

# FOOD & WINE

THE  
TRAVEL  
ISSUE

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BANGKOK, THE  
WORLD'S TOP  
FOOD CITY (P. 86).



Chef Nina Compton offers a spread of grilled conch and snapper for a dinner party in St. Lucia. OPPOSITE: The sunset over Soufriere Bay





A full-page photograph of a tropical sunset. The sun is a bright orange circle on the horizon, with its light reflecting on the calm ocean. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and light blue, with scattered dark clouds. In the foreground, a dark, densely forested hill slopes down towards the water. The overall mood is peaceful and idyllic.

# DREAMING

# OF

SOAKING UP

NINA COMPTON'S  
ISLAND HOME

# ST.

# LUCIA

BY VON DIAZ

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CEDRIC ANGELES

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MAY 2025 FOOD&WINE

105





**THE ROADS IN ST. LUCIA—WINDING,** jostling stretches that run up and down hills and through tightly packed towns—are not for the faint of heart. But everywhere you look, the landscape explodes with color. Homes painted bright aqua and tangerine are punctuated by bursts of fuchsia bougainvillea and golden trumpet tree blossoms. A rainbow arcs casually over the ocean. A cluster of small white butterflies hovers around a bunch of dark pink amaranth, the blooms springing up alongside a road littered with ripe mangoes.

Located at the eastern edge of the Caribbean Sea, St. Lucia draws visitors with its gorgeous beaches, tropical foliage, eye-popping waterfalls, and steep roads that open up to extraordinary views. But it's also home to a distinct and delicious culinary culture—one I was lucky to get a taste of on a trip to the island with 2017 F&W Best New Chef Nina Compton.

I traveled with *Rêverie*, a woman-owned boutique travel agency founded by chef Lisa Marie Donovan and baker Julie Belcher. (In January 2025, Donovan left the company, but she led our St. Lucia excursion.) The two first teamed up when Donovan brought Belcher along on an artist's retreat in Toulouse, France; so many people clamored to join them in the kitchen that they decided to create a culinary travel company. *Rêverie* focuses on destinations that are rooted in history and rich in culture, giving guests the opportunity to hang out and eat with some of the best cooks in the world. These places are not necessarily cheap nor easy to get to, and in many ways require effort to get to know. But the experiences that result from this kind of deeper dive can be extraordinarily rewarding and immersive, especially with a chef like Compton as your guide.

For those in the U.S., Compton is best known for appearing on Bravo's *Top Chef* and for her celebrated restaurants, including *Compère Lapin* in New Orleans. In St. Lucia, where she was born and raised, she's a legend—as is her entire family. Her father, Sir John George Melvin Compton, was a beloved prime minister who served three terms. Her sister Fiona is a renowned artist and historian. When it comes to telling the story of St.



**ABOVE:** St. Lucia is home to over 30 varieties of mango; an annual Mango Madness festival takes place on the island each June. **OPPOSITE:** Nina Compton's creamy, comforting Caribbean Corn and Pumpkin Soup (p. 115)

Lucia through food, there's no better narrator than Nina Compton.

The itinerary for this adventure was truly the stuff of dreams for food lovers. We began at The Villa at Cosmos St. Lucia, an eco-luxury villa and lodge tucked into the side of a mountain, looking out on the

sea and the iconic twin spires of the Piton mountains. We were greeted with the island's signature rum punch, bright pink and heavy on the grenadine, as well as spiced nuts, tamarind candy, and crispy fried red snapper nuggets served with a remoulade and mango salsa. *Rêverie* tours are intentionally intimate, currently topping out at about 20 people, and our group gelled immediately. Guava cocktails helped, but conversation and laughter happened naturally as it became clear how excited we all were to eat and spend time with the chefs.

Over a nourishing, homey, deeply personal meal, Compton, full of warmth and enthusiasm, shared the stories and recipes that connect her to St. Lucia. The first course was a heady corn and pumpkin soup (recipe p. 115), golden-hued and brimming with fresh corn and pumpkin, callaloo greens, and spinners (hand-shaped Caribbean dumplings); it got an additional kick from ginger, onions, and the fruity, spicy chiles locally known as seasoning peppers. Next came curry chicken, an island staple, served with coconut rice. To finish, Compton made a dessert inspired by her mother, Janice: coconut pie topped with soursop whipped cream, which gave the rich, custardy dessert a subtle, funky sourness. "My mom was a baker," she told us. "Whether she was making guava jam or soursop mousse or coconut pie, it was all about celebrating the seasons."





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At the end of the day, we retired to our rooms, each of which opened up to the sea. We slept behind curtains of gossamer netting that protected us from various fluttering bugs until the ocean gently coaxed us awake.

After a light breakfast the next morning, we headed to Castries Market. Founded in 1891 and recently renovated, it's an exuberant expression of the island's abundance. Compton was welcomed like an absolute star, with fans flagging her down as we shopped. She greeted passersby with a warm and inviting smile, asking, "How you doin'? You good?" and chatting with them as though they were all her neighbors.

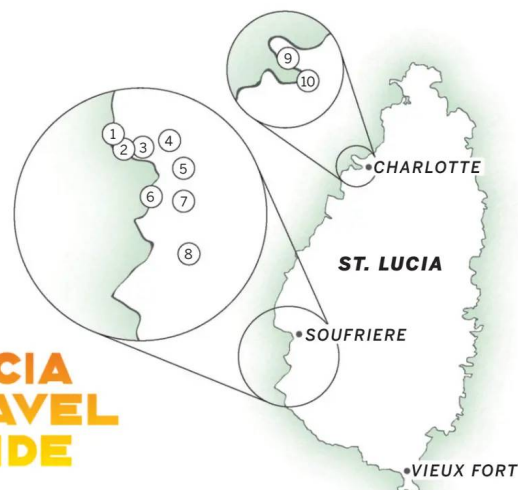
Dozens of merchants hawked their wares in the open air, mostly familiar items such as coconuts, mangoes, avocados, bananas, and fresh herbs. But Compton directed our attention to local treasures: sugar apples (baseball-size fruits that look like nothing so much as gray dragon eggs, filled inside with seedy, creamy flesh) and guineps (a small fruit whose sweet and tangy pink flesh surrounds a large pit). The abundance went on: individually packaged spices arranged in rows, bottles filled with cinnamon bark and other herbs for making spiced rum, homemade pepper sauce, and gorgeous woven baskets. Fishers set up on the corner just outside the market with a dozen or so varieties of seafood: marlin, tuna, barracuda, mahi-mahi, wahoo, kingfish, snapper, and needlefish. Our arms grew heavy with the island's bounty.

The day's haul formed the foundation for the next five days of meals. Once we were back from the market, Compton gave her first workshop, using the chadon beni (also known as culantro), scallions, and bell peppers we picked up to make accra, an iconic saltfish fritter found across the Caribbean and Latin America (recipe p. 116). At the start of the colonial period here, saltfish—heavily salted preserved cod—was brought to the region to feed enslaved people and settlers alike. Today, it's a beloved local ingredient often used to add a pungency that binds salty and sweet elements in a dish or tempers richness—similar to fish sauce in Southeast Asian cuisines or anchovies in Italian cooking. Its firm flesh flakes easily, making it an ideal ingredient for the doughy fritters and fresh salads of St. Lucia.

As the week went on, our time in St. Lucia quickly developed a rhythm around cooking and eating. Mornings were for breads: Creole bread made with coconut milk and baked in a wood-fire oven, cassava bread, and the island's signature bakes (also known as frybread). Lunches were leisurely, with plate upon plate of mouthwatering dishes. In the evenings, Compton and Rêverie's chefs pulled out all the stops. One night featured a St. Lucia-style grill party, with smoky jerk chicken, fire-kissed corn,

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A fruit vendor and needlefish at Castries Market; Nina Compton cracks coconut for a cooking lesson; chiles at the market; Compton with Fond Doux Eco Resort owner Lyton Lamontagne; a dinner party—ready table and pumpkin roasting at Cosmos St. Lucia; a fresh cacao pod; kitchen assistant Lucia Emmanuel at a dinner party at Cosmos St. Lucia.

## ST. LUCIA TRAVEL GUIDE



### WHERE TO STAY

St. Lucia is brimming with places geared toward ecotourists who are also looking for luxury. The **(3) Cosmos St. Lucia** ([cosmosstlucia.com](http://cosmosstlucia.com), rooms from \$1,350) villa is intimate, just six rooms, with a communal vibe that is particularly good for groups and an infinity pool looking out on the Pitons that feels like the edge of the earth. Nearby **(1) Anse Chastanet** ([ansechastanet.com](http://ansechastanet.com), rooms from \$655) is a dream for honeymooners, as is **(2) Jade Mountain** ([jade mountain.com](http://jade mountain.com), rooms from \$296). For those interested in an immersive cultural experience, locally owned **(8) Fond Doux Eco Resort** ([fonddouxresort.com](http://fonddouxresort.com), rooms from \$394) is tucked into a working cacao farm, complete with plenty of delicious chocolate and a stellar restaurant and bar.

### THINGS TO DO

St. Lucia's landscape is awe-inspiring, with hilly roads giving way to countless panoramas and opportunities to gaze at beauty. The **(5) Diamond Falls Botanical Gardens & Mineral Baths** ([diamondstlucia.com](http://diamondstlucia.com)) sits on property that was granted by King Louis XIV of France in 1713 and today holds varieties of all the island's endemic plant species. For a deep, cleansing experience, the mud baths at **(7) Sulphur Springs** ([sulphurspringstlucia.com](http://sulphurspringstlucia.com)) will detoxify your skin and your spirit. For the best examples of St. Lucian traditional dishes, go no further than **(10) Castries Market**, farther north in the island's capital, for island staples like cow-heel soup and bouyon. (Open daily at 7:30 a.m., though seasonal hours are subject to change.)

### WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

#### (9) THE COAL POT RESTAURANT

Founded in 1978, The Coal Pot Restaurant in the Castries Quarter is among chef Nina Compton's favorites on the island. Daily menus are presented on chalkboards at the table, with standout dishes including crab backs, saltfish and green fig (young bananas), mahi-mahi in coconut curry, callaloo soup with potatoes and okra, sweet plantains, red beans and rice, and seafood chowder. ([instagram.com/coalpot.restaurant](http://instagram.com/coalpot.restaurant))

#### (4) TREETOP RESTAURANT

Treetop Restaurant's beautiful mountaintop panorama is matched only by its eclectic, savory Indian-Caribbean fusion dishes. ([treetopstlucia.com](http://treetopstlucia.com))

#### (6) MARTHA'S TABLES

A mother-daughter team serve seasonal, locally sourced traditional dishes in a casual open-air restaurant in Soufriere. Order the catch of the day and fresh juices from the bar. ([marthastables.com](http://marthastables.com))

### HOW TO VISIT

To book a trip with Rêverie, visit the company's website for up-to-date information about upcoming tours. Offerings this summer and fall include itineraries in France, among them an exploration of Toulouse and a week in the Loire Valley. ([reverieforever.com](http://reverieforever.com))



pineapple and peppers served with eggplant fritters, avocado salsa, and chilled watermelon for dessert, all washed down with soursoy daiquiris. Another evening, we devoured snapper in Creole sauce, pickled shrimp with local celery, fried green plantain tostones, callaloo empanadas, and a carambola (star fruit) and avocado salad.

The meals weren't all on Compton but rather were a team effort. Réverie's cofounder Donovan and chef Anne Churchill were with Compton in the kitchen every day alongside Cosmos St. Lucia residential house manager Shermika Lawrence and other local cooks. Often they'd create new, exciting dishes à la minute. In stark contrast to the all-inclusive, buffet-style food and drinks often associated with Caribbean resorts and cruise experiences, Réverie prioritizes fresh ingredients, invests in local economies, and is rooted in sustainability. (For example, leftover snapper from a dinner was later transformed into a fish curry, and remaining pickled shrimp and salads were served cold for lunch on a boat cruise up and down the island's west coast.) Réverie's approach aligns well with St. Lucian culture, which, while rooted in tradition, is deeply adaptable, changing and evolving based on a chef's tastes, what's growing, and the weather that ebbs and flows with the seasons.

"When we arrive in a place, we are the visitors," Réverie cofounder Julie Belcher says. "We're bringing a group to a place to experience the culture and meet the makers, so we approach every event with a certain reverence." From Compton's perspective, it's an ideal experience. "They focus on local fishermen, farmers, restaurants—even the taxi drivers were like our tour guides," she says.

On our final day, we took our appetites on the road, visiting one of Compton's favorite island restaurants. At Martha's Tables, a small open-air restaurant in Soufriere helmed by a mother-daughter team, we ate saltfish and breadfruit fritters, sticky guava chicken wings (recipe p. 116), seasoned pork chops, grilled chicken, fresh roasted mahi-mahi in a tomato-Creole sauce, eggplant lentil salad, a dasheen (taro) puree, and much more. I made sure to try everything, especially savoring dishes I recognized from my Puerto Rican upbringing: creamy potato salad, mashed root vegetables, fried sweet plantains, grilled fresh fish and meat, tropical fruit sauces. The food exemplified what some would call "farm to table." But according to Compton, in St. Lucia, that's just the way you cook.

Bellies full, we sojourned at the Sugar Beach resort, formerly an 18th-century sugar plantation, tucked between the Pitons. All beaches in St. Lucia are public, so Sugar Beach is a

popular spot for tourists and families alike. It also faces west, so there's no better place to have a cocktail brought to your cabana at sunset.

Upon our return to the hotel, we enjoyed Compton's final feast: grilled mahi-mahi and bigeye snapper; grilled conch marinated in ginger, sour oranges, and Baron hot sauce; pickled conch salad with green mango, lime, peppers, onions, and cucumbers topped with flamboyant blossoms; and Creole bread baked by members of the group earlier that day. "Cooking back home is special," Compton said. "Fish from fishermen, whole breadfruit from the market, ginger and turmeric in its purest form—this is a way of life in the Caribbean."

I have traveled to many beautiful islands, in the Caribbean and beyond, and the time I spent on St. Lucia with Réverie felt different: dreamy, evocative, as if I'd been let in on a secret. In a time when traveling can be fraught with concerns around cost, climate change, and its impact on local communities, the path charted by Réverie shows us a new way, down a path that is both transformational and generative—one that gives more back than is taken away.


**BELOW:** A rustic yet luxurious cottage at Fond Doux Eco Resort, located on a working cacao farm  
**OPPOSITE:** Finger-licking-good Spicy Guava-Glazed Wings (p. 116) at Martha's Tables in St. Lucia











**LOCATED AT THE EASTERN EDGE  
OF THE CARIBBEAN SEA,  
ST. LUCIA DRAWS VISITORS  
WITH ITS BEAUTY. BUT IT'S ALSO  
HOME TO A DISTINCTIVE AND  
DELICIOUS CULINARY CULTURE.**



For Nina Compton's Breadfruit Pie (recipe opposite), breadfruit is cooked, casserole-style, in a savory coconut sauce to yield a cozy side dish.



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## Breadfruit Pie

ACTIVE 35 MIN; TOTAL 1 HR 50 MIN  
SERVES 6

*A starchy tropical fruit that can be roasted, fried, grilled, or simply boiled, breadfruit is a staple ingredient in St. Lucian cooking. In this comforting casserole, breadfruit is baked in a cheesy coconut milk sauce. You can find breadfruit (especially during peak season, June through November) at specialty markets, or order online (see Note).*

- 1 large breadfruit (about 2½ lb.), trimmed and peeled (see Note)
- 2 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter, plus more for greasing dish
- ½ cup finely chopped yellow onion (about 1 small onion)
- ½ cup finely chopped scallions (about 3 scallions)
- 1 small Scotch bonnet chile, seeded and minced (about 1 tsp.)
- 2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 2 (13.6-oz.) cans unsweetened coconut milk
- 8 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (about 2 cups), divided
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- Pinch of ground nutmeg

1. Cut breadfruit lengthwise into 4 wedges. Place breadfruit wedges in a large pot, and add water to cover by about 2 inches; add 2 tablespoons salt. Bring to a boil over medium-high. Reduce heat to medium; cover pot, and simmer until breadfruit is tender and can be easily pierced with a fork or sharp knife, about 40 minutes. Transfer breadfruit to a plate using a spider or slotted spoon; set aside, and let cool slightly, about 10 minutes. Remove core from each breadfruit wedge; cut wedges crosswise into ⅛-inch-thick slices.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9- x 13-inch broiler-safe baking dish with butter.
3. Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low. Add onion, scallions, and Scotch bonnet chile; cook, stirring often, until vegetables begin to soften, about 2 minutes. Whisk in flour, and cook, whisking constantly, until lightly golden brown, 4 to 5 minutes. Whisk in coconut milk, whisking until smooth and mixture is lump-free. Increase heat to medium, and bring mixture to a simmer. Add 1 cup cheese; cook, stirring constantly, until cheese melts and sauce thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in parsley, black pepper, nutmeg, and remaining 1 teaspoon salt until well combined. Remove sauce from heat.
4. Spread ⅔ cup sauce on the bottom of the prepared baking dish; top with a single

layer of breadfruit slices (about 2½ cups). Repeat process with sauce and breadfruit 4 more times (for a total of 5 layers of breadfruit). Spread top layer of breadfruit with remaining sauce (about ⅔ cup), and sprinkle with remaining 1 cup cheese. Transfer to oven, and bake until sauce begins to bubble around edges, 25 to 30 minutes. Increase heat to broil, and continue to cook until golden brown on top, about 5 minutes. Remove from oven, and let rest for 5 minutes before serving. —NINA COMPTON

**MAKE AHEAD** Cooked breadfruit pie can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat in the oven at 350°F until warmed through.

**WINE** A ripe, luscious red: 2022 Cline Family Cellars Ancient Vines Mourvèdre

**NOTE** Breadfruit can be found at Caribbean and Asian grocers, especially while in season (June through November). Or look for it online at [tropicalfruit.com](http://tropicalfruit.com).

## Caribbean Corn and Pumpkin Soup

PHOTO P. 107

ACTIVE 1 HR; TOTAL 1 HR 35 MIN  
SERVES 4

*This silky blended soup of fresh pumpkin, coconut milk, and aromatic vegetables and herbs gets a warming heat from Scotch bonnet chiles. Corn kernels add a pop of sweetness. The tender, slender dumplings (called “spinners” because they spin while cooking) need just a few minutes to cook but are fine to sit in the soup and hold up well as leftovers. When in St. Lucia, Compton uses callaloo for the greens; here, she calls for fresh spinach.*

### SOUP

- ¼ cup unrefined coconut oil
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 2 celery stalks, sliced (about 1 cup)
- 1 small yellow onion, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced (about ¼ cup)
- 4 large garlic cloves, minced (about 4 tsp.)
- 8 cilantro sprigs
- 5 thyme sprigs
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- ¾ tsp. kosher salt
- 3 cups vegetable stock
- 3 cups water
- 2 cups chopped peeled fresh sugar pumpkin (about 1 small pumpkin) or kabocha squash
- 1 large carrot, peeled and chopped (about ½ cup)
- 1 (13.6-oz.) can unsweetened coconut milk

- 1 cup fresh or frozen corn kernels (about 2 ears)

- 1 Scotch bonnet chile
- 2 cups fresh baby spinach

### DUMPLINGS

- ½ cup cassava flour (about 2½ oz.) (see Note)
- 2 Tbsp. semolina flour
- ⅛ tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ cup warm water (110°F), plus more as needed

**1. Make the soup:** Melt oil in a large Dutch oven over medium. Add bell pepper, celery, onion, scallions, and garlic; cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Add cilantro, thyme, black pepper, and salt; cook, stirring occasionally, until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Stir in vegetable stock, 3 cups water, pumpkin, and carrot. Bring to a boil over medium-high. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover and simmer until pumpkin and carrot are very soft, about 30 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in coconut milk.

**2.** Transfer pumpkin mixture to a blender. (Do not wipe Dutch oven clean.) Secure lid, and remove center piece to allow steam to escape. Place a towel over lid; process until very smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Pour pumpkin mixture into Dutch oven; add corn and Scotch bonnet chile. Bring soup to a simmer over medium-low. Cook, stirring occasionally, until flavors meld and soup thickens slightly, about 30 minutes.

**3. Meanwhile, make the dumplings:** Stir together cassava flour, semolina flour, and salt in a medium bowl until combined. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture. Pour ¼ cup warm water into well. Gradually mix water into flour mixture, using your hands, until a shaggy dough forms. Press and knead the dough together until a smooth, pliable dough forms, about 2 minutes, adding additional warm water as needed, 1 teaspoon at a time, until dough is pliable and smooth. Pinch off 1 small piece of dough, and roll in the palm of your hands to create a 2-inch-long (spinner) dumpling. Repeat process with remaining dough (makes about 60 dumplings). Set aside.

**4.** Bring soup to a simmer over medium. Add dumplings, one at a time, until all are added to the soup. Cook dumplings, stirring often to prevent sticking on the bottom of the pot, until cooked through and tender, about 20 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in spinach, and cook until wilted, 1 minute. Remove and discard Scotch bonnet chile before serving. —NINA COMPTON

**MAKE AHEAD** This soup is best served fresh, but it can be stored in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

**NOTE** Find cassava flour online at [bobsredmill.com](http://bobsredmill.com).



## Spicy Guava-Glazed Wings

PHOTO P. 111

ACTIVE 15 MIN; TOTAL 1 HR 15 MIN  
SERVES 6

*These fun, fruity, sticky wings were inspired by those served at Martha's Tables, one of Nina Compton's favorite St. Lucian restaurants. They come together easily: First roasted in the oven until the skin is browned and crisp, the wings are then tossed in a salty, sweet, and tangy guava glaze and baked for a few more minutes to set the glaze. They're terrific paired with potato salad or coleslaw.*

### Cooking spray

- 5 lb. chicken wings, tips removed
- 1 Tbsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup guava paste (see Note)
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  Tbsp. honey
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  Tbsp. soy sauce
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. crushed red pepper
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. smoked paprika

1. Preheat oven to 425°F with racks in upper and lower third positions. Line 2 baking sheets using aluminum foil; lightly coat with cooking spray.

2. Sprinkle wings evenly with salt, and arrange in a single layer, skin side up, on prepared baking sheets. Bake until wings are lightly browned and crisp, about 45 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, stir together guava paste, vinegar, honey, soy sauce, oil, red pepper, and smoked paprika in a medium saucepan over medium-low. Cook, stirring occasionally, until guava paste melts and the mixture is smooth and syrupy, about 3 minutes. Remove from heat, and set aside.

4. Transfer wings from baking sheets to a large bowl using tongs; discard any accumulated pan juices, and reserve the baking sheets. Toss wings with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup glaze until evenly coated. Return chicken to reserved baking sheets, arranging the wings in a single layer. Bake, basting wings occasionally with remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup glaze, until wings are shiny and lightly charred in spots, 15 minutes. Transfer wings to a platter. Serve hot or warm. —NINA COMPTON

**MAKE AHEAD** Wings can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

**WINE** A full-bodied, tropical-fruited white: 2023 Daou Paso Robles Chardonnay

**NOTE** Guava paste is made by cooking guava fruit with sugar until it is firm and dense. It is available at many grocery stores or at Latin markets.

## Accras (Saltfish Fritters)

ACTIVE 50 MIN; TOTAL 1 HR 20 MIN,  
PLUS 8 HR SOAKING; SERVES 8

*Fish fritters, a popular snack in St. Lucia and throughout the Caribbean, have a tender, bready interior flavored with umami-rich saltfish and pops of sweet bell pepper and scallions. The fritter batter comes together easily, but note that the salt-preserved dried fish (often cod or pollock) needs to soak in water overnight to temper the saltiness and help soften the fish. The process requires little to no tending and (after simmering) yields tender, easily flaked fish that mixes well into the batter. The crispy golden fritters are perfect with Compton's creamy aioli with tangy preserved lemon and lemon juice. Or you can serve them with a hot pepper sauce; Compton likes Baron, a St. Lucian brand.*

### AIOLI

- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 garlic clove, finely grated
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. lemon zest plus 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp. Dijon mustard
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup extra-virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup canola oil
- 2 tsp. minced preserved lemon

### ACCRA

- $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. boneless saltfish (such as dry salted cod), soaked overnight
- 1 cup all-purpose flour (about  $4\frac{1}{4}$  oz.)
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. curry powder
- 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup finely chopped scallions (about 5 scallions)
- 1 small red bell pepper, finely chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup water, plus more as needed

Canola oil, for frying

Lemon wedges

Hot sauce, for serving (optional)

**1. Make the aioli:** Whisk together egg yolk, garlic, lemon zest and juice, Dijon, and salt in a large bowl until combined. Whisk in olive oil and canola oil in a slow, steady stream until the mixture emulsifies into a creamy sauce, about 5 minutes. Stir in preserved lemon, and season with salt to taste. Cover and chill until ready to use.

**2. Make the accras:** Drain soaked saltfish, discarding water, and place in a medium saucepan. Add enough fresh water to cover by 1 to 2 inches, and bring to a boil over medium-high. Reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, undisturbed, until fish softens and tastes well-seasoned but not too salty, about 20 minutes. Drain and cool saltfish for 5 minutes; gently break fish into small flakes using a fork, and set aside.

3. Stir together flour, baking powder, curry powder, cayenne pepper, paprika, and salt in a large bowl. Fold in flaked fish, scallions, and bell pepper until combined. Stir in  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup water until mixture resembles a thick pancake batter. (Add additional water, 1 tablespoon at a time, as needed to reach the desired consistency.)

4. Pour canola oil to a depth of 2 inches in a large Dutch oven; heat over medium to 350°F. Fry accras in 3 batches by dropping spoonfuls of the batter (about 1 heaping tablespoon each) into the hot oil; cook until deeply golden brown, about 4 minutes. (Allow oil to return to 350°F between each batch.) Set on paper towels to drain, and immediately season to taste with additional salt. Serve accras hot with aioli, lemon wedges, and hot sauce (if using).

—NINA COMPTON

**MAKE AHEAD** The aioli can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

**BEER** A refreshing Caribbean lager: Red Stripe

**“FISH FROM FISHERMEN,  
BREADFRUIT FROM THE MARKET,  
GINGER AND TURMERIC IN ITS  
PUREST FORM. THIS IS A WAY OF  
LIFE IN THE CARIBBEAN.”**

**—NINA COMPTON**





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
Accras, or saltfish fritters  
(recipe opposite); the  
R  verie tour at Sulphur  
Springs (see "St. Lucia  
Travel Guide," p. 109);  
fresh-baked Creole  
bread; the infinity pool  
at Cosmos St. Lucia, over-  
looking the spires of the  
Piton mountains



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