

Name:

Date:

Bahamian Culture

The Bahamas has a distinct culture which has evolved over generations, from a mixture of mostly African, combined with some British and American influences.

Bahamians are best described as easy-going, friendly and hospitable. English is the official language of The Bahamas, with a local dialect called 'Bahamianese or Bahamian Dialect' being spoken.

The Bahamas has three indigenous forms of music and dance: Goombay, Rake 'n' Scrape, and Junkanoo.

'Goombay' music can be considered to be among the earliest indigenous forms of Bahamian music that originated with its Afro-descendant population in the form of a drumbeat rhythm and was the style used by many early Bahamian musicians and composers like Blind Blake, George Symonette and Eloise Lewis.

'Rake and Scrape' has its origins in the family island of Cat Island where it developed as a hybrid form from European and African music cultures. It is a popular folk music form among Bahamians and has been used as a classical folk form for various traditional folk musicals, folk plays, and folk operas by various Bahamian composers. It is, also, used as an accompaniment for the 'quadrille, plaiting of the maypole and other folk dance forms'.

Nothing is more indigenous and unique to Bahamian culture than Junkanoo. It is a music and dance form that originated in The Bahamas during the days of slavery. A festive parade complete with colourful costumes, goatskin drums, clanging cowbells, whistles and horns, it has remained remarkably unchanged over the years. The parade progresses in a low, rhythmic dance called 'rushing'. Traditionally, the festival is held in the early hours of Boxing Day (26 December) and on New Year's Day, winding up at sunrise. The paraders 'rush' in organised groups and are judged on costume theme and performance in a keen competition which captures the spirit of all Bahamians at this very special time of the year.

Art is also an important part of Bahamian cultural life. The vibrant colours and dramatic themes of Junkanoo form the basis of this artistic expression but the lifestyle, social struggles, strong religious influences and the breathtaking beauty of the natural surroundings have a clear influence as well. The work of several Bahamian artists has attracted international attention.

Bahamian Cuisine

Meals tend to center on local fish or conch, rice and peas, baked goods, and fresh fruit. Seafood is the staple diet. Fresh fish, especially boiled fish served with grits. Many dishes here are served with pigeon peas and rice mixed with spices, tomatoes and onions

Bush Medicine

Bush medicine is using indigenous plants for medicinal purposes. It's a tradition African slaves brought with them when they came here. There are almost 100 plants found here that can be used for medical treatment. Examples include aloe vera, crab bush, fig leaf, sailors' flowers and white sage.

Religion

Religion is important in the lives of the Bahamian people. Even small communities have several churches. Our religious devotion is evidence of the Eleutheran Adventurers and their Puritan influences.

Straw Market

Explore one of our straw markets and bring home a piece of Bahamian culture. You'll find handmade hats, mats, baskets, woodcarvings and guava jellies. Test your bargaining skills and get a good deal on a great piece.

Write the answer to the following question in the space provided. Ensure you begin your response with a capital letter.

1. Bahamian culture is a mix of British, American and mostly
2. Bahamian dialect is a broken form of
3. The earliest form of indigenous music in the Bahamas is
4. Rake n Scrape had its origin where?
5. A composer is someone who (Writes/Plays/Records)
6. Rake n Scrape is a hybrid, this means it's a (Child/Mix/Flavour)
7. The drums used in Junkanoo is made from
8. The first "Rush" of Junkanoo takes place on
9. Another important part of Bahamian Cultural life is reflected in
10. The meals native to the Bahamas are called Bahamian
11. The tradition of bush medicine in the Bahamas was brought by which slaves?
12. The Eleutheran Adventurers had influence from the
13. Where can you purchase a piece of Bahamian Culture?

14. What skills are tested for a good deal?
15. Easy going describes (People/Islands/Culture)
16. What word describes the colours of Junkanoo?
17. Bags in the straw market are
18. Over how many plants can be found in the Bahamas?
19. What type of jelly can one find for purchase?
20. What is a staple diet in the Bahamas?