

# A Jamaican *Christmas*

"Mek Di Christmas Ketch Yuh In a Good Mood, Mek Di Christmas Ketch Yuh Feeling Fine. Put On Yuh Dancing Shoes and Come With Mi Tonight, Wi Gonna Rock Til Broad Daylight." A popular Jamaican Christmas song by HomeT. Christmas in Jamaica is one of the most beautiful times of the year. Christmas is about celebrating Christ, thanksgiving, gifts, food, and family and friends.

Anticipation starts brewing during November for the very festive season. With the fresh Christmas breeze brazing the mornings and cooling down as night falls. Christmas lights to brighten houses, whitewashed sidewalks, fresh Day.

## **Tree Lighting**

In the major towns, the city councils usually organize tree lighting. This involves switching lights on a large tree or a tree-like structure in the center of the town. Firework displays, the singing of carols, the delivery of Christmas messages from Local Government officials, and the distribution of gifts sometimes accompany the tree lighting.

## **Gifts**

Americans have their celebrations of Thanksgiving, while in Jamaica, Christmas is usually the time of giving. Around the island, companies, politicians, and charities choose this time to have treats for the kids in lower and middle-class communities, workplaces of gift exchange otherwise called "pixie."

## **Gran' Market**

Gran market is the grand celebration that takes place on Christmas Eve from the dust of dawn until Christmas Day. In all the central towns of each Jamaica parish, streets will be packed with vendors and customers getting their last "Christmas Shopping" in. The roads are usually only for pedestrians and music at every corner for patrons to shop and dance their way into Christmas Day.

### **Church Service**

Christians in Jamaica celebrate the birth of Christ by having a short service on Christmas Morning. This service usually involves a short prayer, praise, and worship and a short word surrounding the birth of baby Jesus. This celebration is to keep in remembrance the reason for the season.

### **Christmas Food**

For breakfast, most Jamaicans have the traditional meal of Ackee and Saltfish or Callaloo with Fry Dumplings with plantains, and a cup of Eggnog garnished with cinnamon and nutmeg. Christmas Dinner is the event of the day that most people anticipate. At this time, homes will be jam-packed with family and friends or even by-passers, tables filled with food such as Glazed Ham, Oxtails, Curry Goat, Beef, Fish, Bake or Fry Chicken, Gungo Rice & Peas, Vegetables, and famous Sorrel drink topped off with the Christmas fruit/black cake.

### **Boxing Day**

the day after Christmas is called "Boxing Day" in Jamaica. This name originates from tradespeople in the olden getting gifts from their employers in boxes known as a Christmas boxes congratulating them for a year of work well. Today, Boxing Day is observed as a public holiday. It is when families go out to have fun and celebrate with relatives and friends since Christmas when most people were in the comfort of their homes.