

Home » Miscellaneous, People & Places » Mangoes Galore At Hopkins Mango Fest

Jun 2, 2015
Mangoes Galore At Hopkins Mango Fest



The mango season is one that is highly anticipated; and at last it is finally here. There are a number of succulent and juicy mango varieties in Belize and most, if not all, are loved and enjoyed. The season is abundant and the fruit can be had from even the corner stall. Over the weekend, Duane Moody travelled to Hopkins in the south, where the celebration of the mango was a huge event. The third mango festival turned out to be a fun event.

Duane Moody, Reporting

"Julie Mango" – the popular soca jam from Byron Lee and the Dragoners describes best how the tropical fruit is a favorite in the region. The "slippers mango," "black mangoes," number eleven and even apple mango; the juicy fruit is found naturally all over. It is one of the most cultivated fruits in the tropics and locally it is consumed by most Belizeans, primarily during this time of the year when there is an abundance of the fruit across the country. But many would tell you that the sweetest and most succulent mangoes are from Hopkins and annually, tourists—both local and international—would travel to the southern village for a taste of "dem juicy mangoes."

The third edition of the Mango Festival was held this year after a two year hiatus. It is now organized by a revamped Hopkins chapter of the Belize Tourism Industry Association and Chairman, Anthony Marsico, says that the festival provides a unique and diverse cultural experience.



Anthony Marsico, Chairman, B.T.I.A. Hopkins
"The last time we had the mango festival was in 2012; it was a little smaller. And then the Hopkins B.T.I.A. went incognito for a couple of years—I guess—is what I would say. And so when we brought it back this year, Hopkins B.T.I.A. reformed in November 2014 and one of the first things we wanted to do was bring back the festival that would highlight all of the cultures that we have around our area of Hopkins and a lot of the things that Hopkins has to offer that we think that are unique to Belize. Basically, I always say, if you draw a ten mile circle around Hopkins, we've got three very alive cultures—Maya, Garifuna and Creole."

Traditionally, the fruit is picked straight from the tree, peeled and eaten; salt and pepper would also go great with a good bag full of green, "ton" and even ripe mango." But at the festival, entrepreneurs put their twist to the fruit making jams, jellies and even cakes.



Kathy McKay, Owner, Oasis Fitness
"We are at the Mango Fest featuring some healthier things of smoothies, featuring mangoes as well as a taste of Belize which includes sourp, pineapples and bananas. We also have some fresh mangoes and coconut muffins and cakes with the Oasis Fitness Booth. And then we have another one with Lucky Lobster and we are doing more savory dishes with the mangoes. We've got hotdogs with mango chili on it; sausages with sweet mango glaze or spicy mango glaze and also smoked turkey legs with mango."

One of the booths attracting much attention was that of super chef, Sean Kuylen. Kuylen took the time out from his Sittee River home and restaurant, bringing out his mobile food truck. As unorthodox and creative as he always is with his cooking, Kuylen served up pork skewers with mango glaze, fritters and even mango smoothies.



Sean Kuylen, Chef
"I excited to see the first lee blossom off of the mango tree about a month ago and I pack that up on the side and make it get ripe. So the green mango, we make a smoothie, a lassie, like an Indian dish. We put some yogurt and we blended it with lime and mint. Then we made green mango chutney. We put cinnamon, clove, lotta love, brown sugar, spices cayenne and I pair that with a pork skewer. And this week, the mangoes get ripe, so we make mango juice now. We make...a dip, chocolate. Yes, I could take this trailer to a Belize City festival or anything, but this is aguyu bra, this dah home. So when I see the sea and I see my people and originally, I dah mi musician and I see Garifuna Collective; I ketch haras, like ah wah weinha and thing right. (laughs)"

...And then there were also information booths and fun games on the grounds.



Selvin Roches, Hamanasi
"One of the things that we try to do is our green team main goal is sustainability and like in the purchasing section, whatever goods we purchase, we have to ensure that the packaging material is recyclable because that's one of the big things that the green team does. We recycle; reuse and we educate people within Hopkins village. For example at this event, we have our green team booth, we have our board over there that has information on recyclable materials, what recycling is and stuff like that."

Hopkins is readily becoming a major tourism destination for the country, while maintaining its uniqueness and warmth. While the focus for the B.T.I.A. is to have pocket tourism in the area, the event has economic benefits for the village.



Anthony Marsico
"It brings everybody together and from the surrounding villages—Maya Center, Sittee River—it brings everybody here in one spot to showcase what they got. All the different foods; all the different crafts; all the different activities that we have for everybody and this year, not so much of an even for tourists, but next year, it will be on the calendar earlier and it will be a reason for people to come down and sped late May in Hopkins."

Duane Moody
"So it is really an economic booster for the village?"

Anthony Marsico
"We see it as an economic boost. Next year, I'm sure we are going to grow to a two-day event. We are going to have a lot more music for two days."

Live cultural acts were held throughout the day and the festival concluded with a two-hour concert by the Garifuna Collective as they head to their US tour. Duane Moody for News Five.

Be Sociable, Share! Social media sharing icons for Twitter, Facebook, Email, StumbleUpon, LinkedIn, and others.

Viewers please note: This Internet newscast is a verbatim transcript of our evening television newscast. Where speakers use Kriol, we attempt to faithfully reproduce the quotes using a standard spelling system.

Advertisement for Great Belize Productions Ltd. with the text 'Saving money brightens your day :)' and a 'Begin' button.

Leave a Reply form with fields for Name (required), Mail (will not be published) (required), a text area for the comment, a CAPTCHA Code*, and a Submit button.

Volkswagen Touareg advertisement featuring a luxury SUV, starting at \$46,745, with a 'Find a Dealer' button.

- News Stories for: 06/02/2015
List of news stories including: Tropic Air Plane Goes Down, Helicopters Were Just Passing Through; No Need for Alarm, Petrocaribe Used To Bail CPBL?, etc.

- Home
GB Research Center
News Five
Gimme Five
About Us
Video Production
Featured Films
Store
Contact Us
News in Images

Calendar for October 2016 showing days of the week and dates.

FIXitUP FlexiLOANS advertisement with a 'Plan to Improve Your Home?' graphic and a list of participating hardware stores.

WATCH VIDEO GB RESEARCH CENTER advertisement with a play button icon.

GB Research Center from Great Belize Productions Ltd. on Vimeo.

CHANNEL 5 POLL: Do you support a prolonged strike by the BNTU until their demands are met? Yes/No options and a Vote button.

Mailing List Subscription form with fields for Name and Email, and a Subscribe button.

- Recent Comments
Archives