

SPICE OF THE MONTH

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June's spice is jerk seasoning!

In *Motherland: A Jamaican Cookbook* (available for checkout from your Library!), author Melissa Thomas wrote, "Ask a non-Jamaican to name a Jamaican dish and chances are that they will say jerk..."

The piquant spice blend — often rubbed directly on meat or mixed with vinegar, to create a tart paste that works as a marinade — is as ubiquitous to the island nation as the image of its blue skies and endless beaches. Aficionados say the meat must be smoked over pimento wood to be considered authentic.

The origins of preparing jerk are, according to Thomas, a tribute to human ingenuity and anti-slavery sentiment. During British colonization of the Jamaican Islands, the indigenous Taíno population taught Africans who had escaped from Spanish enslavement how to cook meat in covered pits, after it had been salted and spiced as a method of preservation. This minimized the smoke, which in turn reduced the risk of detection and capture.



Jerk spice blends are deeply personal creations, varying between cooks and depending on personal tastes, availability, and family traditions. Almost all the blends include allspice, scotch bonnet chilies, salt, and acid (vinegar and/or lime juice) as ingredients.

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All books listed here are available to check out from the Croton Free Library!


Our sources:

- *Motherland: A Jamaican Cookbook*, by Melissa Thompson
- "A Brief History of Jamaican Jerk" from *Smithsonian Magazine*:
smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/brief-history-jamaican-jerk-180976597/

The recipes in this kit are:

- Jerk Butternut Squash from *Motherland: A Jamaican Cookbook* by Melissa Thompson (p. 96)
- Parade Day Jerk Chicken from *The Last OG Cookbook* (p. 86)

See our cookbook collection (both on the shelves and online via the Libby app!) for additional info & recipes.



What did you make with your jerk seasoning?
Post it on social media with the hashtag
#CrotonSpiceClub and tag us, or send a photo &
description to reference@crotonfreelibrary.org!

Jerk seasoning purchased from Penzey's Spices.