



A Lunch to Remember

During my first year on the island, I had an experience so unbelievable and strange that I get **goose bumps** just thinking about it. A new friend invited us to a meal at his house to celebrate an Indian festival. When he said there'd be cabri massalé, one of my favourite Creole dishes, I said 'yes' without hesitation.

Driving to our friend's house, I **could tell** that this wouldn't be the simple lunch meal I'd **expected**. As we turned into his street, we saw over a hundred people at the house, dressed in all the **colours of the rainbow**. After kissing and being introduced to dozens of people, I walked around the garden and watched the **feast** being prepared. The meat was extra fresh. In fact, I got to witness my very first **slaughter** of live goats, using knives taller than the people who carried them. The knives were so **sharp**, it took less than a second.

The men cut up the meat, cooking it in giant pots over a wooden fire pit. The smell of **curry leaves**, cumin and **cloves** filled the air. Meanwhile, the women got to work lighting **candles** in a **shrine** decorated with flowers, coconut shells and fruit peels. I was so concentrated on discovering all the new **smells** and sights around me that time passed quickly. Soon, I looked up to see two men wearing robes. While the crowd around them sung and chanted in Tamil, the men took turns walking, and even jumping on the **blades** of the giant knives that I'd seen earlier. Even though the knives were incredibly sharp, the men came off the knives **without a scratch**. But the craziest part of the day **was yet to come**.

After lunch, our friend laid out an **offering** for his ancestors. There was of course plenty of rice, **beans** and goat meat. But also a can of coke and a bottle of whisky, his ancestors' favourites. Then, our friend started chanting and entered a trance state. I was invited to sit in front of him. At first I couldn't understand what he was saying, because I was expecting him to speak Creole. Soon, I **realised** that he was actually speaking Hebrew to me, the language of my grandparents. In fact, his voice sounded exactly like my grandfather! Over the next 10 minutes, he told me things that only my family would know about me, and gave me **advice** about a problem I'd been having. When the conversation ended, my friend **snapped out of** the trance and went back to speaking Creole. He had no memory of what had just happened.





Vocabulary

goose bumps - chair de poule
I could tell - j'ai compris que
to expect - s'attendre
colours of the rainbow - tous les couleurs
feast - festin

slaughter - abattage
sharp - aiguisé
curry leaves - kalou pilé
cloves - clous de girofle
candles - bougies

shrine - autel
smells - les odeurs
blades - les lames
without a scratch - sans blessure
was yet to come - était à venir

offering - offrande
beans - grains
to realise - se rendre compte
advice - conseil
to snap out of - sortir de

