

Welches Fest

Every year for at least two (2) to three (3) weeks prior to the Whit Monday holiday, one small and tightly-knit community in Anguilla transform its daily activities and physical appearance in preparation for hosting one of the biggest cultural extravaganzas in Anguilla. The Welches Village Fest captures the spirit of “jollification” where villagers and other supporters work together from no later than 5:00am to prepare traditional foods where some of them are prepared outdoors on wood or three (3) “fire stones”.

The Welches Villages Fest, the brain child of Teacher Susan Smith nee Vanterpool, began in 2007. Its initial purpose was to educate and expose the village’s children to the practices and ways of life of their forebears.

The festival starts with an old traditional breakfast including your choice of Flour pap - (a type of porridge made from flour), guinea-corn porridge, Johnny cakes- baked in tank ovens and a rock oven, fried cakes, bush tea, stink weed coffee, stewed old wife and fried fish.

The old-fashioned traditional dishes continue for lunch with different options such as Kale and Rice, Peas and Rice, Corn Fungi, local fish (prepared in various ways), Curried Goat , Chicken and a variety of delicious soups. A wide range of delicacies such as Sweet Potato Pudding, Coconut Tarts, Sham and Jams, and homemade local drinks such as Mauby, Tamarind, Ginger Beer and Passion Fruit are also available.

Individuals from across the island are able to showcase some of their artifacts. These include the goose (iron), kerosene lamp, kerosene fridge and stove, typewriter, an array of enamel utensils, three legged pots, ironing comb, demijohn and many more.

Children and adults alike can be seen playing with rollers, knickers, tops, marbles, kites. Killer bands/Killybans (traps) for bird-catching are also on display. Music is provided by live string bands and scratch bands throughout the day for the listening and dancing pleasure of patrons.

From its inception, the Welches Village Festival has had an array of cultural highlights which

includes traditional dances, traditional games, the Old Time Fashion Show and the Old Time Wedding.