

Amerindian legacies in the caribbean

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Topic: " The Amerindians have left a legacy that forms part of the Caribbean Civilization. " Discuss. The Amerindians have left a legacy that forms part of the Caribbean Civilization. The Amerindians were two groups of people having completely different personalities. One group was the Arawaks or Taino which occupied the Greater Antilles and the other was the Caribs or Kalinago which occupied the Lesser Antilles. The Arawaks were a very peaceful group of people; slim and short, but firmly built. The Caribs on the other hand were very aggressive people and were taller and had a bigger built than the Arawaks.

The Caribs were also cannibals and some people assume that is why they were bigger than the Arawaks. Despite their differences in personalities, they had a similar way of living. They were both excellent fishermen, craftsmen, farmers, handymen and doctors. Since they were naturalists and believed in the environment, they made use of the natural resources they had in order to survive. After the Europeans settled on Amerindian territories, they raped their females, killed and overworked their men and ate their produce.

Disease and famine resulted in a rapid decrease in the Amerindian population. Hundreds of years after, Caribbean people still benefit and utilize the legacy of the Amerindians such as place names/ words, food/cuisine, architecture and handmade materials. Long before Christopher Columbus arrived in the Caribbean Sea, the Caribbean was still relatively " new". This allowed the early settlers; the Amerindians, to give names to countries, places inside those countries, animals, food and other objects for the first time. Some of these names are still utilized.

The Amerindians called Barbados "Ichirouganaim", St. Vincent "Hairoun", Dominica "Waitukubuli", Jamaica "Xaymaca" and named a lot of other Caribbean territories. They gave names to places in Venezuela, such as Tacarigua, and in Trinidad such as Piarco and Tunapuna. They still have their names. The names of some of our fruits, vegetables and other words were derived from the Amerindian words. Some of these words were maize, from "mahis", barbeque, from "barbakoa", guava from "guayaba" and hammock from "hamaca". In some countries like Dominica and St.

Vincent, animals named by the Amerindians still survive. The agouti (rat), manacou (opossum), touloulou (crab) and iguana are some of the animals that still have their Amerindian names. There are plenty more words that we use derived from the Amerindian languages. This contributed to us not being limited to the more "formal" languages of empire (Spanish, Dutch, English and French) and having our own varieties of Creole between Caribbean countries. The Amerindians were excellent farmers and cooks. They left us a lot of crops and some of their cooking techniques.

Both Arawaks and Caribs had diets of meat and vegetables, but the Arawaks had a more vegetable based diet and cultivated a lot more than the Caribs. They cultivated cassava (yuca), sweet potatoes (batata), corn (maize), squash, peanuts, pineapples, beans and peppers. Most of these are indigenous to the Americas but continued to grow thousands of years after in the Caribbean. The Amerindians ground the roots of the Cassava (yucca) into a powder in which they baked cassava bread. The Amerindians showed us how to cook; bake, boil, stew and arbeque (cook slowly over open fire).

They also taught us how to remove the poison from the cassava roots so it can be made edible. Another thing they did was cook or roast the corn and eat it from the cob. They also grew tobacco and cotton in which they wove hammocks and made clothes and cigarettes. The Amerindians were their own doctors as they used the leaves, roots and barks of certain herbs to heal certain illnesses and diseases. Sage, sweet grass, bitter root and others were used to help the unhealthy regain their energy and wellbeing.

Information of these herbs has been passed down to us, and that is why our grandparents believe we should drink these teas to remain healthy and clean. The Amerindians used to build a lot of things from stone, bone, shell and wood; metal was not familiar to them. They carved the wood from tree trunks to make canoes for fishing, used clay to make pottery, straw to make baskets and calabashes from the opo squash tree. They also left petroglyphs that when read, showed us certain practices that we continue to use today.

The canoes are used mainly in the Caribbean countries with rivers to fish, the clay make plates and flat trays for baking, while the calabashes stored food, molasses and drinking water. The Amerindians made Jewelry by hammering gold nuggets into artistic pieces and connecting bones and shells of small animals and wearing them on various parts of the body. They made their own houses from wood and/or straw with their original gable designs. Even after thousands of years, the people of the Caribbean make use of the legacies passed down to us from the indigenous people; Taino and Kalinago.