

Ochi Seafood Festival A Hit

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Writer: Janet Silvera

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WESTERN BUREAU:

One of the things we know is that people love food and will travel miles for good food. This was evidenced by the hundreds who turned out for the Hah-R-Mony Entertainment Ocho Rios Seafood Festival on Emancipation Day at the Turtle River Park in St Ann.

From all walks of life, they had one thing in common an appreciation for seafood in a variety of forms.

Sponsored by the Jamaica Tourist Board, the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports, Jamaica Public Service Company Limited and the St Ann Development Company, the man touting the importance of gastronomy, Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett, said it was now Ocho Rios' turn to have a signature event capable of holding its own against any food festival in the country.

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Candice Grant poses with Javion Plunkett.

Addressing the group, which consisted of families, interspersed with several visitors to the island, the tourism minister reiterated his plan to establish Jamaica as a prime gastronomy destination.

"This is so that the world can come here to sample all types of foods. In fact, the international gastronomy market is approximately US\$150 billion. Eighty-eight per cent of the people who travel the world travel primarily for food experiences," he stated, while congratulating the event's founder, Garwin Davis and his newest partner, Hochimin Castillo.

Now in its 10th year, the festival started simply because there was no signature local calendar event, Davis noted.

"The entire equation changed in 2007, when we managed to pull a crowd in excess of 10,000 persons, and that was the inaugural year," said Davis.

Food was merely one aspect of the event. It was a day filled with entertainment, which started as early as 11 a.m., with several presentations by the Hah-R-Mony dancers, drummers and steel pan players, culminating with the likes of gospel artistes Kevin Downswell, Jodian Pantry and Sandra Brooks.

Festival song winner Eric Donaldson and dancehall artist D'Angel, completed a list of impressive performers who changed the course of the event in the late evening.

janet.silvera@gleanerjm.com