

You know it's Christmas when...

Birthday lime at Clifton Hill

Folklore

Dining at food trucks
in San Fernando

Green fig recipes

Chip chip in Manzanilla

Parang hombres!

Members of Los Hombres Sexuales perform at Nuvo Sera Night Club on Ariapita Avenue on November 30, 2014. From left are Avelino Thomas, "Johnny", Stanley Jennings, and Aaron Thomas. See full band on page 3.

Chacachacare -
come to my island!

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Sweet TnT
 MAGAZINE

Lifestyle
 Creole Language
 Food
 Places

Trinidad and Tobago culture for so!



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Parang at Nuvo Sera 'on de Avenue'



Anthony Maillard on flute and wearing green jersey swings with his band Los Hombres Sexueles as they entertain the crowd with sweet parang music at Nuvo Sera Night Club on Ariapita Avenue, November 30, 2014.

Sweet TnT MAGAZINE

Editor's note

The question: What is so sweet about T&T these days? Our writers and photographers have successfully answered this all year long in every issue of Sweet TnT Magazine. Our December publication features the overflowing sweetness that exists in Trinidad and Tobago that people enjoy every day.

In the Lifestyle section, we share a humorous Christmas piece, images of a decorated mall, a birthday lime at Clifton Hill, a date night at Valpark, and we honour two of our talented family members. The Creole section has a frightening yet exciting poem about folklore, an interesting short story set in a rural village, and a Trini Christmas poem. In the Food section, readers enter the homes of cooks who show off their mouth-watering meals prepared for their families; enjoy a dining experience at the roadside in San Fernando; see many ways to prepare delicacies using green fig; and get more action from Tableland's food fiesta. While Manzanilla Beach and Chacachacare Island may be desolated at present our stories and photos in the Places section show a positive view that is very comforting. Finally, take a cruise "Down De Islands" with our adventure seekers who also swim with dolphins.

Congratulations to our team, writers and photographers for a job well done for 2014! Thanks to all our advertisers, readers, and social media fans who have liked, shared and commented. Remember to keep visiting www.sweettntmagazine.com for past and future issues as we post a new one every other month.

Enjoy!

Joyanne James
Editor

Credits

Editor
Joyanne James

Graphic/comic artist
Andrina James

Marketing representative
Jevan Soyer

Feature writers/photographers
Marc Algernon
Nadia Ali
Marissa Armoogam-Ali
Kielon Hilaire
Nerissa Hosein
Marika Mohammed
Omilla Mungroo
Felesha Parboo
Annisa Phillip

Accountant
Patricia James-Wilson
Semaj Consultancy Services
Bon Air West, Arouca

Webmaster
Neil Singh
Net Control Ltd, 76 Main Road, Montrose,
Trinidad

Printer
TechXpress
579 First Street, Edinburgh 500,
Chaguanas, Trinidad

Publisher
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You know it's Christmas when...

By Annisa Phillip

It is that time of year again when some of our spirits rise and many are full of cheer. The season of giving as many refer to it, Christmas. There are somewhat clear demarcations that indicate that the season of Christmas is upon us and the year will soon be over. I figured, why not make a list of these "Christmas indicators". So below is a list of signals to this joyous season in sweet T&T.

You know it's Christmas when:

1. You hear "100 days of Christmas" on the radio.
2. Your friends try selling you parang tickets.
3. You try selling parang tickets.
4. You hear more parang than soca.
5. Radio DJs mix soca parang with soca. (Really?)
6. You start humming parang, soca parang or carols.
7. People start curing ham.
8. People start making pastelles.
9. Malls put up decorations.
10. You start buying decorations.
11. You consider gift giving.
12. You begin telling yourself that you should have started shopping sooner.
13. The Advent wreath appears in church.
14. Your neighbour's decorations and crèche goes on display.
15. Sorrel goes on sale.
16. Rum passing and even the young get a sip.
17. House colours and curtains change.
18. People start cleaning and you know that they only do it once a year.

19. If you are a parent, your children begin making requests.
20. Children write to Santa (if they believe in Santa).
21. If you're a university student, you begin studying (or cramming) for final exams.
22. 6.00 p.m. outside looks like midnight.
23. Nights get colder.
24. Courts furniture store gives you free ham and grog when you make purchases.
25. Movies and television shows are Christmas oriented.
26. The Carnival calendar gets released.



Christmas tree at Trincity Mall.



A crèche on display inside Trincity Mall.

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Christmas at Trincity Mall



A beautifully decorated entrance at Trincity Mall.



Children look at Christmas display at Trincity Mall.



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Birthday lime at Clifton Hill

By Annisa Phillip

My friends and I visited the Clifton Hill Beach Resort to celebrate two of my friends' birthdays with lunch and a beach lime. The resort is really quite lovely with its eye-catching water features, plants and restaurant decor.

The plan was to chit-chat and old talk over food and drinks then head to the beach for a dip. Unfortunately, we didn't eat at the resort since none of us wanted what was on the menu. We hoped that it was simply due to choosing the wrong day of the week. So we resorted to ordering fast food.

At the beach, there were music and entertainment which included a nearby man wining his way across the beach. Later in the evening, there were awkward minutes that passed as a random man stood near us chatting with a male friend and making some



Lee Ann Quan Chan, Gena-Marie Bereaux, Marina Roberts and Annisa Phillip at Clifton Hill Beach.

really odd comments when asked to leave. He clearly wanted to enjoy our group's vibes as well. Nonetheless, we enjoyed our-

selves as the water was not too cold so we went straight in swimming, splashing and playing casual games. With water and vibes not

much more was needed. Great company can turn any experience into a blast. Nothing can cramp our style!

Honouring
our own!

Covers for
toilet paper

Decorative duck

Moth balls

Talented Joyce!

As 2014 ends, the *Sweet TnT Magazine* team honours a very special mummy to us, Joyce James-Pitman also known as Ms Joyce, a pleasant and lively lady who is very much appreciated by everyone with whom she comes into contact.

She is a caring wife and mother to her husband, four children, eight grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, all her sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and a “second mummy” to her younger friends. She is a loving sister to her siblings and in-laws, a joyful friend and neighbour to many and a favourite among the members of her religious place of worship.

In our December issue, we highlight Joyce’s crocheted and knitted works as we continue to show the world the greatness that lies among our people in Trinidad and Tobago.

ter-in-law, and a “second mummy” to her younger friends. She is a loving sister to her siblings and in-laws, a joyful friend and neighbour to many and a favourite among the members of her religious place of worship.

Ms Joyce
wearing
a blouse
she made
herself.



Blouses



Dressed up doll

I learned the art of crochet at the age of five by a lady named Mrs Howard in Curepe since it was very important for a girl child to have a skill in the home. I bought my own tutorial and design books as I grew older and while I improved my crocheting I learned to knit on my own. I used one needle with a hook to crochet and two needles to knit. I have been crocheting and knitting several items ever since up to this present day.

My work was never for sale. I made many things for myself, my family and my friends. I knitted and crocheted blouses, dresses, baby booties, table cloths, cushion covers, mats, doilies,

moth balls, toilet paper covers, teddy bears and doll dresses. People would compliment my work and say, “Gosh Joyce, you have to make one of that for me.” Long ago, I would have made it and give it as a Christmas gift but not now. I only do it to feel relaxed and forget about everything that is out there.

I try to think positive and not follow too much bad news to take it on. I ask the Lord to keep my loved ones safe as much as possible and focus on the things that I can help. We have two choices in life, be sad or happy, and my choice is to be happy.

I love my country. When I travel abroad, my thoughts are always on



Dress

Congratulations, Kielon!



Kielon Hilaire at his graduation ceremony.

Special congratulations to our feature writer Kielon Hilaire on his great achievements as he graduates from the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) on November 23, 2014.

Kielon received the Academic Award of Merit for graduating top of the class in the Associate Degree in Internet Technology, and an Award for Excellence in the Associate Degree (based on overall academic performance upon completion).

Readers would know Kielon for his entertaining interviews with interesting talented persons in T&T written in his usual lively and amusing style. In this issue, Kielon takes us to his friend's kitchen in the Food section on pages 18 and 19.



Award for Excellence in Associates Degree.



Kielon's plaque commemorating his achievement.



Doilies

when I am going back to Trinidad. When I am on my way back on a plane and I see mountains, I make the sign of the cross and say thank God I am back, and that is the truth.

I tell everybody that I cannot live outside of Trinidad. I was born here, the Lord put me here, I feel safer and more free than when I am anywhere else. When people come to my door I don't have to peep through a hole to see them. Also, when I am out there, I have to wait for someone to take me around, but here I can easily flag down a taxi, a maxi-taxi or I can use the free bus service that the Government has provided for me. I would live here until I die.

I say that young people in T&T should go out there, see the world, learn new things and come back and put it to good use to improve their country. Although life may be filled



Floor mat

with contradictions, people must not dwell on the negatives in their lives. We cannot stop that. We can only go forward if we stop living in the past and just live in the now. It is best to keep a good relationship with everyone around.



Assorted items

Date night

All marriages need it!

By Nerissa Hosein

Sometimes working women or stay-at-home moms forget the necessity of romance. Marriage is a tricky dance, throw in kids, bills, household chores, financial stress and everything else, romance can take a back seat. It's hard to balance everything and still maintain the hand-holding phase of the relationship.

That's why every once in a while, I like to get all dressed up and remind my husband of how beautiful I can really be. It also serves as a reminder to me. Most days I wear no make-up, no nice clothes, my hair stays piled up on my head while I concentrate on the kids and the house. It's not easy but it's what we as parents have to do. I love my kids and I love the fact that I get to

be a stay-at-home mom with them. I get to see all their "firsts" and I don't mind being a plain Jane most days.

But now and then it's great to get all dolled up and feel the sparkle! Money is always a concern so we don't do it often, but every once in a while my husband and I have a date night. We leave our two darling boys (see page 11) with the relatives and we get all decked out and have a couple hours for ourselves. Those couple hours are so important in any marriage. We get to have adult conversation, we laugh, we eat, we remind ourselves of how lucky we are to have found our other halves and of course we get a few moments to miss the kids! And boy do I miss them! It's only a couple hours but I miss them like crazy!

This week, our date night took us to an old

favourite, Valpark Chinese Restaurant. We had a date night to celebrate 17 years of knowing each other. We've been going there for years now and I love the food. We always love the ambience, the live music of classic songs from Elvis and other legends warm the place and the food is reasonable and delicious! Best shrimp cocktail I've ever had.

At the end of the night, my husband and I got the few moments we craved, I got to feel like Cinderella and my kids got a few hours with the grandparents! It's a win-win for all and every marriage can benefit from a few moments of romance!

Keeping
T&T sweet!

A Sweet TnT series
MAGAZINE

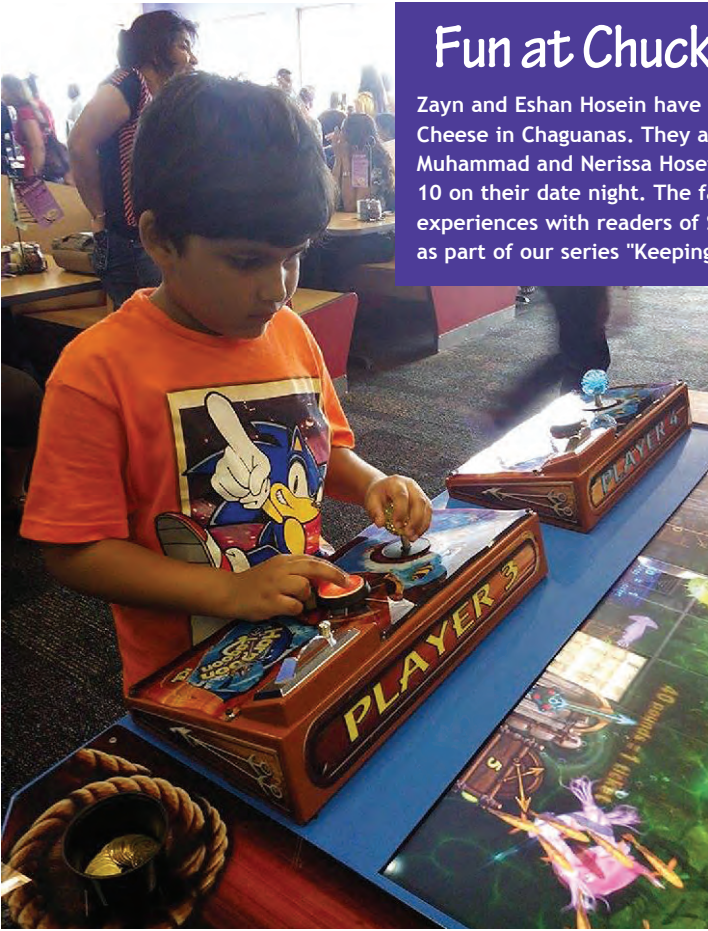
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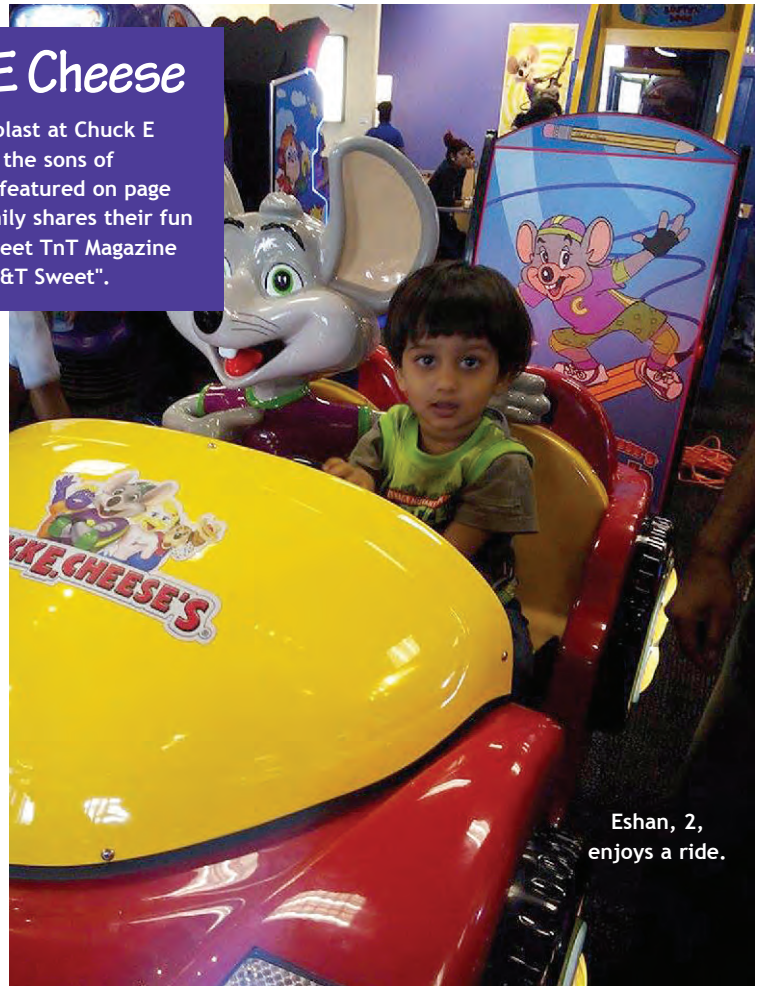
Keeping T&T sweet!

Fun at Chuck E Cheese

Zayn and Eshan Hosein have a blast at Chuck E Cheese in Chaguanas. They are the sons of Muhammad and Nerissa Hosein featured on page 10 on their date night. The family shares their fun experiences with readers of Sweet TnT Magazine as part of our series "Keeping T&T Sweet".



Zayn, 6, plays a fun game.

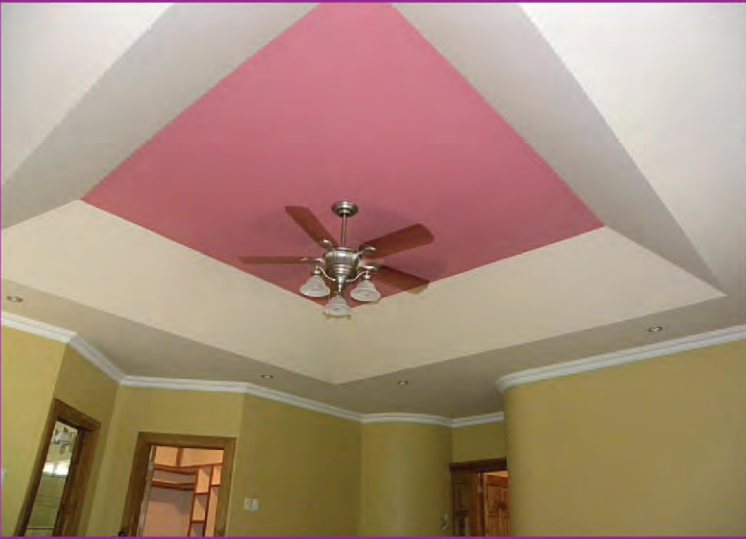


Eshan, 2, enjoys a ride.

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Folklore?

By Marc Algernon

I just love long Sunday drives, and
returning home late at night
but I must have made a wrong turn, the
narrowing road is cause for concern.
The trees hung low to the road, and my
gas light started to glow
this was one of those nights, where
nothing seems to go right.

Out of the dark comes a horrible
scream, this must be a terrible dream
my heart asks me if we're gonna die,
my mind shouts, "For God's sake
DRIVE!"

A woman and child block my path, the
white of her eyes stops my heart.
It's a Churile for sure, what I always
thought was folklore.

My brakes let out a violent screech, but
now she sits in my back seat
I opened the door and started to run,
then I heard the beat of horrible drums
I am swallowed up by the wicked night
as my eyes are filled with the vilest
sights
the truth is if you don't believe me,
then come to the land of Silk Cotton
Trees.

There was a giant black dog eating a
goat, I tried to scream but the noise
would not leave my throat.

Over there on my left, in a long scarlet
dress, was a La Diabliesse, with her
hands outstretched
And over there on my right, was a
Lagahoo in plain sight, no yampee in my
eye.

And if not to appear too soon, a giant
ball of fire filled the moon.

Moko Jumbies dripping black, Bucks and
Douens
sitting back.

I took off in a desperate run, the ball of
fire swooped overhead for fun.

This road must have an end to this hell,
all of a sudden I tripped and fell.

Down I went to the muddy ground, the
sound of the drums was all around.

The Giant Dog barked in my ear, giant
claws grabbed my shirt and started to
tear.

I screamed and I begged, I begged and I
prayed, the Moko Jumbie laughed, "NO
REDEMPTION TODAY"

They chewed on my fingers and bit off
my toes, my back wore gashes,
something crawled up my nose.
I was dragged down a track by two
horrible Douens...

Never to be heard of... again?!

By Marissa Armoogam-Ali

As the rain beat down heavily upon the rusted galvanised sheets of the old wooden house, Anita peered through the hazy glass window pane which hung loosely from the rotted wood frames. The wind was blowing angrily down on the cane fields behind her house and the stalks of cane seemed to dance at times and at other times bow in respect each time the lightning flashed across the country sky.

Inside the little wooden house her mother scurried to place old iron pots and empty pigtail buckets to catch the naughty rain that had sneaked in through the fold of the galvanised sheets. Her little brother Randy was curled up in the corner of the bed fast asleep snuggled amongst blankets made from empty flour bags that her mother had sewn together.

Anita was a small frail girl, aged six. Her hair was thin and fell carelessly around her pale face. Her clothes, though not new was clean, her mother always made sure the children were clean. As she looked out into the fields her mind wandered far beyond that place. Her family, her village, the cows that grazed near her house was all she knew.

Sometimes in the far off distance beyond the field she would see a thread of grey smoke which moved quickly across the horizon until it faded away. Once she asked her mother where

Anita's paradise

the smoke came from, with a peculiar look her mother stopped scrubbing the wooden floor and looked up at her daughter's inquisitive face, she thought for a minute and then answered ever so softly, "Them is the trucks that going by the factory, that is where yuh father used to work long time." Then they looked at each other both wondering what the other was thinking and her mother went back to scrubbing the floors.

Anita had never seen a truck before, not even a car and her mind designed pictures of what this marvellous contraption that could make smoke and run faster than her looked like.

Suddenly, the rain stopped as abruptly as it had started. Without asking her mother she pushed open the wooden door and ran out the house into the yard like a freed animal. She loved this time, the atmosphere was calm and quiet, everywhere was wet and seemed clean and fresh as if it was just washed, the smell of the wet grass enticed her, this was the only time she understood why the cows ate it.

She ran through the wet grass barefoot, she jumped into the holes in the dirt road now

made into numerous pools of muddy water and she giggled as the mud squished in between her tiny toes. This was her time, the only time her little unadventurous existence became full of life.

In the distance a calf cried for his mother after he had wandered off into the nearby cane fields during the rains. The air became filled with what seemed like tiny cane ash but upon closer investigation she realised it was swarms of rain flies. Frogs came jumping and croaking loudly as they reached for the flies.

Further down the road she saw the outline of someone coming up the old road, cautiously she ran behind an old tractor wheel and stooped down to peep at the approaching stranger. As the image became clearer she realised it was her father coming back from the garden. He had gone to harvest tomatoes and peppers to sell the next day at the market.

She jumped out from behind the tyre and ran happily to greet him. She lovingly jumped into his hands and hugged his dirty face. They both walked up the road together towards their small wooden paradise. This was her life and she loved all of it.



Wooden house in Manzanilla. See more scenes in the Places section.

Decorated street in Valsayn.



Christmas Oh Christmas!

By Felesha Parboo

As a child growing up in Trinidad I could hardly wait for Christmas. I knew I would get gifts and toys. My aunties, uncles and cousins would visit And there would be lots of food.

Christmas preparations started months before Christmas.

My mother would go shop in San Fernando for Christmas curtains and decorations. She prides herself on having a home that looks almost brand new for Christmas. The Christmas tree with all its dazzling and sparkling ornaments adds the finishing touch.

Late at night, the parang bands and Christmas carollers begin appearing.

They sing Spanish and Christmas songs to the accompaniment of the guitar, cuatro and the maracas.

Or simply by beating a spoon on a bottle in tune to the song.

They were always welcomed at our home. My sister and I would dance the night away. Or until Mummy told us it was time to go to bed.

On Christmas Day, we got to open our presents and oh what a joy it was! We would see our neighbours dressed up in new clothes headed to the church. After the service, they may drop by for a quick visit.

Some brought us gifts and some received one in return.

They also expected to eat and drink their bellies full with my chef of a mother.

The food was an important part of our Christmas.

My mother prepared egg nog along with ham and bread for breakfast.

The ham is my favourite item on our Christmas menu.

Our Christmas dinner consisted of a lavish display of Christmas fried rice, roast pork, pastelles, chicken (baked and stewed), stewed pigeon peas, callaloo and macaroni pie.

Sometimes we had wild meat such as opossum, armadillo and deer.

These were washed down by tasty sorrel and Peardrax.

After eating all of that, I didn't have room for the fruitcake dessert, but that was ok. Because it was a great Christmas with more to come.

Christmas oh Christmas!

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Meals and photos
by Edwin O'Neil

A succulent baked
ham already sliced
and ready to
be devoured.

Well seasoned cheesy
baked potatoes.



Scrumptious macaroni pie that must be on every plate.



Lunch is served!



Pastelles



Bread



Macaroni pie



Cookies



Sorrel and ginger ale

Christmas with Marina

By Kielon Hilaire

Ask a Trini what makes Christmas feel like Christmas and you would more likely get, “OMG, de food! De food! I jus’ cyah wait to eat de food!” But when you ask Marina Rivas you’ll get, “I love to cook! I love to bake! I love to make all sorts of Christmas foods!” Now the whole of Trinidad and Tobago might want to come to Marina’s place for Christmas!

Well in the prime of her life, Marina has been whipping up food storms in the kitchen since she was eight years old and she happily recalled the story of how that happened. Her mummy used to cook each day. But on one occasion she found that the food was taking too long to “magically” appear on the table so she went to find out what was wrong. She discovered that her mother had been preoccupied with other chores. Seeing this, she immediately paced towards the kitchen where she spotted raw meat sitting inside a bowl; without thinking, she picked up the meat chopper and said, “Meat, I’m going to cook you!” And she actually did it.

She had spoken those words till they eventually came into existence. Startled by both her success and her ambition, from then on Marina’s family supported her desire to cook by teaching her various family recipes. And they continued to do so till a new chef was born.

Almost 20 years later, Marina admits that she loves to create most of her foods during the Christmas season and that the pleasant aromas of



Marina Rivas shows off her sweetbread.

Christmas with Marina

some meals alone are enough to get her thinking about making them.

Yummy pastelles, fresh breads, sweet fruit-cakes, crusty pies and sweetbreads with textures so fine that every mouthful slithers down your throat to satisfy your innermost desires. But of course for many Trinbagonians Christmas is no Christmas without black cake – a cake that is laden with a plethora of fruits and drenched with premium spirits. Then there are the drinks – sorrel, ginger beer, mauby and an all time favourite, Ponche de Crème which is a homemade beverage primarily made from alcohol, nutmeg and a combination of creamy milk.

All of these Marina enjoys making. But no matter what, Marina claims that one of her signature dishes, especially as it reminds her of how she got started, will always be to bake ham or turkey till it is moist and tender, a meal that is often the highpoint of a non-vegetarian's Christmas. Nevertheless, Marina attributes much of her success in the kitchen to being a Graphic Design major and having a natural enthusiasm for art. To her, cooking and art are the same things.

Marina was asked if she could imagine Christmas without food. Her response was, "Absolutely NOT! Not just because I love the food so much but because cooking and baking during that time of year can easily bring families together. Some people see Christmas as a time for opening gifts but I see it as a time to celebrate life, for celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ and



spending time with the people who mean the most to you, sometimes even with strangers. Christmas to me is also a time for sharing, giving and being at peace with yourself. And this all starts from the moment someone realises that material things will never continuously make your Christmas merrier."

Marina also expressed that as much as she looks forward to Christmas food each year she also looks forward to the day when more parang festivals are aired more often by the media during the holidays. "I love the sweet melody of Christmas carols and parang and to see how many people attend the parang festivals in Arima, Lopinot, Santa Cruz and Maracas, just to name a few. These things really get me in the Christmas Spirit." She believes that food and music go hand in hand and can universally invoke peace and happiness, which ultimately keep people closer together.

Nevertheless, despite all the positives of celebrating a Trini Christmas, the season is notoriously known for the hassle of last minute shopping, long lines at the supermarket, manoeuvring through traffic jams and performing hurried painting and decorating, etc. But amidst all the stress, it is worth considering that Marina might really have the secret to spending the merriest Christmas ever: Eat and be merry, and most importantly, sing! Singing "Ah want ah piece ah pork" by Scrunter is a good way to start feeling infused by the Christmas Spirit. Thanks Marina!



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Dining at food trucks in San Fernando



Aadam and Elaina Ali at BMR Burgers at the "Cross" in San Fernando.

By Marissa Armoogam-Ali

The social dynamics and general culture in Trinidad has evolved considerably over the past years. I was born and grew up in the south of the island and I have always found it to be a bit more relaxed and laid back in comparison to the lifestyle of the northerners.

One of the welcomed changes to southern living has been the introduction of a more vibrant night life; in particular the numerous food trucks which come out nightly and line the streets in many of the

districts. One such area is at Lady Hailes Avenue in Cross Crossing, San Fernando, also known by locals as the "Cross".

Every night around seven o'clock, the trucks pull into their designated parking areas and begin setting up their tents and other items to prepare for the influx of customers who descend upon the trucks ready to devour the succulent dishes they offer for sale.

The foods available come from cultures across the globe, they range from curry dishes, to local cuisines, various types of meat and vegetable burgers and

hot dogs, corn soup, gyro, taco, burrito, and the Trini favourite doubles.

I usually take a casual drive with my two children down to the "Cross" on any given day and hand in hand we walk from food truck to food truck trying to decide of which dish we will partake. The environment is clean and comfortable, the people are friendly and welcoming and the food is delicious. So I extend an open invitation to all my northern brothers and sisters the next time you are down south, take a drive to the "Cross" and enjoy the dining experience.

Green fig

for the Trini soul

By Marissa Armoogam-Ali

Living in the Caribbean has awarded many of us the opportunity to relish in the bounty of the earth and all the goodies she has to offer. The warm sunshine and rich soil pair well together and help bring forth some of the most mouth-watering fruit and vegetation than anywhere else in the world. One such produce which I have personally used many times in varying dishes is the green banana or green fig.

The green fig has long been used in Trinidad cooking in many dishes, I have done some research and all have pointed to great health benefits of consuming the green figs. They contain fibre, vitamins, minerals and a starch that may control blood sugar, manage weight loss and lower blood cholesterol levels. It is high in potassium, a one cup serving of boiled green figs offer 531 milligrams of potassium.

Let me share with you some of the “yum” factors. There are many creative ways to use the green fig:

- Green fig pie
- Boiled and fried green figs with smoked herring/salted fish and tomatoes
- Steamed green figs in coconut milk with curried fish or chicken
- Any soup with green fig
- Sada green fig with roti
- Green fig souse
- Green fig salad
- Curried green figs and roti
- Green fig porridge
- Green fig oil-down with pigtail

I am quite sure that there are many other dishes which are hidden among the gifted local chefs of our twin isles which we will learn about soon enough. Until then let me share with you two recipes. Enjoy!



Green fig pie

5 lbs of green figs (boiled in the skins) – this makes it easier to peel and easy clean-up
2 packs of evaporated milk
3 eggs
Salt and pepper to taste
3 cups of grated cheese
5 cloves of garlic grated
Local seasoning minced/cut-up
3 pimentos diced

After peeling the boiled green-figs, mash them the same as you would potatoes, add the salt, pepper, grated garlic, local seasonings, diced pimentos, 3 beaten eggs, the two packs of milk and 2 cups of the grated cheese, mix gently and turn into a buttered baking dish, evenly spread the rest of the cheese across the surface and bake in a 250 degrees oven for 30 minutes or until the top is golden brown and the pie is well baked. (This pie preparation can be done and foiled a day in advance and baked the following day for easy entertaining).

Steamed green figs in coconut milk served with curried fish

5 lbs of green figs (peeled and cut into halves)
2 packs of coconut milk powder
Salt and pepper to taste
Local green seasonings cut-up/blended,
3 diced pimentos
5 cloves garlic, peeled and grated
1 tbsp Golden Ray Cooking Margarine
2 pounds of any fish of choice well seasoned
Curry powder
Ground geera
Oil for frying curry

In a large pot, melt the margarine; add the garlic, seasoning and pimentos and lightly sauté. Add in the green figs and stir, slowly pour in 5 cups of hot water and dissolve in the 2 packs of coconut milk, add the salt and pepper. Cover and cook over a medium flame. Test the green figs by sticking with a fork; the fork should pierce it easily. Lower the heat and let the liquid thicken until the green figs are in a thick creamy sauce. Set aside and prepare the curried fish according to your cooking preferences. Serve the hot curried fish over the steamed green figs.

Tableland food fiesta



Vendors show off their sweets to customers.

Photos by Marika Mohammed



Strawberry plant



Creative food display.



Ladies sell their spicy products at the expo.



A variety of fruits.



The Trinidad Theatre Workshop is a not for profit organization and has long been a flagship for theatre here in Trinidad and Tobago, and indeed for the Caribbean.

Trinidad Theatre Workshop has multiple facets. These are:

- Theatre in Education (T.I.E.)
- School for the Arts Workshops (Children Theatre Workshop, Teen Theatre Studio, New Actors Workshop)
- Productions

• **Theatre in Education**

Theatre in Education also known T.I.E. was started in 1991. The concept of theatre in education (T.I.E.) incorporates the elements of education, theatre, and drama.

The benefits to school children and young people, while interacting as members of the audience or as participants of a TTW T.I.E. Company Project, may be put into four basic components:

1. Social Interaction
2. Content
3. Forms of Expression
4. Use of the media – the language of drama

• **School for the Arts**

The school for the arts has three components which are Children Theatre Workshop, Teen Theatre Studio and New Actors' Workshop. These classes teach basic acting techniques, movement and allow students to engage in fully participatory sessions. The January Cycle has already started. The New Cycle begins in April and May.

New Actors' Workshop - Wednesdays 6 pm to 9 pm - Restarting April 30th - \$1600.00

Children Theatre Workshop - Saturdays 10 am - 1 pm - Restarting May 3rd - \$1200.00

Teen Theatre Studio - Saturday 1 pm - 4 pm - Restarting May 3rd - \$1400.00

Scholarships and deferred payment plans available



Trinidad *Theatre* Workshop

Founded 1959. Derek Walcott, Founder. Albert Laveau, Artistic & Managing Director

Chip chip Jewels of Manzanilla

By Omilla Mungroo

An indigenous delicacy we hardly hear about these days in Trinidad and Tobago is chip chip. I remember as a girl camping at Manzanilla Beach on the east coast of Trinidad, my family would carry utensils of all sizes and types down to the beach when the tide was low – rice strainers, bowls, buckets and shovels, even big bags to “dig for chip chip”.

Around the time between Carnival and Easter, but nearer to Easter time, the tiny mollusc can be found burrowing ferociously into the sand on the shore when the tide ebbed. In some instances you had to dig to find a hole where a batch of them could be found. Exciting shouts of “Ah find ah hole! Look how much! Come and help me dig!” would fill the air whenever somebody found “treasure” as we called it.

Chip chip is family to the oyster and clam. Its soft, tiny boneless body is embedded inside a small shell about one inch in length, with one side of the shell hinged.

These shells can be pried open but when gathered by the buckets to cook, they are washed thoroughly about three or four times to remove all the sand from them, then put into a clean iron pot over medium to high heat for a few minutes. In no time the shells would open up to reveal the soft meat inside. The smell is unique and some may say unpleasant but we loved it, because we knew the final result of the chip chip.

It is said that the Amerindians



Chip Chip on Manzanilla Beach.

who inhabited here enjoyed this tiny sea creature as one of their favorite foods. Shiva Naipaul, brother of the prized author VS Naipaul also wrote a book entitled “The Chip Chip Gatherers” which depicts the wearisome task of gathering the chip chip. However the task is well worth the effort because any Trini who has tasted curried chip chip always finds him or herself back to either Manzanilla or Mayaro to dig for more of it.

At our camps we children were

always looking forward to help “clean” the chip chip. What we were actually doing was just removing the meat from the shells, after it was heated and opened, which we thought was fun, but the grownups did the real cleaning.

To clean and make chip chip ready to cook, you had to take the meat that was removed from the shells and rub them in a sieve or very fine strainer to remove the tiny bags of sand that each one carried, sort of like its means of excretion.

This was the most tedious task for the grownups, but we just couldn’t wait till the chip chip was cooked.

After thoroughly cleaning the chip chip it was rinsed again about two or three times. The sand must all come out, or its exquisite taste would be lost among a sandy crunch. The meat, which always never seemed to be enough was then rinsed again with a squeeze of lime and then seasoned to taste.

We cooked our chip chip either curried, just as you would curry shrimps, or we made chip chip sauce with some of it and called it our own oyster sauce made with chip chip instead.

For those of you familiar with oyster sauce, this is very similar, except for the fact that the meat is much smaller and the taste just a wee bit different. The seasonings used depend on the personal preference of those making it, because pepper is the main “zwing” to a good chip chip sauce.

Take a drive to Manzanilla one of these days. Walk with some utensils to collect some of this delicious sea food, and try to get home soon after or better yet, like all Trinis might, make a cook right on the beach! You will be returning every year about the same time for more!

Editor’s note: Unfortunately, the Manzanilla Beach is closed off at this point due to disasters caused by heavy rains in the area. We do hope the beach is restored to its original state so people can once again enjoy this tourist attraction in Trinidad.

Manzanilla scenes



Bar at Manzanilla Beach.



Shark oil for sale near the beach.



On the way to the beach

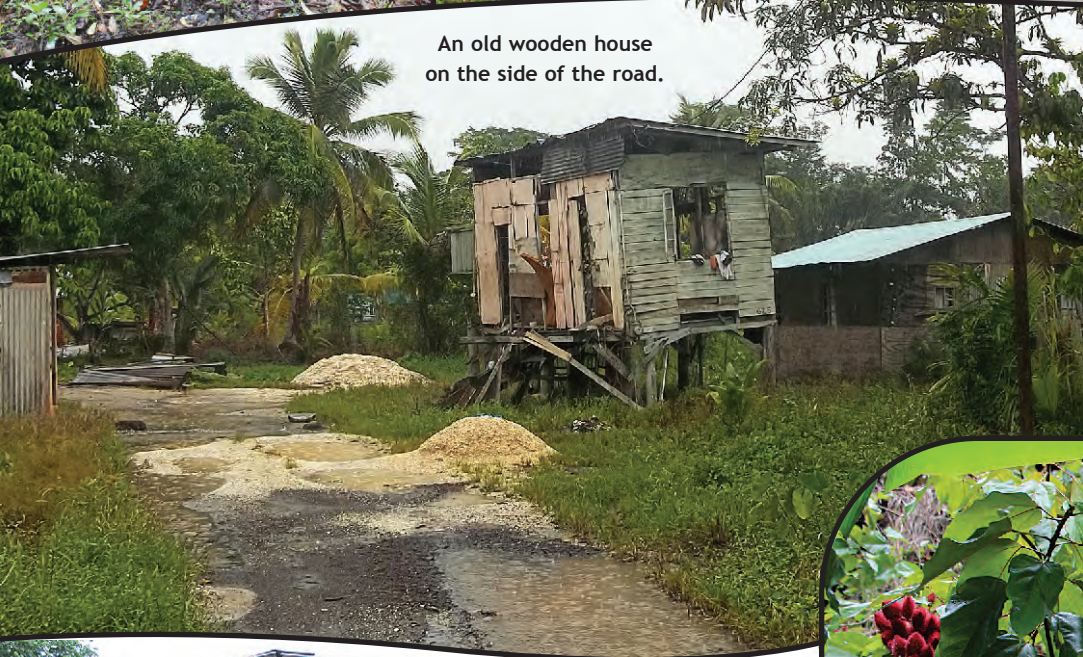
Places



"Falling rocks" danger sign.



Broken bridge rail.



An old wooden house on the side of the road.



Stand pipe on Eastern Main Road, Manzanilla.



Roucou tree on roadside.



Roucou sauce vendor by a fruit stall.



Chickens walking along roadside.



Intersection in Manzanilla.

CEDAR HILL TR

Places

Manzanilla scenes



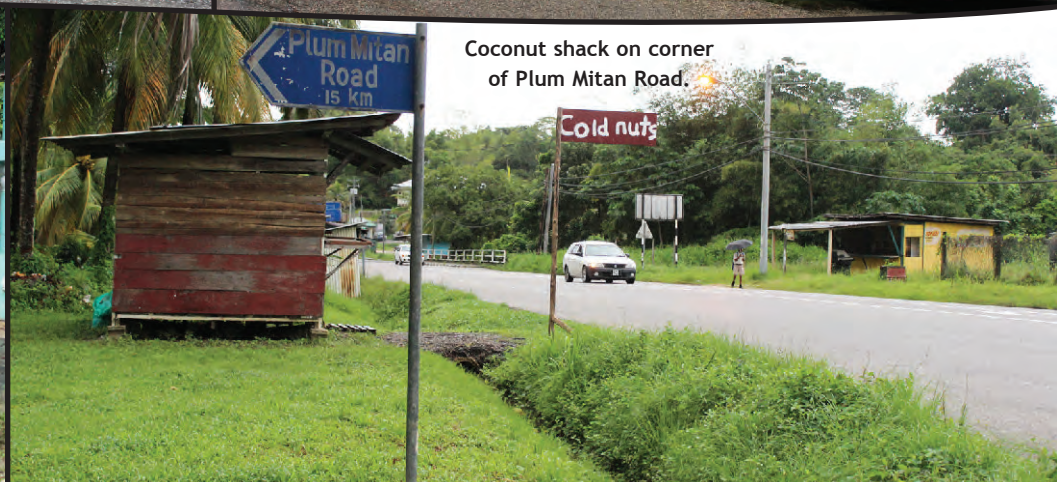
A place to stop and have a meal.



Business place close to Manzanilla Beach.



A resident poses with his vicious rottweiler dog.



Coconut shack on corner of Plum Mitán Road.

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Cruising 'Down de Islands'

By Nadia Ali

Living on a twin island there's so much fun to be had in the water, under the water and on the water. Needless to say, the best on the water fun is definitely cruising to the Bocas Islands which lie between Trinidad and Venezuela and are locally known as "Down de Islands".

The boat we rented allowed eight guests alongside the two crew members to go out for a day cruise. Some took to the sun-kissed deck of the boat, others relaxed under the shade of the canopy and the rest sat in the open sunshine. As the boat slowly pulled out from the marina, the silhouettes of the skyline of Port of Spain dazzled in the morning sunshine.

Once in the open waters, the captain increased the speed churning up thick sea foam that trailed behind the boat. The spray of sea water refreshed our faces, the Caribbean wind blew through our hair and with a flick of a switch the sound of music filled the air as we set sail for our day cruise.

We sailed between huge tankers, small boats with fishermen and chunks of islands. As we passed the abandoned island of Chacachacare (see page 30), the largest of the islands between Trinidad and Venezuela, our captain gave us a brief historical story. He said it is horse-shoe in shape, about 900-acres in size and that it had been used as a whaling station,



Captain of the boat and an adventure seeker.

leper colony and a cotton plantation.

We then continued on the open waters taking in the sights as we headed between the last two islands. The captain then stopped the engine, turned off the music and advised us all to be quiet. Were pirates after us? Was the Loch Ness Monster lurking in the waters below the boat?

"Look!" he said, pointed out to sea, "there's dolphins ahead!" Suddenly, there was a frenzy onboard, we ran onto the deck, others hung over board to catch a glimpse.

"They are coming this way," announced the captain. The boys in our group ran and dived into the water. I wasn't that brave and grabbed a bright orange life-jacket and with a splash hit the water.

There was sheer excitement bobbing up and down in the bottomless, open sea. We were told there were about ten dolphins heading towards us, arching in and out of the water. Bobbing up and down in the waves we could

barely see the approaching fins of the dolphins, whereas the others onboard screamed directions, "Over there! Over there!" Pointing to the left and to the right. The waves rolled in and in them we saw the dolphins smiling at us. It was unbelievable! The dolphins kept a safe distance as they playfully dived under the waves. It was such a thrill and yet a little scary at the same time as we saw them up close. Then they began to swim away.

After watching them swim into the distance, our captain started the engine, switched on the music and we sailed towards a shallow bay area where lunch was served. We swam for a while and then as the sun began to set we began the cruise back to the yacht club. My cousin turned and said to me, "This place is like a paradise!" It had been a very long time since I had last heard of Trinidad being referred to with such high regard. As we sat on the deck of the boat skimming over the sea heading back to the yacht club, it certainly felt like it... paradise!



Swimming with the dolphins.
Photos by Nadia Ali

Chacachacare

By Omilla Mungroo

“I sit and wait, deserted with all my jewels. I lie alone at nights like one drifted apart from incongruous main lands, not sure to which I really belong, but claimed by one; the smaller yet more precious in my sight, from my jetty, where I see lights flickering in the distance, and hear the far away, pulsating rhythms of soca music at Carnival time. I wait for those who will seek adventure, for those who yearn for seclusion, tranquility, even sanctuary when they soak up my salty air. I am a home where no one lives, but a home only to those whose lives are enchanted by my beauty, and to those who taste the roasted foiled fish caught fresh from off my waters... I am Chacachacare. Come to my island!”

Situated about 10 degrees 41 minutes north latitude and 61 degrees 45 minutes west longitude, the island of Chacachacare spreads across only 3.642 square kilometres of land space. It is the western most of the Bocas Islands that belong to Trinidad and Tobago, the others being Monos Island and Huevos Island. It is presently abandoned except for the lighthouse keeper who stays on the island, and can be a perfect paradise and haven for those seeking a short, quiet recluse. After camping with my family on this island for over a period of twenty years, I recommend a visit for those seeking a quiet, peaceful getaway from city life, for history lovers, and for those who just want to rejuvenate.

This tiny island, embossed with solemn history, and filled with extravagant beauty, remains an enigma to its first time visitors and yet, a memory to relive for every subsequent visit. You visit Chacachacare once and feel compelled to return, again, and again and again; the island's strange magic never fading with each visit; its serenity ever drawing you back for more.

The island's disturbing history spans from the early 1500s when on his third voyage, Columbus named it the “Port of Cats” (because it was said to be inhabited by wild cats) until 1984 when the last of the lepers

*Come
to my
island!*

This tiny island,
embossed with solemn
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died and left the place abandoned. It is also said that Columbus called it El Caracol meaning The Snail, because of its shape. Its present name Chacachacare, though, was given by the Amerindians who lived there at the time. The island was used at first as a cotton plantation, then a whaling station, and finally a leper colony. It also served as a base for approximately 1000 US Marines in 1942, who built barracks on the island. Today, some sea-island cotton trees can still be seen scattered on the island.

On the far right side of the island there is a Hindu temple which people say is still used today. Most of the lepers were Hindus so the temple was built for them to have their prayers and rituals done. It is located in such a remote part of the island that people who visit, hardly know it even exists. You can hike from the jetty to go there, if you wish to see it.

The leper asylum ruins can be seen if you hike across from the jetty to the western end of the island. Ruins of the nun's quarters still stand to the eastern side.

Lower down to the south eastern side of the island, there is a pond that is said to be a salt lake, where the deadly Manchineel tree fringes around it. It is said that the Salt Pond was made to combat a mosquito invasion on the island but it is really an entrapment of sea water from the sea. The early inhabitants had tried to extract salt from it, hence its name, the salt pond. We hiked across to find the salt pond during one of our camps on the island, after hearing stories of it from an old fisherman we met there. What a sight it was!

Chacachacare's lighthouse stands on the highest point and the view from there is one of the most panoramic! The journey to the lighthouse, about 3 miles, provides visitors with adventure and excitement. The once paved road is now broken in some areas along the way, but getting there is worth the walk. From every angle atop the lighthouse there is beauty. On some days the mountains of nearby Venezuela, which lies just about 8 miles to the east, can seem so close, they feel almost like home. Visit the lighthouse for yourself and see. It's a joy to experience, all on its own!

For local campers, Chacachacare holds many attractions: hiking, fishing, sea-bathing and crab-catching at certain spots across the island. You can find crabs, iguanas, (the wild cats now extinct, I haven't seen any in all the years we camped there) squirrels, and birds of various species, some from the nearby mainland of Venezuela. Fish like groupers, grunts, parrot fish, pompano, and sometimes shark, can be caught off the waters surrounding the island. During one camp, we caught two lobsters at the Boca Grande. We also saw a stingray feeding early one morning by the jetty.

To get to Chacachacare from the mainland in Trinidad, you have to take a boat-taxi from the boat yard at Island Property Owners Association in Chaguaramas. The trip is 5 miles to Chacachacare, and may take about 45 minutes to get there.

During the Easter weekend, and on Carnival Tuesday or Ash Wednesday, there are several cruises and one-day excursions to Chacachacare. During many of our camps, we have met people who visited Chacachacare for

'Down de Islands'

Photos by Annisa Phillip

The view from
Gasperee Island.



Chacachacare

the first time, on board one of the small cruise ships that made trips there. They are usually interested right away about camping.

The CDA – The Chaguaramas Development Authority is the sole authority for those wishing to camp on the island. You have to obtain a permit if you want to camp on the island. There are no toilets, no changing rooms, and you have to carry everything you need like drinking water, food, etc. If you get on one of the boats like Pier 1 Cruises or the Treasure Queen, most likely you pay for your trip to and from the island, and whatever food, drinks, and entertainment the boat provides. No permission needed for that!

We usually cleaned up as much as we can, before and after setting up camp. So if you plan to camp, please leave the island cleaner than you found it!

The most popular beach in Chacachacare is La Tinta beach. From its shores you can see some of the mountains of Venezuela too. La Tinta is so named because of the black bottom of its sea bed, but the water is very clean and clear. Most visitors prefer to bathe in the Sand Beach to the front of the island on Sanda Bay though. The sea-bed is sandy, and remains shallow a good distance from the shore making it very safe for children.

Snorkeling, fishing, jet skiing, or just chilling out on a yacht like the yachties do... Chacachacare is perfect for more than all that. Come to my island this Easter and see for yourself!



The loading bay in Chaguaramas.



The view from
the pirogue.



Sweet TnT

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