- 👁️ **Visual:** Map of Arawak-Carib migration
- 🔊 **Audio:** The Arawaks were the first to migrate up from the Orinoco Valley.

## EARLY HISTORY

The story begins in South America, where people who spoke Arawak, an Amerindian language, fashioned a culture based on yucca or cassava farming, hunting and fishing in a dense forest cut by many rivers. By the year 1000 AD some of them had moved up the Orinoco River to the Caribbean Sea and its islands, where they established a new way of life. Later other people, whom history has called "Caribs," moved into the Caribbean out of the same areas.

Scholars theorize that resources became scarce in the Orinoco thus forcing the Arawaks to migrate. Being both farmers and seafaring people, many of the Arawaks, with the help of good trade winds, sailed north and settled on some of the Caribbean islands. Some time after 1000 AD, the Carib Indians followed the same course as the Arawaks. Unlike the Arawak, the Caribs were not farmers but were fishermen and able warriors. They traded with the Arawaks, sometimes raiding their settlements, and eventually they pushed them out of the smaller islands, taking their women as wives and killing or enslaving the men. Descendants of Carib men and Arawak women were known as the **Calinago**, or as they are commonly referred to the Island Caribs.

## AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN PRESENCE

- 🕒 **Time code:** 6:20
- 👁️ **Visual:** Map of Pre-Columbian African explorations
- 🔊 **Audio:** Long Before Columbus arrived, African explorers and merchants followed trade winds and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean.

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*"Between the years 1302 and 1313, some Africans from the kingdom of Mali sailed on two Mandingo expeditions to the west. One of these expeditions was under the leadership of Abubakari II, Emperor of Mali. The Garifuna story also is about those Africans who inhabited the island of Yurumein, St. Vincent and lived with the indigenous native inhabitants before the arrival of Columbus."*

 Felix Miranda,  
Garifuna tradition bearer

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# DEMAND OUR PLACE, OUR HISTORY

...CONTINUED

- 🕒 **Time code:** 7:15
- 👁️ **Visual:** Map of European Colonialization
- 🔊 **Audio:** After 1492 and for the next three hundred years, Spanish, Dutch, French and British Colonialists fought each other for our fertile Caribbean land.

European presence in the Caribbean began with Christopher Columbus in 1492. The colonialists who followed found rich fertile soil on which to establish sugar plantations. The colonialists began importing slaves from Africa to work in the fields. Thus began the economic triangle between Africa, Europe and the Caribbean.

Following the shipwreck of 1635, Caribs welcomed and protected the African refugees. For survival sake, the Africans quickly adopted the Carib way of life and eventually intermarried. Out of this union came a new people who began to compete with the Island Carib for land and power. These were called Black Caribs by the Europeans to distinguish them from the others, who were called Red or Yellow Caribs.

By the 1750 the Black Caribs of St. Vincent were numerous and quite prosperous. The men hunted and fished and made trips to nearby islands to trade tobacco and baskets for arms, munitions, and other European manufacture goods. The women raised the children, planted and harvested cassava. Some Black Caribs began to grow cotton for export, using captured African slaves to supplement their labor. Although French settlers lived in St. Vincent at the time, there was enough land for all, and few problems arose. In fact the Caribs found it to their advantage to trade with the French not only on St. Vincent, but on neighboring islands such as Martinique, St. Lucia and Grenada.

By 1763 the British started coming to St. Vincent in large numbers. They wanted the fertile land owned by the Caribs and did what they could to acquire the land. The Garinagu were not willing to give up their homeland. It was where they hunted, farmed, and raised their children. Animosity grew between the groups as British campaigned against the Caribs both with words and guns.

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*"The Garifuna resisted slavery, but slavery is a part of the heritage of any black people in the new world. We didn't come here on the love boat, we went through it too"*

 Joseph Palacio,  
Anthropologist and Garifuna scholar

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*"The Caribes...the English labour to exterminate them utterly. I believe that God allows this, without fathoming his judgments & that the whole of Europe should invade their lands: because they are too great an insult to the Creator through their bestial ways of life and because they have no wish to recognize him at all. Although it has been possible to speak to them for the last twenty years, they ridicule Him; & if there were reason to hope that they could be made Christians, it would be first necessary to civilize them & make them into men."*

 Sieur De la Borde,  
Jesuit Missionary (1674)

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# DEMAND OUR PLACE, OUR HISTORY ...CONTINUED

## CARIB WARS

- 🕒 **Time Code:** 9:11
- 👁️ **Visual:** Drawing of Chatoyer, Carib chief
- 🔊 **Audio:** Chatoyer was the paramount chief of chiefs among Garifuna in St. Vincent.

In 1772, the British provoked the Caribs to open warfare and the Carib Wars began. The French joined in the fight against their common enemy, the British. Determined to end the conflict and take over the entire island, additional British troops arrived for a major military campaign. Ironically, slaves of British settlers helped fight the Black Caribs, for they had accepted their master's views and were frightened of what they saw as a dangerous "primitive" people.

In 1795, Carib Chief Chatoyer was mortally wounded during an ambush. By the summer of 1796 the French surrendered. Caribs continued to fight and withdrew into the thick mountainous jungle of St. Vincent. British troops burned Carib houses, canoes and crops. Two years later, sick and nearly starving, the remaining Caribs surrendered. Approximately 5,000 Garinagu men, women, and children were taken prisoner. They were sent to the nearby island of Baliceau where they suffered overcrowded, unsanitary conditions. While waiting for the British to decide their fate, more than half their population was decimated by yellow fever.

## EXILE

- 🕒 **Time Code:** 10:29
- 👁️ **Visual:** Drawing of Ship S.S. Experiment
- 🔊 **Audio:** For two years after Chatoyer's death the Garinagu continued to fight until finally they were forced to surrender.

In 1797, the British permanently exiled the Black Caribs to Roatan, an island off the coast of Spanish Honduras where other rebellious blacks were sent. On March 11, 1797 the darker skinned Garinagu along with British troops and supplies, were

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*"...the Charaibs are altogether uncivilized, and the Blacks particularly of an idle and untractable disposition!"*

👤 Sir William Young, 1765

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*"The participation of a small district hemmed in by the seas, with a people whom the law can never reach, and of savage manners, must never be dangerous; and if they have antipathies to us, founded in attachments to our enemy, must in the end be fatal. These truths are so powerfully urged by late events, that without interposition of the strong hand of the government, it is to be feared that the most healthy, rich, and beautiful islands of St. Vincent's may, to all intents of national advantage, be lost to the crown of Great Britain. Mere regulations respecting the Charaib can no longer be deemed effectual. Laws cannot reach them in their woods*

👤 Sir William Young, 1772/1795

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## F.Y.I.

*On the Caribbean Island of Dominica, the Garifuna people are known as Karaphuna.*

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# DEMAND OUR PLACE, OUR HISTORY

...CONTINUED

loaded onto eight ships. Captain James Barrett, commander of his Majesty's Ship "Experiment", took the lead and they set off across the Caribbean Sea toward Roatan. One stop over was made in Jamaica for repairs and to load fresh water and meat.

Lighter skinned Caribs were sent back to St. Vincent where they were subjected to British laws prohibiting them from speaking Garifuna or practicing Garifuna traditions or customs. Inter-marriage between the black and red Caribs had created a situation where families had both light and dark skin members. The British's orders managed to tear families apart forever. Carib settlements can be found on St. Vincent and Dominica to this day.

🕒 **Time Code:** 11:35

👁️ **Visual:** Map of Exile from St. Vincent to Central America

🔊 **Audio:** It was the darker skinned Black Caribs that were rounded up for deportation.

Upon arrival in Roatan over half of the people were sick and frail. Left with only fishing hooks and lines, cuttings and seeds, survival appeared almost impossible. Many quickly crossed over to the mainland where jobs were available for Garinagu men. They became soldiers in the Spanish army or fishermen in Trujillo. The Garinagu women farmed successfully. They soon prospered having enough to eat for themselves and a surplus to sell to the European colonists. The colonists benefited as they did not know how to live and produce food in the tropics and found themselves near starvation. Traditional crops grown in Europe did not do well in the acidic soils found along the Caribbean coast.

Soon after arriving in Trujillo, Garinagu men began to explore the coast line as far as British Honduras in one direction and Nicaragua in the other. Logwood and mahogany were major exports then, and the British woodcutters were pleased to give work to any Garinagu who would venture into their territory. Wood cutting and smuggling were the main occupations of the British in Central America at that time, and the Garinagu soon became known for their skills in both activities. Their canoes were likely to be seen anywhere on the coast and its many lagoons, and their small settlements

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*"Under all these circumstances and considerations, the Council and Assembly of St. Vincent's, in the instructions to their agent in London, declare the sole alternative to be,..."*

*'That the British planters, or the Black Charaibs, must be removed from off the island of St. Vincent's.'*

 Sir William Young

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## F.Y.I.

Many Garinagua prefer the word *exile* instead of *deportation*, as it was **THEIR** homeland from which they were banished.

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*"I have no choice but to admire the versatility of our ancestors who were deported from St. Vincent... Remember these were people who arrived in Central America, virtually naked with nothing, who were able, within five short years to make the dories, outfit their boats, boats that were big enough to cross the channel from Honduras to Belize. These weren't little boats that they sailed along the shore."*

 Roy Cayetano,  
Garifuna tradition bearer

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# DEMAND OUR PLACE, OUR HISTORY

## ...CONTINUED

dotted the entire shoreline wherever work could be had. They clustered about Omoa and Trujillo in Honduras, near San Felipe in the Gulf of Dulce and Livingston and Santo Tomas in Guatemala, as well as what the British came to call "Carib Town" in Belize. For the most part, the women and children stayed behind in the villages as the men traveled.

### HONDURAN CIVIL WAR

In 1823, civil war erupted between colonialists loyal to the Spanish governor, and the colonialists who wanted self rule. In 1832, and after long, hard years of fighting, the self-rulers, led by Francisco Morazan, defeated the loyalists. With the defeat came the beginning of yet another blood bath for the Garinagu. Most had aligned themselves with the losing side. Accordingly, Morazan's government considered the Garinagu as enemies to be sought out and slaughtered.

Alejo Beni, fearing for the lives of his people and himself, led a small band of Garinagu men, women, and children up the coast to British Honduras. Arriving in long canoes with cassava and cassava bread, they reached the shores of Stann Creek in British Honduras, on November 19, 1832. Today in Belize, this day is celebrated as Garifuna Settlement Day.

### SETTLEMENT IN BRITISH HONDURAS, BELIZE

- 🕒 **Time code:** 12:46
- 👁️ **Visual:** River with mountains in background
- 🔊 **Audio:** Ironically, when they arrived, our ancestors were forced to live under British rule.

Given their previous relationship, the British distrusted the Garinagu and considered them to be a major threat. The British tolerated their presence because they served a useful purpose. The wood cutting industry was a very profitable industry for the British and the Garinagu could supply the much needed labor.

Fears were raised that the Garinagu would help slaves escape or cause an uprising. Deep prejudice directed at the Garinagu was instilled into the Creole slave population. To achieve this, the British painted the Garinagu as devil worshipping, baby



# OUR LANGUAGE

## THE GARIFUNA LANGUAGE CRISIS IN BELIZE

- 🕒 **Time code:** 6:39
- 👁️ **Visual:** Children dancing.
- 🔊 **Audio:** It is during the long journey that we rearrange our burdens

The Church provided educational opportunities for the Garinagu that the British would not have offered.

- 🕒 **Time code:** 19:50
- 👁️ **Visual:** One boy pulls another up out of the water onto a wooden pier.
- 🔊 **Audio:** We in Hopkins are working very hard to teach the children the language so that they may see the value of our Garifuna culture.


In Hopkins, Belize, most Garinagu can speak Garifuna and are knowledgeable about the culture. In other towns throughout Belize, Garifuna children are not learning their own language. For the most part, they are speaking Creole. The Garifuna future, like the future of all peoples, lies in the hands of the children. They are the ones who will carry on the traditions and the knowledge of their culture.

The language which one speaks helps to interpret the world around him/her. To speak Garifuna is to see the world through the eyes of Garinagu. To lose Garifuna, one risks losing that world.

## BACKGROUND OF GARIFUNA LANGUAGE

The Garifuna Language is made up of Arawak, Carib, African, Spanish, French and English words. When Carib men raided Arawak villages and took Arawak women as their wives, the women continued speaking their mother tongue, Arawak, although the males spoke Carib. Today, although hundreds of years have passed, this division of language between the genders is still somewhat intact in the Garifuna language.

*"They went, not as Garifuna young men, but as representatives of an alien culture, to teach Catholicism, Methodist, or Anglican religions. They went to teach, not Garifuna but the Queens English, and European history. They became an agent for change in the wrong direction. The erosion of the culture is to a great extent due to the role we Garinagu played in colonial education."*

 Roy Cayetano,  
Garifuna tradition bearer



# OUR LANGUAGE...CONTINUED

English word	Carib/male word	Arawak/female word
pronoun "I"	au	nuguya
Pronoun "you"	amuru	buguya
Command "you come"	ahu	hagabu
female	wuri	hianra
male	wuguri	eyeri
rain	gunubu	huya
fishing	adiyehani	ouchahani

Africans who later moved into the villages were not able to communicate with the Caribs. Moreover, Africans were not always able to communicate with one another in their native languages as they had come from various locales within Africa which did not all share the same language. In order to communicate, they had to learn the host language using a few of their own words in the process. Up until now, only a limited number of African words can be found in the Garifuna language. Today, research on the African origins of Garifuna words continues among Garifuna scholars.

Garifuna word	Origin	English translation
mutu	Bantu	person
baba	swahili	father

The French, Spanish, and British all influenced the Garifuna language. The French, however, were the most influential perhaps because they had more sustained interactions.

Garifuna word	French word	English translation
ligilisi	L'eglise	church
amarieda	marier	marry
mudun	mouton	sheep
gabana	cabane	bed

Garifuna word	Spanish word	English translation
badia	badea	watermelon
binu	vino	wine/rum
fadiri	padre	priest
aragubusu	aracabuz	gun

Garifuna word	English model	English translation
risi	rich	rich
faifa	pipe	pipe
adinara	to dine	to dine
peinsili	pencil	pencil





# OUR PEOPLE, OUR CULTURE

- ☺ **Time Code:** 20:23
- 👁 **Visual:** Boat glides across water
- 🔊 **Audio:** Ambient sound

## LIFE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

### ***Garifuna communities***

Today there are four primary countries in Central America in which Garinagu live: Honduras, Belize, Guatemala and Nicaragua. Although Garinagu share a common heritage, their individual histories and loyalties to their nations have had some effect on their lives. They are not all alike.

### ***Social & political status***

In Honduras and Belize they have become a visible and politically aware minority. The Garinagu live not only in the rural coastal cities, but in the capitals as well, where many of them have achieved high governmental and economic positions. Some have become elected officials and Garifuna teachers are to be found in large numbers in both countries.

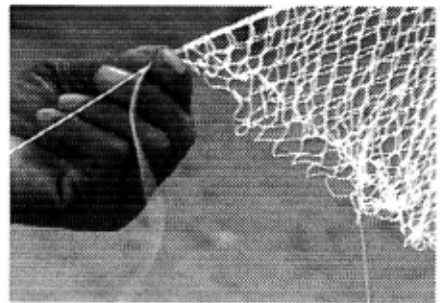
In Guatemala there are under 4,000 Garinagu living in and around Livingston on the Caribbean coast. Since they are not perceived as Indians, nor are they Ladinos, the two primary ethnic categories in that country, little attention is paid to them. Livingston itself is isolated and so are the people. Although a small number have migrated permanently to Guatemala city, most have sought to leave for New York or elsewhere in the U.S. For the most part, they have not participated in the recent Guatemalan political struggles, apparently preferring migration to reforms which may take generations.

### ***Employment***

While some Garinagu are employed as educators and civil servants, others pursue the traditional occupations of farming and fishing. To sustain themselves and their families, other Garinagu sell lottery tickets, cold drinks, fruits, make clothes to sell to the community, tend small stores or make and sell cassava and sweet bread. With the decline in jobs all along the Caribbean coast and Central America, many of the smaller villages would have ceased to exist long ago were it not for the international migration and the money which is sent back home.



***Typical wood house in Belize***



***Making a new fishing net.***

Older people in particular, are very dependent upon these checks from abroad, and the women depend on them to support their households, and to buy food for the children left in their care. It is common to see grandmothers taking care of their adult children, and their grandchildren. Money and ideas from outside have had other influences on the home. More people have possessions, such as radios, refrigerators, televisions, gas stoves and other home appliances, which tend to improve their lives. Forced migration to obtain financial resources has the unfortunate consequence of separating family members when Garinagu leave.

### ***Changes in lifestyle***

As time progresses, things change. Transition of a people and a culture occurs with both negative and positive consequences. Here are two illustrations of how Garifuna culture has changed.

### ***Housing***

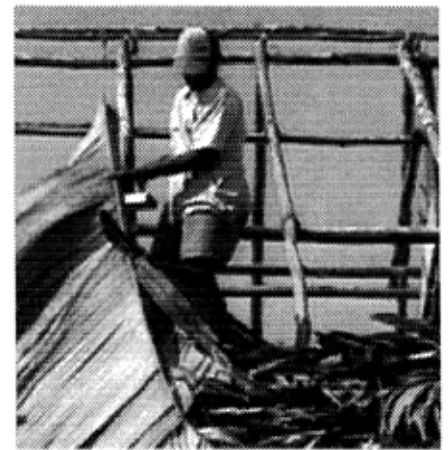
Historically, Garifuna houses were made from materials found in the bush surrounding the villages. Wooden posts or planks for the wall, thatch for the roof was collected freely by anyone who needed to build a shelter. Skills in thatching a house resembled the skills used in building a temple for the ancestors.

Walking down the streets of a coastal Garifuna village today, one can observe the juxtaposition of wood plank houses and concrete houses. As these coastal areas experience hurricanes and strong trade winds, both types of houses are built on foundations that lift their bases several feet off the ground (a preventive flooding measure). The concrete houses are more than likely to remain intact and standing. The wooden houses would almost certainly be torn apart.

Whereas concrete houses are more permanent, they come at a great expense. Money will have to be spent on labor and materials. Construction of a concrete house helps to increase the Garinagu dependence on a cash economy in an economy where there is not much cash to be made. In addition, loss of knowledge about thatching undermines some of their traditional ways of living. Today, for example, when the temple for the ancestor has to be built, and it must be built in the traditional way, outsiders are brought in to help with the thatching, typically the Maya who still use thatch for their dwellings.



***Wooden house raised off the ground to prevent flooding in case of a hurricane.***



***Man placing thatch on a roof.***





## OUR PEOPLE, OUR CULTURE...CONTINUED

### **Boats**

Historically, the dories that the Garinagu construct for themselves are hand-crafted from gigantic mahogany trees. These beautiful vessels are a wonderful sight, a link the Garinagu share with their ancestors. Constructing dories is a very labor intensive, time consuming task and is a skill that Garinagu men have passed on to one another over the generations.

Fiberglass boats are slowly replacing the handmade wooden canoes. They provide a quick, easier and sometimes safer mode of transportation for long distances. Constructed in Mexico and imported to Belize, these boats cost several thousand dollars each not including the price of the engine. When these boats break or need a repair, no one in town has the technology to fix it. With the increasing lack of mahogany timber, it is likely that fiberglass boats will soon replace the wooden ones.

It is hard to say for how long people will continue to retain both the skills and the need for these traditional activities. Will the next generation want to construct their own wooden houses or hand-craft their canoes? Change has already begun and it is sure to continue.

## **LIFE IN NORTH AMERICA**

### ***Garifuna communities outside of Central America***

There may be as many as 50,000 Garinagu now living in New York City alone and perhaps another 10,000 across the United States in Washington, Chicago, Saint Louis, New Orleans, New York, Houston, and Los Angeles. London, England also has a sizable community. The Garinagu from Honduras were the first to migrate, followed by the Belizeans and finally, the Guatemalan Garinagu. Those of Nicaragua have migrated in fewer numbers.

### ***Advantages of life outside of Central America.***

In spite of the cold weather, which few tropical people really enjoy, most Garinagu are able to live better than they did at home. They have discovered how to use the available health facilities, free education and adult classes, and other means of public assistance. Some Garinagu are engineers, doctors, butchers, bankers and barbers. Others work in the garment industry, either in the factories and marketing outlets, or sew



piece work at home. Still others do domestic work. College graduates have become more common and some have gone to post graduate programs as well. Immigration in most industrial nations has been welcomed, as Garinagu have always had the reputation for being good workers.

They have found living spaces in many different neighborhoods which they've transformed with love and hard work into comfortable homes. Local markets sell most of the foods Garinagu have always eaten: plantain, yucca, yams, mangoes, avocados rice and beans as well as more modern processed convenience foods which they can seldom purchase in Central America. Garinagu will cross the city to buy fresh fish in the early dawn before going to work.

Language is not a problem, for in addition to their native tongue, all Garinagu today speak either standard English or Spanish. Both New York and Los Angeles are practically bilingual cities, therefore even those with no English are able to communicate. Most Garinagu, just as in the home villages, socialize primarily with each other during their non working hours, visiting each other's houses, playing soccer, cards or dominoes in neighborhood parks, drinking and sometimes dancing Punta and other traditional dances. They have both new and old holidays to celebrate. Belizean Settlement Day on November 19 is one of the most important.

### ***Disadvantages of life outside of Central America***

There are social and cultural sacrifices of such migration. The Garinagu who have migrated from the different Central American countries continue to live apart from each other. They tend to live in different parts of the city, they hold separate activities and celebrations and their values and aspirations seem to be different, even though some of their leaders would like to see a more unified front. In part, their failure to achieve solidarity in the United States seems related to the individual political, social and economic events in their countries of origin.

In addition, children born in the United States seldom learn to speak their native tongue well and many don't speak it at all. Many know nothing of their heritage, and often are embarrassed or ashamed by the elders beliefs in the spirit of the dead. There are traditional Garifuna healers working in the United States, but major rituals to placate the ancestors are said to be best held in Central America. Garinagu try to visit their home villages from time to time, especially at Christmas and Easter, and almost all return for major family crises, such as the death of a parent.



## OUR PEOPLE, OUR CULTURE...CONTINUED

### MUSIC, SONG & DANCE

Music, song, and dance are essential to Garifuna culture. They are threads interwoven into the fabric of life.

Garifuna songs number in the hundreds and almost all of these songs are accompanied by a specific dance and drum beat. Many of the songs composed come about through dreams and visions. Composers, who can be male or female, compose a variety of different of songs such as lullabies, ballads, hymns, work songs, healing songs, and dance songs. Others are about travel, missing a loved one or are written to commemorate an event or a Garifuna hero.

🕒 **Time Code:** 22:00

👁️ **Visual:** Man getting a shave looks into the mirror at the barber shop.


🎧 **Audio:** Punta Rock is popular with today's youth. Sung in Garifuna the music speaks of our history and the achievements of our ancestors.

Punta is competitive, very popular and originally spiritual in nature. Punta's lyrics, written mainly by women, are meant to recall the Garifuna's ancestors. Garifuna musician and artist, Pen Cayetano, spun out a whole new trend of music in 1983 when he created his Punta Rock with his band then known as the Turtle Shell Band. Using drums, both the primero, segunda, and turtle shells, he took the lyrics of traditional Garifuna songs and put them to a "rock" beat.

Today, Garifuna traditional lyrics and instruments still set the scene. Punta rock singers Andy Palacio, Chico Ramos, Moho-Bob Flores, Titiman Flores, and the only living female punta rock star, Paula Castillo are all Garinagu. When it first began, non-Garifuna Belizians ridiculed punta rock, but today it is a source of Belizian pride and enjoyment.

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*"And when the singing and dancing starts, everyone is encouraged to participate. While expert drummers, dancers, singers, and composers are locally known, one need not be an expert to join in on the action. In fact, one does not even have to be a performer. As an audience member, one has a good chance of being just as active as the performers."*

 Roy Cayetano,  
Garifuna tradition bearer

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## OUR PEOPLE, OUR CULTURE...CONTINUED

### **Garinagu dances**

**Hunguhungu:** a secular circle dance, drums play simple three beat rhythm while people sing in unison.

**Wanaragua:** a masked dance, performed during Christmas time by white faced men dressed in elaborate head dresses and sometimes a skirt who go from house to house singing male composed songs dance in an African style.

**Abaimajari:** semi-sacred women's song, no musical accompaniment, women stand in lines linked by pinkies while gesturing to beat of an irregular rhythm, Caribbean Indian roots.

**Matamuerte:** a mime dance, dancers pretend to find a body by the shore and poke it to see if it is still alive.

**Lauremuna Wadauman:** a man's work song, sung by males working together on taxing jobs.

**Gunchei:** a very social and graceful dance, each man takes a turn dancing with each woman.

**Charikanari:** a mimed dance, hunter encounters a caveman and a cow.

**Chumba:** a poly rhythmic song, soloists dance with highly individualize styles.

**Eremwa Eu:** a women's song, sung during the preparation of cassava bread

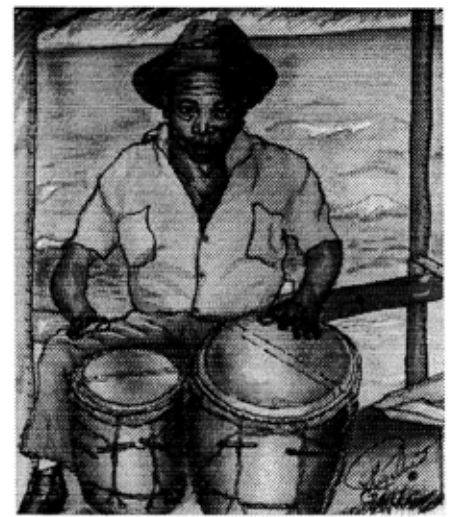
**Sambai:** dancers take turns showing off their footwork in the middle of a circle after a short drumming sequence.

### **Drum Making as an Art Form**


Drums are a vital and essential component in Garinagu music. There are many steps involved in making a drum and precision is a necessity. The process begins in the rainforest where a tree must be cut down to be transported to the drum maker's yard. Once in the yard, the tree is cleared of branches and is sliced into sections measuring approximately 3 to 4 feet long and several feet wide depending on the log. Then, carefully circling the inside of the log with a saw, the drum maker leaves only a thin, even layer of wood around the edges of the log. Once the core is slipped out from the log, the remaining thin layer becomes the wall of the drum. After a little smoothing, shaping, and polishing, a piece of dried, stretched animal skin is secured on top to complete the drum.



**Boy and Girl Dancing**



**Isabel "Isawelu" Flores**

 **Ulmar Gregory Palacio**  
Illustrator



What is ingenious about this process is that after the drum is completed, the drum maker will go back to the core and repeat the process. This process is repeated many times. Hence, when the drum maker is finished, several drums will have been produced from each 3-4 foot slice.

Guitars, flutes, violins, and rattles may sometimes find their way into Garifuna music but they do not come anywhere close to the drum. With roots stemming back to Africa, these drums are the heart and soul of Garinagu music, in both secular and religious music.

What will differ, however, is the number of drums used and the beats that you will hear. In secular music, you have to have a cross section, therefore, two drummers, a primero and segundo, are needed. With sacred music, you usually have three drums and some rattles.

## GARIFUNA FOODS

- ☺ **Time code:** 23:25
- 👁 **Visual:** Market scene
- 🔊 **Audio:** "Our food is so important because it is not everybody who knows about it."


Food is an essential element for many people's identity including the Garinagu. It connects their present with their past and future. It is a means of socialization and a fundamental element in Garifuna spirituality. Moreover, food is viewed as a necessity for both the living and the dead.

In the past, growing crops meant the difference between eating or starving as there was little other way to feed oneself or ones family. The Garifuna have always practiced a system of slash and burn agriculture. Every year portions of the overgrown Rainforest must be cleared away so that it may be farmed on. Typically these lands were a mile or two inland from the coastal villages.

Clearing land is a difficult, time consuming task, one that requires much physical strength. On the cleared land cassava, plantain, bananas, yam, sweet potato, maize, beans, and rice are planted and harvested. Root crops may only be planted during a new moon while non- root crops are planted during a full moon. While men typically clear away the land and later burn it, the bulk of the farming is



*Garifuna woman preparing food.*

 *Ulmar Gregory Palacio*  
Illustrator

*When my mother was living-she had a farm and she feed us all from that same hill that fed other people from Punta Gorda Everybody had a farm then but now we getting lazy. But when you have a little farm and you have bananas and you have sweet potatoes-you got the coco, you got the sweet cassava, you can make life.*

 *Spoken by Fannie Gonzalez*



# OUR PEOPLE, OUR CULTURE...CONTINUED

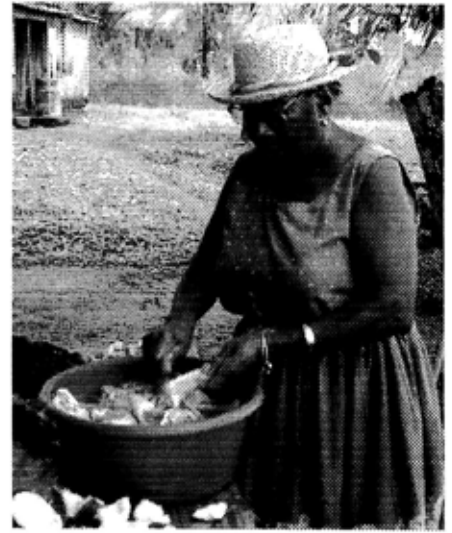
performed by women. The land that was burned is left to lie fallow for many years to regain its nutrients.

Walking to the farms, clearing land, planting, harvesting and preparing food took up a significant part of the day. Oftentimes, these activities were accompanied by song and conversation allowing people to get together to socialize and bond while unifying the community.

- ☺ **Time code:** 23:40
- 👁 **Visual:** *Woman cutting fish in marketplace.*
- 🔊 **Audio:** *When we like our food we like it fresh, from the sea to you, from soil to you, from the pot to you.*

For centuries, Garifuna men have been fishermen hunting sharks, barracudas, and tarpons. Other seafood harvested include turtles, manatees, shrimp, spiny lobster, and land crabs. Over-fishing in certain areas and resulting fishing restrictions are impinging on the ability of Garifuna to harvest food from the sea as they have done for centuries. In addition, the encroachment of timber companies on the Rainforest and the development of protected ecological areas within the same Rainforest is limiting the slash and burn agricultural production of the Garifuna and Maya people living in Central America. Those who are able to farm have to take precaution against theft, or destruction of crops by animals, insects and hurricanes.

The importation of food changed the diet of the people in Belize. Today, 75% of the Garinagu's diet is store bought and includes such items as flour, lard, "Irish potato", salt, pork, and sugar. Food production and farming is in decline while profits from the food sold trickles out of the villages and into the United States or Europe. Belizians, on average, need \$3.30 Belizian dollars a day to eat. As the typical Belizian household consists of approximately 5.3 members, the necessary food allowance for a Belizian family equals \$17.00 Belizian dollars. While in the United States this price sounds pretty reasonable, in Belize, it is difficult or nearly impossible for many families to afford.



*Woman cooking traditional Garifuna food.*

## RECIPE

*Falumo: a fish stew.*

*Ingredients: salted or fresh fish, coconut milk, salt, black pepper, habanero pepper, onion, bay leaf.*

*Boil coconut with salt, black pepper, habanero, onion and bay leaf. When liquid is boiling add fish pieces and stir until fish is done and gravy is thick. Serve with ereba (cassava bread), or hudut, a boiled and pounded plantain.*





# CASSAVA

- ☺ **Time code:** 25:27
- 👁 **Visual:** Camera moves across the tops of trees in the rainforest
- 🔊 **Audio:** We Have To Continue With It, Cassava Bread

## General Description

Cassava is the root of perennial shrub that grows three to six feet tall and has large palmate leaves and greenish-yellow to greenish-purple male or female flowers. The edible portion of the plant cannot be seen, it is the root. This root is classified as bitter or sweet depending upon the quantity of cyanogenic glucoside (cyanide) present. The amount of cyanide present is determined by climate and soil conditions. If the cyanide level is high, the cassava must be cooked before it is eaten to reduce the levels of toxins present

## Nutritional Value

Cassava produces more calories per unit of food than any other crop in the world, except for possibly sugarcane. For this reason, cassava is a staple crop for close to 500 million people in Central America, South America, Africa, and Asia. One still needs to eat fruits, vegetables, and protein products as cassava lacks in vitamins, minerals, and protein. In Africa, however, this is not so much a problem as the much needed vitamins and protein are obtained by eating cassava leaves as vegetables.

## Horticulture

While cassava was originally grown in a savanna climate, cassava can also be grown in climates with heavy rainfall. Cassava will not tolerate flooding, and in droughts, it drops its leaves to conserve moisture. Once the drought has ended, the leaves grow back making cassava an unusual crop as it is drought resistant. A crop of cassava can be produced with at least eight months of favorable conditions. When conditions are not as good, crop production can take up to eighteen months or longer.

- ☺ **Time Code:** 27:00
- 👁 **Visual:** Unloading sacks of cassava from the back of a truck.
- 🔊 **Audio:** Before we start and peel the cassava, that cassava will have to be sprinkled with rum.

## F.Y.I.

*Did you know that tapioca comes from the cassava plant?*

*"When I open a bottle of rum for us to drink, I sprinkle a little on the ground first. That offering is for those who have gone before us and those who are yet to come. We are simply guardians of our physical and social environment and we thank those who have gone before us for having preserved it for us, and recognize our obligation to those who are yet to come to preserve it for them."*

*Roy Cayetano,  
Garifuna tradition bearer*



## CASSAVA...CONTINUED

### Harvesting

While traditionally performed by women, today it is not uncommon for men to help with the harvesting of Cassava. Once the root is out of the ground, it must be handled with the utmost of care as damage means a very short shelf life. Within 48 hours, cassava must be prepared or temporarily preserved by encasing it in paraffin or wax, peeling and freezing the cassava, storing it in a plastic bag, or packed in moist mulch. These measures can extend the shelf life to three or four weeks allowing for exportation. Cassava bread, also known as ereba, has a much longer shelf life than the cassava root and when it is not exposed to moisture can be kept for several years.

### Processing

Once the cassava has been transported back to the village the outer layer must be peeled and then the root soaked in a tub of water. Grating follows either by using a handmade grating board or, more recently using an electric grater. This handmade grater, called an egi, is a wooden board embedded with quartzite bits which protrude just enough to pulverize the cassava root as it is passed over it. Historically, the women sang Eremwu Euu , a traditional grating song while accomplishing this laborious task.

🕒 **Time code:** 29:28

👁️ **Visual:** Woman stuffing ruguma with grated cassava.

🔊 **Audio:** The ruguma is used to strain the poisonous juices from the cassava.

The flour contains cyanogenic glycoside that will need to be drained. The flour is stuffed into a long, snake like woven basket called a ruguma which is then attached to a tree limb. The other end is attached to a long weighted pole. While the weight of the flour and the gravitational pull cause the toxic juice to come rushing out, the weight of the men or women who sit on top of the pole makes the task go faster.

The cyanogenic glycoside juice has various uses. It can be used as a starching agent or, when boiled and sweetened in the sun it can be used as an antiseptic, to help preserve meat, and to flavor foods. This preservative is called carareep. In addition, the fermented juice makes an intoxicating liquor.



**"Ehreba"...Cassava**

Ulmar Gregory Palacio

🎨 **Illustrator**

**"We make a juice drink out of it, like Kool Aid. We gather the crumbs after serving cassava, bake them and then add water and mix it to make a juice called hiyu."**

🗣️ **Spoken by Virginia Flores**



- 🕒 **Time code:** 31:10
- 👁️ **Visual:** Woman lets chickens out of chicken coop.
- 🔊 **Audio:** The following day you are going to set the fire under the comal, sieve the cassava, then afterwards start to bake.

Following the juice extraction, the flour is baked on a thick iron comal, heated with firewood. It takes approximately six big bags of cassava roots to make approximately forty cassava breads. The size of the bread will differ with the size of the comal.

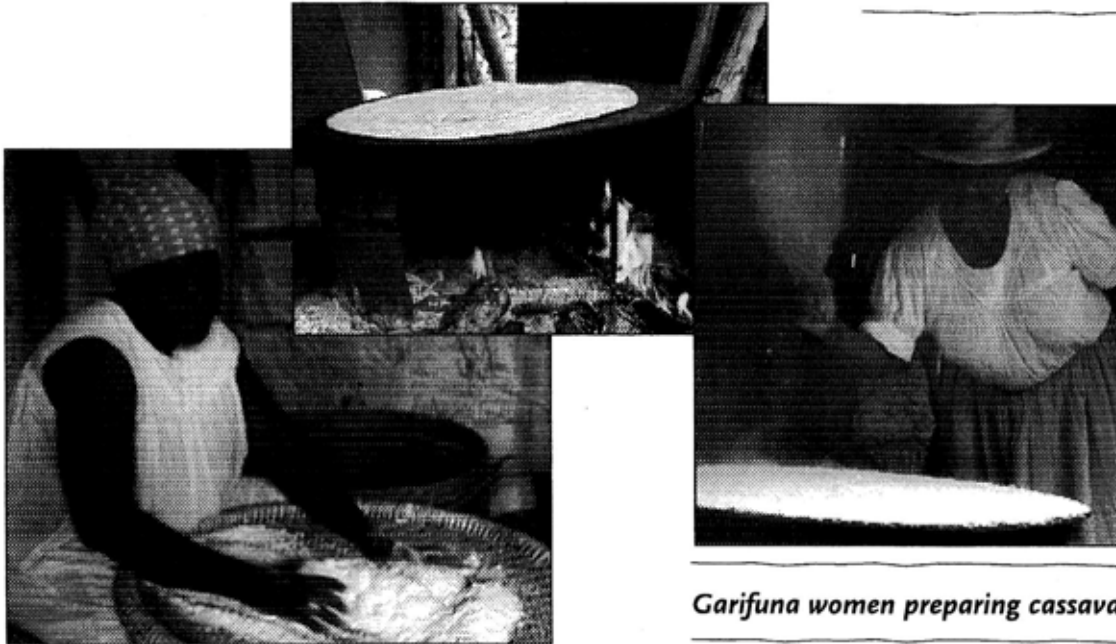
Involving a traditional process and being used in ritual, the making and consuming of cassava bread connects Garinagu to their past and their ancestors. Being a natural resource, cassava connects the Garinagu to the land. Finally, as it is a daily bread which requires a group effort to produce, the process of preparation connects the Garinagu with each other. Making cassava bread is a time for socialization. It is a time that helps to unify the community and it gives Garifuna women a strong sense of purpose and accomplishment.

## RECIPE

*Hiyu: a drink made from cassava scraps.*

**Ingredients:** Cassava bread scraps, baked until brown, salt, sweet potato and ginger.

*Pound Hiyu in a mortar with a little water. Place in large pot with water to cover. Add grated sweet potato, grated ginger and touch of salt. Let it ferment several days, strain, add sugar to taste.*



*Garifuna women preparing cassava.*





# OUR ANCESTORS

- 🕒 **Time code:** 32:56
- 👁️ **Visual:** Crackling fire, words on screen, Ereba...for the ancestors.

## GARIFUNA WORLD VIEW

Within the Garifuna world view the maintenance of a harmonious relationship with the ancestors and members of kin is crucial. Reciprocity in relationships are vital and this is sustained even after a person dies. This interdependent relationship is rooted in the notion of "I am because we are," and "you for me and I for you." The Garinagu view the ancestors as a link to those who are living, a way to forge bonds and maintain harmonious relationships among family members. If this sense of harmony is not intact between family members, an ancestor requests a Dugu healing ceremony. This request oftentimes comes through the dreams of a living relative.

- 🕒 **Time code:** 33:50
- 👁️ **Visual:** Faces floating in the clouds
- 🎧 **Audio:** I for you my grandmother, and you for me. Because of my close relationship with my ancestors, I have been better able to accept the guidance of the Catholic saints. We look to them for guidance as we look to our own ancestors.

## THE CHURCH

When the Missionaries came to the Garinagu of St. Vincent in the 1600s, they brought the tenants of the Catholic faith, and, proclaimed the Garinagu way of worship to be pagan and sinful. The Christian missionaries took steps to completely destroy the traditional spirituality of the Garifuna. The Dugu was banned, the Garifuna language was forbidden and any manifestations of their traditional spirituality ridiculed and quickly subdued. Though the Church negatively influenced many Garinagu to turn away from their own traditions and spirituality, it was unable to completely break them. Having successfully resisted slavery, Garinagu continued the fight to hold on to their roots.

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*"We draw our strength from the group so that we are never really weaned from the group, our fortunes are tied into the group. I owe you and you owe me, mutual obligations we owe everybody, we even have obligations to our dead parents and grandparents, our obligations cut across the borders of this life."*

 Roy Cayetano,  
Garifuna tradition bearer

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*"Right now you won't find anything official that the church has said recognizing the Dugu."*

 Father Calestes Cayetano

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## OUR ANCESTORS...CONTINUED

Today, many Garinagu have been able to blend their Christianity with their Garifuna spirituality. Catholic saints can be turned to for guidance just as their ancestors are. It does not matter that the Church only tolerates their spirituality and does not embrace it. Ancestral rituals have always been a part of the Garinagu way of life. Therefore, while more Garinagu embrace Christianity, many Garinagu simultaneously continue to hold on to their ancestral rites.

☺ **Time Code:** 37:17

👁 **Visual:** *Frame of temple under construction, words on screen: Dabuyabai, the temple*

Descendants of the ancestor requesting the Dugu share many responsibilities during the preparation process. Preparation can take several years, and could cost up to \$20,000. A dabuyabai or ceremonial house must be built, traditional foods must be planted, harvested, and prepared in great quantities; and finally a buyei or Garifuna shaman must be hired to officiate for both the preparation process and the Dugu itself.

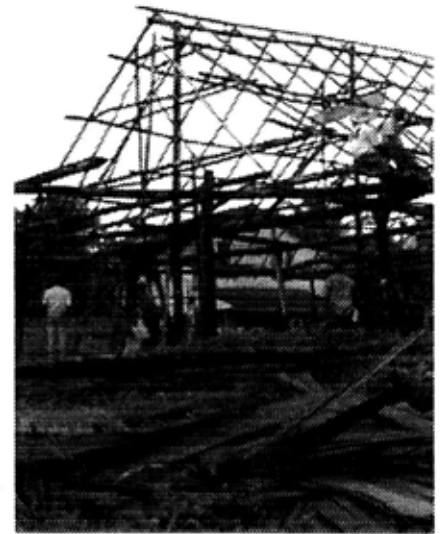
### DUGU

☺ **Time code:** 41:00

👁 **Visual:** *Women join in circle with back towards camera, words on screen: The Dugu*

A *Dugu* is performed following a request made by a deceased ancestor. Ancestors communicate multiple messages to relatives through dreams about their desire and expectations for the celebration. If the request is left unheeded, a family may experience a series of misfortunes including sickness or death, until *Dugu* preparations begin.

For one week, family members of all ages and from all over Central and North America and Europe gather for the healing ritual. The most sacred of the ancestral rituals, the *Dugu* ceremony, includes food, and traditional music and dance.



*Men sit on the roof of the temple frame as they wait for the thatching to begin.*

*"The Dugu serves as a reunion, the coming together of Garinagu from Honduras, Guatemala, Belize and the United States."*

*Sebastian Cayetano*



# OUR ANCESTORS...CONTINUED

During the *Dugu* itself, the circle becomes of utmost importance. It is in a circle the participants ritually dance, sing and await the arrival of the ancestors. The circle becomes a metaphor for the life cycle events, for life and death itself, and wholeness of a community, family etc. The ritual cassava bread is circular in shape and echoes these values.

*"It is in the very process of families convening together, sharing with one another, experiencing a strong sense of belonging that the Dugu heals on one level. The sacred and solemn moment of the 'mali' dance during the Dugu ritual is also experienced as another significant time of healing of divisions among relatives as ancestors and family members unite across generations in a spirit of oneness and solidarity."*

 Barbara Flores

At the end of the ceremonies, the ancestor is asked whether he acknowledges receipt of the *Dugu*. If the ancestor is satisfied, the *Dugu* is complete, if not, the ceremony may have to be repeated in the near future.



*Drummer tunes drum as buyei blesses the drum with smoke.*

---

## F.Y.I.

*The dugu ceremony, the most sacred of the ancestral rites, involves the ritual feeding of the ancestors. The ancestors' favorites must be prepared in enormous quantities and "fed" to the ancestors. Foods are both traditional such as cassava bread, fish, hudut as well as items that particular ancestors liked to eat while living, such as coca cola or the like.*

---

*"While many Garinagu have turned away from the spirituality of their people, the elders continue to practice it. Sadly, Garifuna spirituality can not be seen on a day to day basis. Nevertheless, on Garifuna Settlement Day, during Dugu, and during times of sickness, Garifuna spirituality is very present and alive."*

 Barbara Flores

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# RESOURCES



**Caribbean Research Center**  
 Medgar Evers College (CUNY)  
 1150 Carroll St.  
 Brooklyn NY 11225  
 Phone : (718) 270-6421/6418  
 Web site: www.dynateck.com/crc

**Center for Black Music Research**  
 600 South Michigan Avenue  
 Chicago, IL 60605-1996  
 Phone: (312) 663-1600  
 Fax: (312) 344-8029  
 E-mail: cbmrref@popmail.colum.edu  
 Web site: www.colum.edu/cbmr/  
*Audio and video materials collected for The Garifuna Journey project are housed in the library archives.*

**Confederation of Autonomous People of Honduras (CONPAH)**  
 Apartado 20-585  
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras  
 Phone: 001-504-25-2612  
 Fax: 001-504-25-4925  
 e-mail: conpah@sdnhon.org.hn  
 Web site: www.ibw.com.ni/~cgenica

**Cultural Survival**  
 96 Mt. Auburn  
 Cambridge, MA 02138  
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 Fax: (617) 441-5417  
 E-mail: csine@cs.org  
 Web site: www.cs.org  
*The Garifuna Journey is a "Special Project" of Cultural Survival.*

**Earth Council Apdo**  
 232-1002 San Jose  
 Costa Rica  
 Phone: 001-506-256-1611  
 Fax: 001-506-233-1822

**Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean (EPICA)**  
 1470 Irving Street NW  
 Washington, D.C. 20010  
 Phone: (202) 332-0292  
 E-mail: epica@igc.apc.org

**Garifuna World**  
 P.O. Box 6619  
 Johnsville Station  
 New York, NY 10128-0011  
 Phone: (800) 859-1426  
 Web site: www.garifuna-world.com

**Institute of Caribbean Studies**  
 1612 Seventh St. NW  
 Washington DC 20001  
 Phone: (202) 387-8748  
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*Dedicated to research policy analysis & education w/ focus on issues that impact Caribbean Diaspora in the U.S.*

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**Lawanserun Garifuna Heritage, Inc.**  
 119 Ashford Street  
 Brooklyn, NY 11207  
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 Contact: Felix Miranda

**The National Garifuna Council of Belize**  
 59 Commerce  
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 Phone: 05-23781  
 Contact: Roy Cayetano, President

**The Progressive Garifuna Alliance**  
 Phone: (312) 548-9870  
 Contact: Rhodel Castillo

**South and Meso American Indian Rights Center (SAIIC)**  
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 E-mail: saiic@igc.apc.org

**Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE)**  
 E-mail: tide@BTI.net  
*A grass roots organization for ecotourism issues in Belize*





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Castillo, Jessie, **Garifuna Folktales**, Caribbean Research Center, Brooklyn, NY, 1994

London, J., **The Village Basket Weaver**, Dutton Children's Books, New York, NY, 1996.

*The story of a boy and his grandfather, as the boy learns to appreciate his Garifuna Heritage and embrace the culture by following in his grandfather's footsteps. The story is appropriate for second through fifth graders.*

**The Atlas of Threatened Cultures**, ed. by P. Mason, Raintree Steck Vaughn Publishers, Austin TX, 1997.

*An atlas of threatened cultures. It acknowledges the Garifuna, but does not talk about them specifically. Good background reading to learn about the wide variety of threatened cultures. The book is appropriate for fourth through eighth graders.*

Morrison, Marion, **Enchantment of the World: Belize**, Children's Press, New York, NY, 1996.

*An in-depth guide to the country of Belize. Garifuna are mentioned on several pages, and have a small section focusing specifically on them on pages 63-64. Appropriate for middle school-aged kids and maybe the first couple years of high school.*

Morrison, Marion, **Central America**. Silver Burdett Press, Englewood Cliff, NJ, 1989.

*Text and illustrations introduce geography, history, people and culture of Central American countries.*







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*Garifuna woman sitting next to ruguma.*

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