

Caribbean Facts

- The Caribbean is made up of more than 7,000 islands.
- In the Caribbean, there are over 500 species of birds, including 172 species that are found nowhere else in the world. Also, there are about 189 different species of amphibians, 497 species of reptiles and 164 types of mammals who live there.
- The Caribbean Islands have a diverse topography (physical features) including coral reefs, mountains, tropical forests, low-lying plantations, valleys, waterfalls, and volcanoes.
- The main languages spoken in the Caribbean include: English, Spanish, French, Haitian Creole, French Creole and Dutch.



Windrush Facts

- In 1948, Britain was starting to recover from World War 2. Thousands of buildings had been bombed and lots of houses were destroyed – it all needed to be rebuilt.
- Many Caribbean men and women had served in the British armed forces because at the time, many West Indian islands were still under British rule (empire) and not yet independent.
- After the war, many Caribbean people answered an advert to come to Britain, where there were many different jobs to do. Other people just wanted to see Britain.
- An advertisement had appeared in a Jamaican newspaper offering cheap transport on a ship for anybody who wanted to come and work in the UK.

Key dates:

- 21 June 1948 - The Empire Windrush docked at Tilbury, Essex carrying 1,027 passengers (and 2 stowaways), mainly from the Caribbean, hoping for a new life in Britain.
- Between 1948 and 1970, nearly half a million people left their homes in the West Indies to start a new life in the UK.
- 2018 – There was a British political scandal concerning the “Windrush generation” that challenged the right for these migrants and their families to reside in the UK despite being promised the right to remain.

Where can Caribbean culture be seen in Britain today?

Music

The arrival of the Empire Windrush had an immense impact on British music. Music in the Caribbean was already fused with Latin American, African and Asian influences. Therefore, when Caribbean artists and music-lovers arrived, they brought jazz, blues, gospel, Latin and Calypso, at a time when London was all about swing and dance bands. Over time, musical styles fused together. From a mixture of Jamaican reggae and British dance music, Drum & Bass and Dubstep were born. Jamaican influences also led to new genres, like Garage, Jungle and Grime. Many of today’s grime and garage artists are children of the Windrush generation.

Carnival

Caribbean communities organise and participate in carnivals throughout the UK. The best known of these is the annual Notting Hill Carnival, attracting up to 1.5 million people from Britain and around the world, making it the largest street festival in Europe. The carnival began in 1964 as a small procession of Trinidadians in memory of festivals in their home country, and today is regarded as a significant event in British Culture. Leeds West Indian Carnival is Europe’s oldest Caribbean carnival and now attracts around 130,000 people. Other carnivals include the Leicester Caribbean Carnival and the Birmingham International Carnival.

Sport

Caribbean influences in sport include:

- Athletics – Linford Christie, Colin Jackson, Kelly Holmes and Denise Lewis.
- Boxing – Frank Bruno, Lennox Lewis, Audley Harrison
- Motorsport – Lewis Hamilton
- Football – Theo Walcott, Ashley Cole, Rio Ferdinand, Sol Campbell, David James.

What is your favourite sport?

Caribbean influences can also be found in cricket, netball and many other sports too.

