



ABUNDANCE

By: Renee Stewart



Nutritional Information	
Energy Values, kCal/kJ per 100g	311/1315
Protein g/100g	8.7
	3.1

ALLERGENS IN BOLD:
Contains GLUTEN

ABUNDANCE

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Introduction

Abundance is more than just a celebration of food; it is a reflection of heritage, identity, and the stories that bind generations together. As a third-generation Black British Caribbean, I have often felt a sense of cultural displacement. Yet, food has always grounded me, serving as a comforting reminder of where I come from.

This publication is an exploration of how food within Black British Caribbean communities transcends mere sustenance, acting as a vessel for preserving identity and tradition by weaving together personal narratives, archival imagery, and visual storytelling. Abundance aims to honour the richness of Caribbean culture while inviting readers to reflect on their own connections to food and heritage.

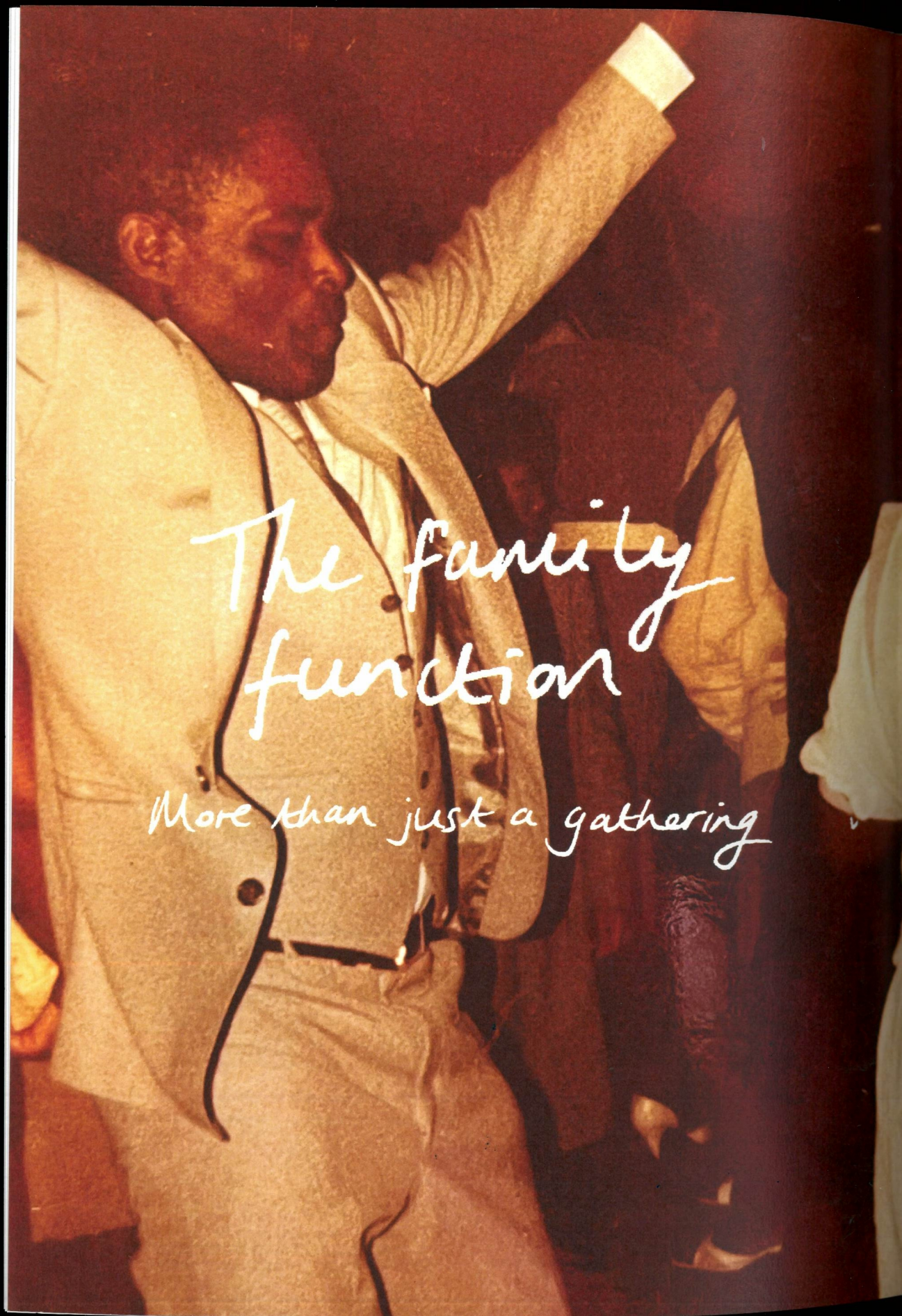
Through these intimate conversations and intergenerational reflections, I hope to shed light on how cuisine serves not just as a bridge between past and present but as a powerful means of self-expression and belonging.

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The family function

More than just a gathering

The family function is more than a social event; they are long-standing memories, a gesture of love and a symbol of community. These events create unforgettable moments that nurture a deep sense of belonging to one's identity.

They are spaces where elders would share stories and wisdom, where the familiar sound of dominoes banging against the table echoes far and wide, where bonds between cousins are strengthened, and debates between aunties over whose mac and cheese is the best fill the kitchen.

Whether it's birthday parties, weddings, BBQs, christenings or Sunday dinners, food serves as the unifying thread that brings people together at these gatherings.

POST CARD

THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE



nanny



Sandra

grandma's house



Q: If you were to reflect on Grandma's house and how her home was a space where everyone would come together, what stood out to you the most in those moments?

When it came to my mum's house, my God! Everybody goes there for the food. And food was just...it just brought everyone together.

Nanny : ...In my days, your doors were open to others so everyone was welcomed. Just the smell alone would bring people into the house, and when my mum cooked, she cooked for the whole community.

Renee : Yeah, I remember Grandma's food it was so good. When we were near her house, you could already smell the food from outside. Then, as soon as I come in she would say

grab food from the kitchen

Nanny : She used to throw parties too. People were there for the parties because of her food and when there was none left, they would scrape the bottom of the pot! They would literally scrape the bottom of the pot, believe you me!

Nanny : But like you know, even with these events like parties, christenings and weddings, people almost try to outdo each other. There is a competitiveness around who can provide the most or who has the nicest food, so you have to talk about the competitiveness within Caribbean culture.

Renee : You're so right. Even myself sometimes I compare and think "I remember so-and-so's barbecue from last year and the food was good, etc." I guess there is this unconscious competitive behaviour and the memories of those events stick with you.

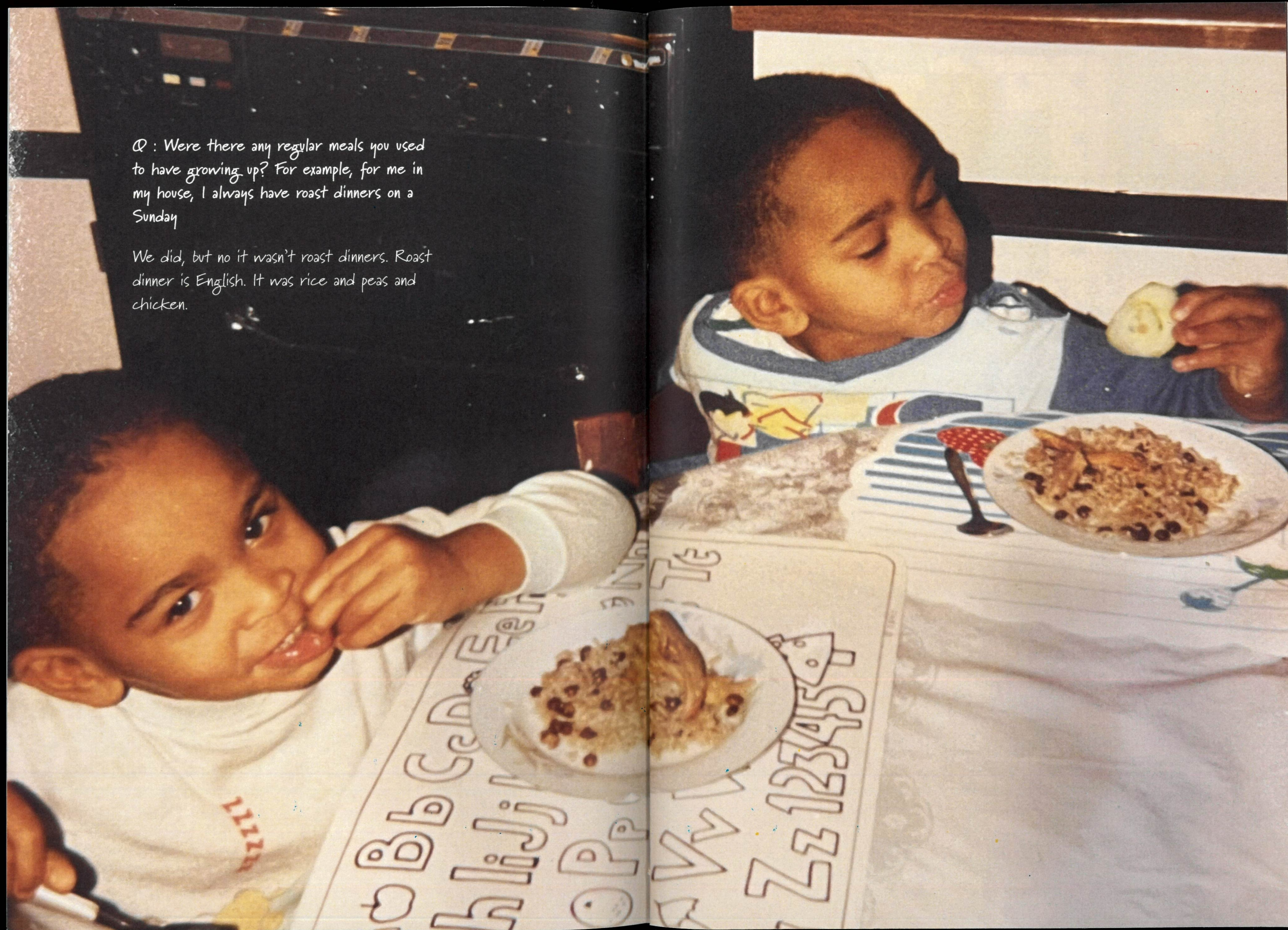
Nanny : yes its true!

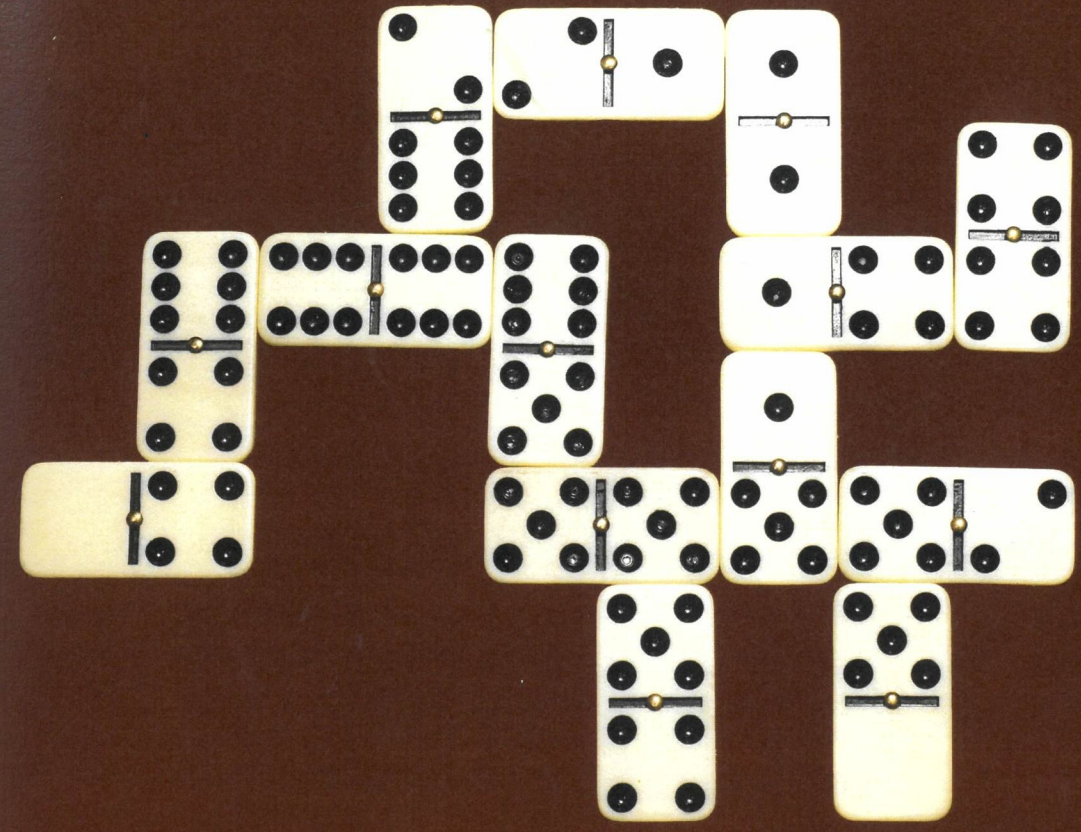
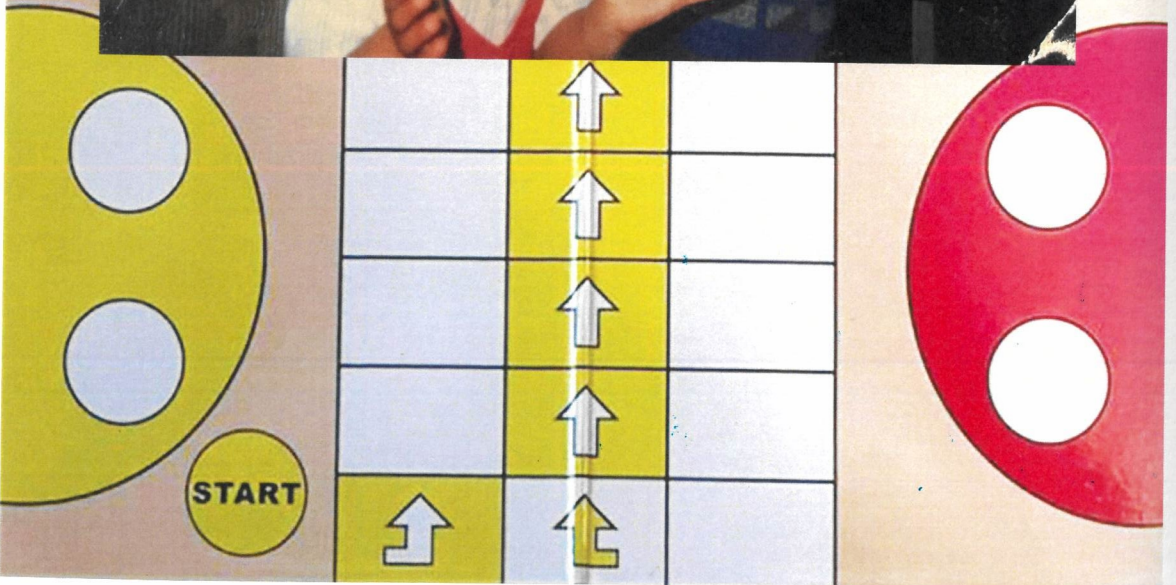
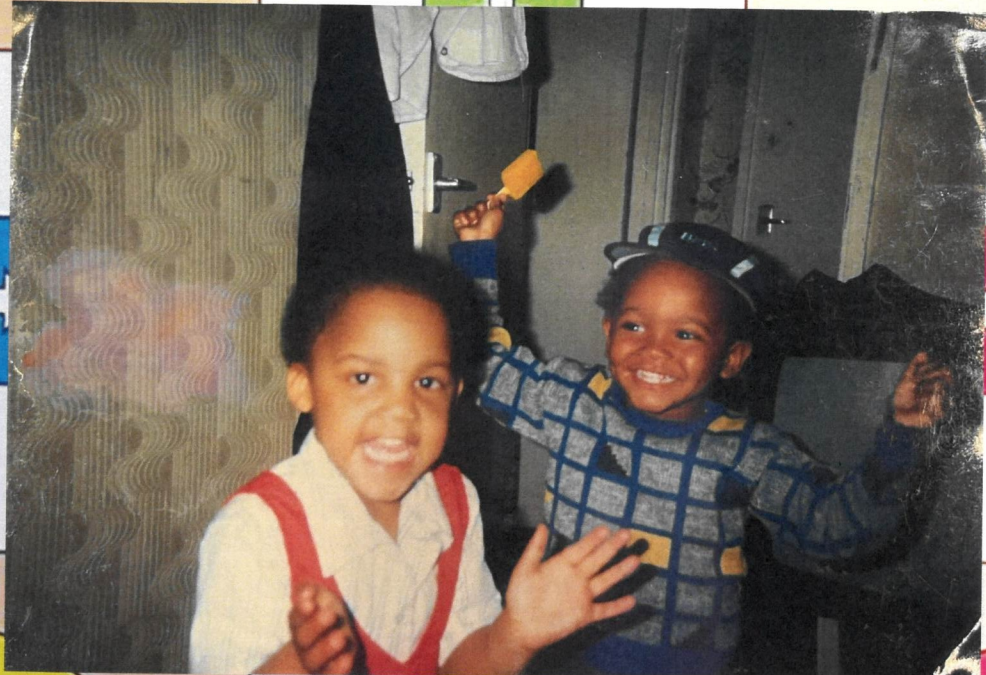
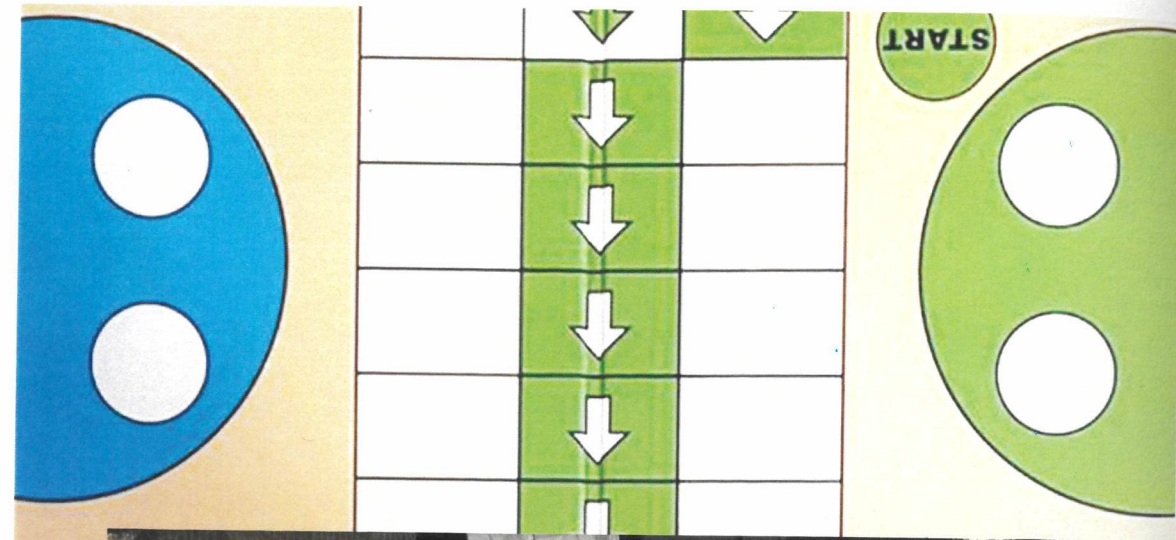
But when it comes to events you have to be hospitable. You always have to provide. Its just a part of the culture.



Q : Were there any regular meals you used to have growing up? For example, for me in my house, I always have roast dinners on a Sunday

We did, but no it wasn't roast dinners. Roast dinner is English. It was rice and peas and chicken.





Q : Are there any other things that stick with you from Grandma's house in terms of the environment itself?

Like, because I always remember, there was always a lot going on at Grandma's house.

Nanny : I mean, everyone would just come together as a family. Then you have some food, there might be music playing in the background, and my dad would be sitting in the living room watching horse racing.

Nanny : Playing dominoes! Oh my God!

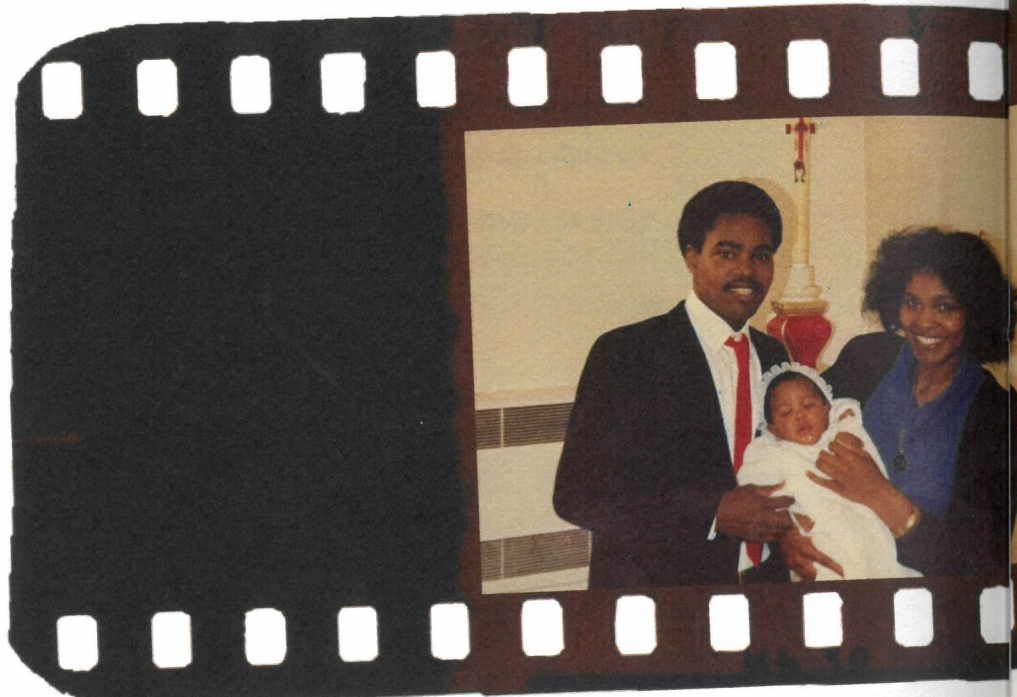
Renee : All I would hear is a smacking on the table and arguing!

Nanny : Oh my God. The arguments! Those arguments were the best.

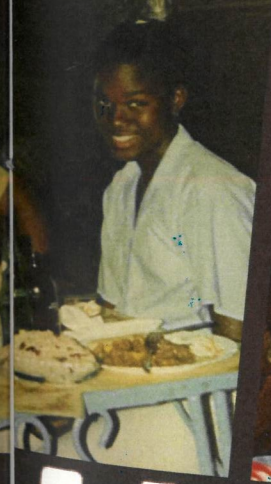
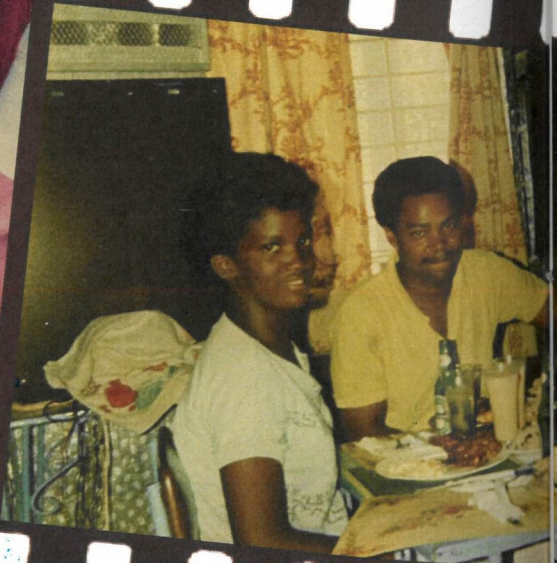
Those arguments were like, You're banned, you're banned! You're not coming back on the table!

And then when you're playing Ludo as well, lord have mercy. The Ludo! It's the crying, the tears, the laughter. Those were some memories.

My dad's christening! →

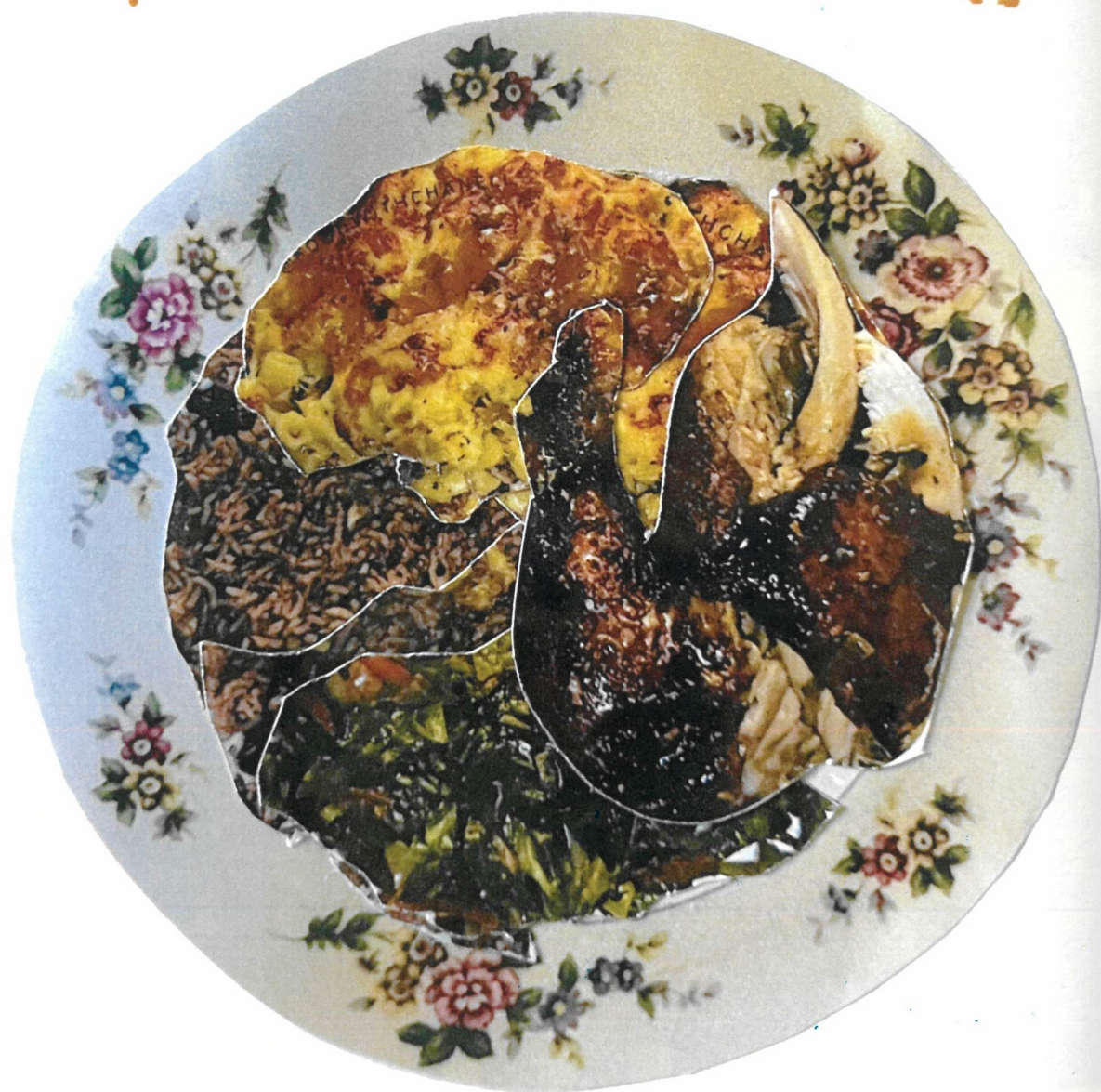


← My twin uncles
3rd birthday



Nine nights

Healing open wounds



A nine-night originally referred to as "ninth night" is a wake that celebrates the life of the deceased, before the person's funeral and burial.

This cultural practice is said to come from the traditional Jamaican belief that the journey from this world to the next is not complete until nine nights after the death of the body. A malevolent ghost or "duppy" of a deceased person might linger after death, inhibiting its old home or exacting revenge on those who have mistreated it. Hence, the ninth day is a way to permanently and positively transition the deceased's spirit into the afterlife by celebrating and respecting the life they lived with their loved ones.

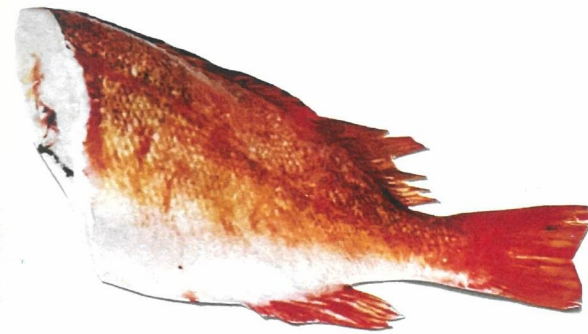
Nine nights involve remembering the individual through sharing stories, singing, dancing, drinking, and most importantly eating food which is provided in abundance to everyone from family, friends, and strangers.

The most central part of this funerary tradition is food, as it is used as a way to console family and friends during a time of mourning. For some cultures, this practice may not be significant, but in Caribbean culture, having food at nine nights and even after the deceased person's funeral is essential. It is believed that a warm meal can not only support in alleviating feelings of grief but can also be an appreciation of the person who has passed, especially if they were a good cook!

Typically, food for this event must be cooked by the family of the deceased for the attendees of the nine nights, but as Jamaican communities have migrated worldwide, the nine-night has adapted to new environments and this idea has slightly changed. It is now commonly practiced for the family's relatives and friends to bring food instead, as some people believe this places less burden on the family.

While specific dishes vary, common staple foods include fried fish or curry goat, white rice, hard-dough bread or bammy. Traditionally, this food would be set up on a table for the deceased, and no one would be allowed to eat from the table before midnight, as it is believed that the spirit passes through the party at this time to say goodbye and have a final meal before leaving this world.

good food





Libations

Drinks are also a core part of this tradition, particularly Jamaican rum. The use of rum has many different functions such as purifying the home from duppies to raising the spirits of the attendees. However, a common use of the drink at this event is called a libation. A libation is a ceremonial pouring of a liquid, alcoholic or non-alcoholic, to pay homage to the deceased. Libations are often performed as a way to connect with the deceased spirit and show respect to them.

Music Music Music

Lastly, nine nights wouldn't be complete without music as music helps to create a festive atmosphere and remember the deceased's life through gospel songs, hymns and even music they enjoyed. It is a powerful medium to honour the deceased and console the grieving.

For some families, specifically descendants of the Maroon tribe, Kromanti drums would also be played on nine nights. Kromanti drumming is a significant cultural practice of the Jamaican maroons, particularly in communities like Moore Town and Charles Town.

It involves specific drum styles and rhythms played during ceremonies, dances, and songs to invoke a connection and communication with ancestral spirits. Whether it is traditional hymns or Kromanti drumming, music plays an integral part in sending the person's spirit into the other world.



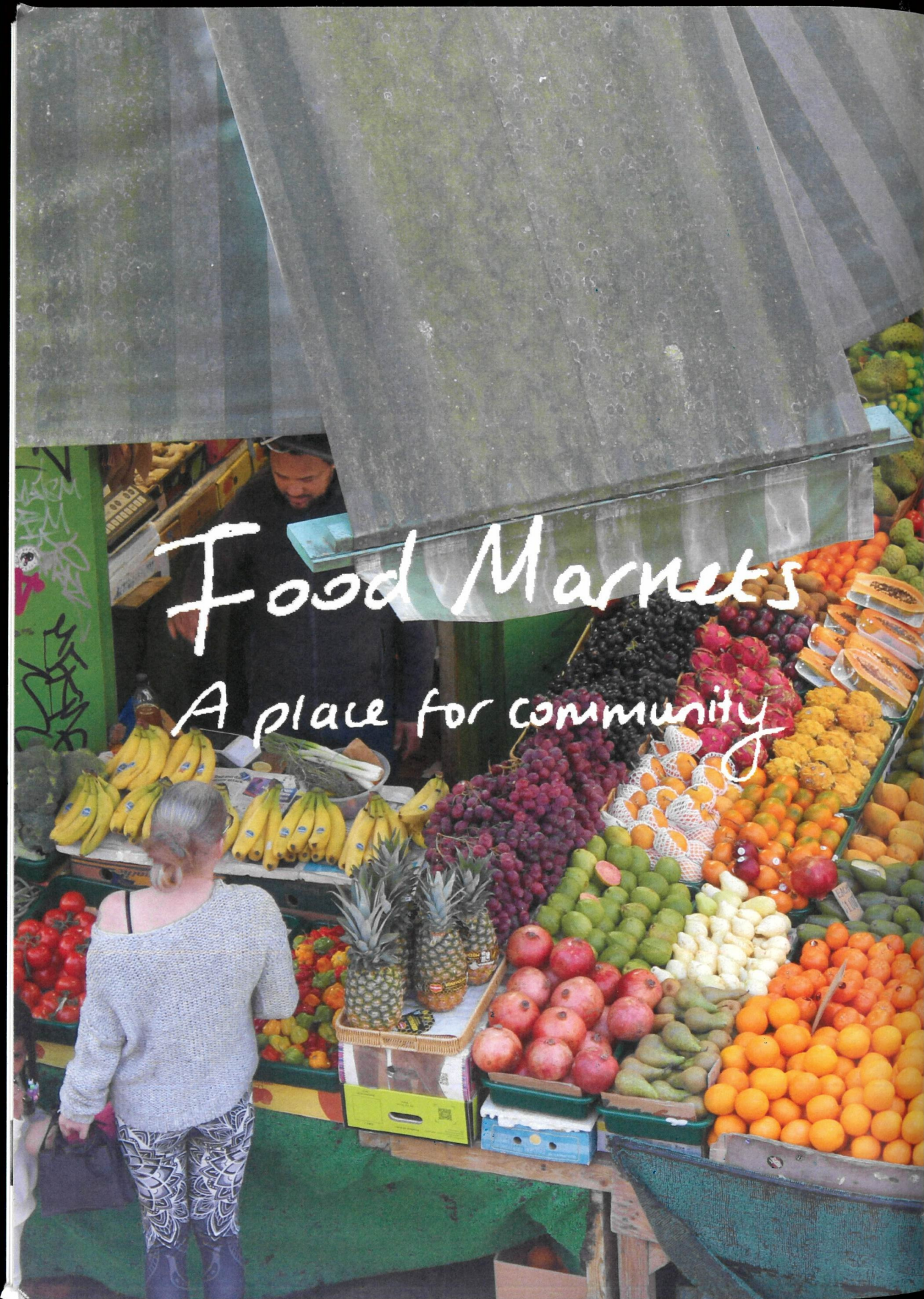


To conclude, nine night traditions are a vibrant blend of joyous celebration and deep-rooted superstition, reflecting the unique spirit of Caribbean culture. These rituals serve as a way to honour both life and death, demonstrating our special approaches to mourning and remembrance. Even though many Caribbeans may not fully grapple with the deeper meanings behind these practices, they continue to be cherished and passed down through generations.



" Don't cook rice or touch rice for seven days...they say when you leave rice over 'duppy put they hand inna it!' "

-my superstitious grandmother



Food Markets

A place for community

Food markets are more than just places to pick up your favourite fruits or store cupboard essentials; they are hubs of connection and familiarity. These spaces invite you to bounce from stall to stall, be welcomed by your favourite shopkeepers who know your order off by heart while lugging around your shopping trolley that's on its last legs.

Although these spaces have changed over time, the community remains the same.

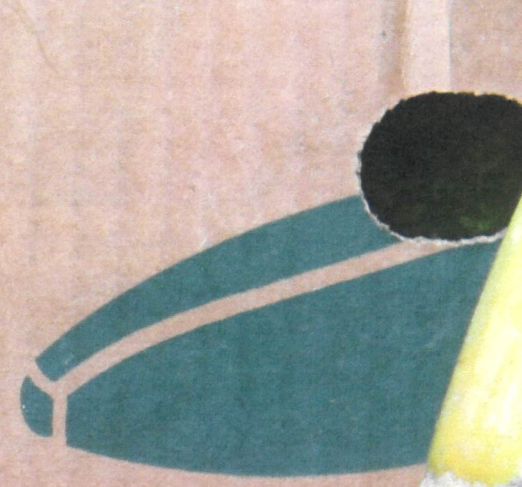
These conversations aim to explore and celebrate the spirit of community that lives within the market stalls of Brixton, a location filled with history, where stories are exchanged over fresh produce and bonds begin to form between strangers. Reminding us that markets are not only about buying food but also nurturing connections and conversation.

PLANTAINS

PREMIUM PLANTAIN

PREMIUM PLANTAIN

Plantain





Abraham

Q : So where are you from and when did you first open up the shop?

Abraham : I am from Sierra Leone, and basically before I opened somebody else used to sell here, so we bought the shop from them, and we have been here for over nine years now.

Q : Why do you own a store selling African and Caribbean food? Why do you feel that having a store like this in Brixton is important?

Abraham : Because these are the communities that dominate Brixton, so it makes sense to sell these foods, you know.

Anonymous customer 1 : Yes, there have been West Indian people in Brixton for a long, long, long time, until they sold off most of the markets. May I tell you, from thy kingdom come, there have been lots of black people in Brixton market, but it has changed a lot now.

Renee: That's true, it has changed a lot since I was young.

Q : Would you say that food has been used as a way to formulate community here?

Yes, because everybody needs Caribbean food. Everybody needs it now, so it's more, it's high in demand. But prices are increasing because of the market, the import rates are higher, that's why I say everything is going up.

Q : Have you been able to build strong relationships with the locals and regular customers over the years?

Yeah, yeah, definitely. It's a lot. It's been a build-up. If you come here on Friday or Saturday you can't come here because it's packed! It's always packed here.

Anonymous customer 2 : Yeah, we love coming to him.

Abraham : So you see, it's busy.. I won't lie to you; the Caribbean community really support me here. I will not lie; if I say otherwise, I will be ungrateful.

The problem is that you have to realise that they don't look after the Caribbean people in this country. When it comes to food, many of these shops have to close because they don't treat them well, even though these are the people who spend money on their products.

If you treat them badly, you're out of the map. They'll come through and say, 'Listen, I don't want this food, I'm not coming here again, no more'. So, that's why it's essential to look after everybody.







Econ

BLUE VERVAIN £25

HOODIA £30

Q : So, when did you first open up this business?

Econ : In the year 2015

Renee : Oh wow, you've been here for a long time

Econ : Ah no, that's when I started the business. I've been here in Brixton for...this November would be three years.

Q And what encouraged you to start a business like this in the first place?

Econ : Um, I lost my mother to a disease that I feel like was reversible. So now I feel like helping people get rid of things they don't have to live with, you know? And I also started off my journey with diabetes and I reversed that. I've always wanted to show people how I did it as well. But then losing my mother was kind of like the catalyst, the push that made me want to try to help others.

Renee : Where are you from, by the way?

Econ : I'm from Nigeria, both parents.

Q How did you learn about herbal and holistic practices, and why is it important to you? What connects you to it?

Econ : I think the creator, you know. I believe that everyone has a calling, and most people don't listen to their calling. Some people ignore their calling, but you're put on the earth to do something, and it will become clearer to you what you're supposed to do.

So I just do my best and I think the creator does the rest after that. And to answer your question, everything is self-taught. I taught myself and Dr. Sebi inspired me. Without him teaching the way he taught, I wouldn't have learned the way I learned. So he inspired me to look at things a bit deeper than the Western way of looking at things.

EAT TO
LIVE
NOT TO
DIE

**ALKALINE POCKET
NUTRITION
GUIDE**
INCLUDES 10 RECIPES

A VISUAL CREATION OF DR. SEBASTIAN'S NUTRITION GUIDE

Q When it comes to alkaline foods, why is it the best way to go and to have a healthier lifestyle?

You know, alkaline foods or electric foods are for everyone. So in order to bring everything up and balance everything, we need electric foods. Carbonates, phosphates, iodides, and bromides. Scientifically, these are foods the human body needs.

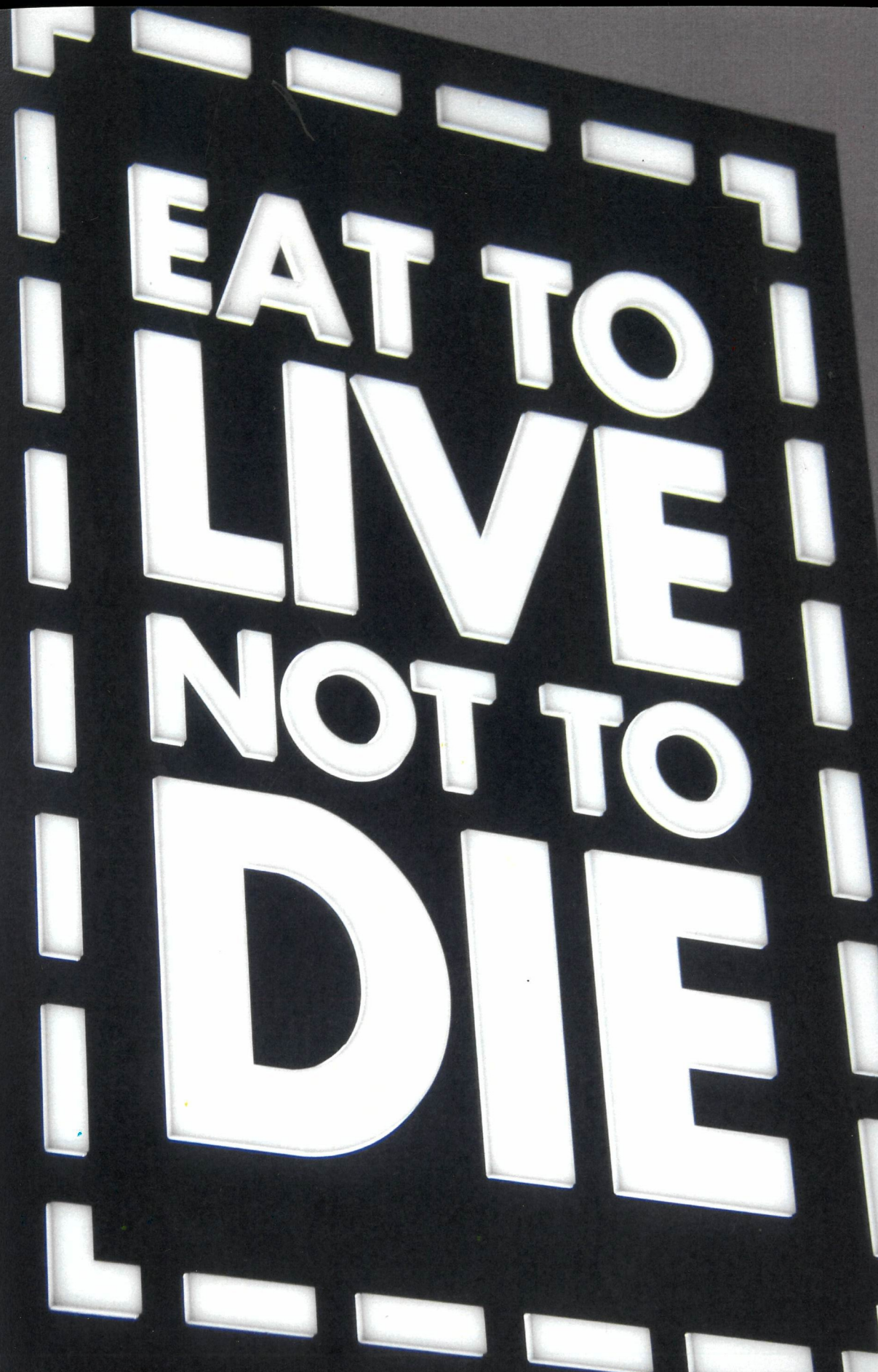
Most people will eat something and say, "Oh, I like it, it tastes nice, but you should be saying that before I eat this, I know that this will nourish my bones. Because I could prepare you some mushrooms with the same taste as your favourite chicken store, you wouldn't know the difference unless I told you. If I didn't tell you and I made you eat it, you wouldn't know the difference. I can make it crunchy, I can make it chewy, I can make it the texture that you're used to. That's the power of a chef if he knows what he's doing.

Q : My last question to you would be, have you felt a larger community by having your shop in this area? Do you feel that food and herbs help foster community?

Yeah, music as well because I didn't start off here. I started outside the Iceland in Brixton. I used to play a lot of music and the music would draw in the crowd.

So before I even talk to you about herbs, the energy has been generated off the back of music. This is a universal language.

So this is what's happened, you know? We've cultivated community through music, herbs, knowledge, wisdom and understanding. All of that.



Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank the people who contributed to this publication and allowed me to share their stories.

A special thank you to both of my grandparents for providing beautiful archival images that capture the richness of our culture and the lives they have lived.

I am especially grateful to my nan, Sandra Burton, who supported me throughout this project. Our many conversations about food and her personal experiences have been invaluable.

I would also like to thank Abraham and Econ, who are local business owners in Brixton, for taking the time to speak with me and continuing to provide to the community. Your insights and stories have helped enrich this project and add meaningful depth to this work.

