

**MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**MAYARO  
POT SPOON COMPETITION**

**FEATURE ADDRESS**

**THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN CADIZ  
MINISTER OF TOURISM  
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**Date: Sunday July 15, 2011**

**Venue: Mayaro**

**Time: 11.00am**

- The Honourable Winston “Gypsy” Peters, Minister of Community Development
  - Mrs Juliana Johan-Boodram, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism
  - Mr. Hazari Ramdeen, Chairman and other Counsellors of the Rio Claro/Mayaro Regional Corporation
  - Mr. Rajiv Shandilya, Chairman of the Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC) and other TDC Directors and Senior Management Executives
  - The Mayaro Community
  - Members of the Media
  - Ladies and Gentlemen
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It is certainly a pleasure to be here in Mayaro – the largest of Trinidad and Tobago’s cherished coastal communities. With mile upon mile of sun-kissed, coconut tree-lined beaches and people as warm and inviting as the clear blue ocean, Mayaro boasts of a unique and beautiful landscape and a rich community lifestyle which truly is to be embraced by all.

There is no dispute as to why Mayaro with its exceptional expanse of some twenty one (21) miles of beach area is perhaps one of our most popular beach destinations. Hotels, guest

houses, holiday homes and restaurants have been springing up on the beach front attracting a bandwagon of visitors to Mayaro especially during weekends, public holidays and this long school vacation period.

The county of Mayaro has made a significant contribution to the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. In the past the area was a major player in the cultivation of cotton, coffee, sugar, plantain and coconut. Today, Mayaro is the home of the energy giant BP's Galeota Point oil terminal. The majestic strip of coconut palm trees is a living testimony to the village's "coconut plantation days".

In fact, the two seem to fit together seamlessly - as when you think of Mayaro - you immediately picture the statuesque coconut trees along Cocos Bay. Mayaro has the potential and charm to appeal to domestic and international tourists alike.

Fishing has also for many years formed a popular aspect of Mayaro's culture and chip-chip, a tasty sea food delicacy, can still be found buried in the sands of Mayaro.

Given this background, therefore, it is no surprise then that the theme for today's **Pot Spoon Throw Down** event is all about Seafood and Coconut.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Government has made tourism a central pillar of development and a vehicle to generate revenue for community development and provide employment for our people, especially our youth. Today's community culinary festival aims to promote community-based tourism as well expand domestic tourism.

This community festival, which started last week in Lopinot with a plethora of Spanish cuisine, is all part of our vision to generate interest and participation among our local citizenry in our heritage. As local travellers discover new places, the international visitors usually seek them out and follow.

The community forms the heartbeat of a culture and, therefore, plays an important part in creating and maintaining cultural artefacts and products of this nation. As such, the core of developing a sustainable tourism industry, as stated in Government's National Tourism Policy, is our local communities.

We emphasise within all our initiatives the active participation and empowerment of persons within the communities in order that the benefits of our tourism projects roll down to as many as possible.

We are fortunate that Trinidad and Tobago possesses a great deal of both natural and cultural resources and attractions that are reflective of our multi ethnic heritage.

We must then take pride in such a fact and, as a community, support our local traditions, culture, history, cuisine and care for the environment in which we all live. It is our responsibility to learn about such a natural and cultural legacy, and add value to it.

It is also our responsibility to keep our beaches, our streets and our communities clean. One of the “vexing” problems plaguing Mayaro beach, and indeed all our beaches, is that of litter. I therefore ask everyone using our beaches to assist in removing garbage.

I call on people heading to Mayaro and any of the nation’s beaches to take along garbage bags so they could remove their litter when they leave. We must all understand that our actions

would affect this beautiful land of ours and the environment and what we do today would impact upon the next generation

As the Minister of Tourism, let me assure you that this government is committed to sensitising and training local communities in order to build their capacity to function effectively within the tourism sector. We will also continue to encourage, engage in and support community activities such as today's Mayaro Community Culinary Festival.

I would like to highly commend the Rio Claro Mayaro Regional Corporation for supporting us every step of the way and I hope that we will have their steadfast and full support and partnership as we work to make Trinidad and Tobago **the** destination of choice in the Caribbean.

I must extend my appreciation to the Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC) for their efficient and smooth arrangements of these community culinary festivals. The attendance thus far exceeded expectations, the wealth of local talent discovered in our communities very heartening ... and what can I say about the food ... in no uncertain terms absolutely delicious.

I look forward to the increased participation of all local communities within the tourism sector, and to all the residents and visitors to Mayaro, I say thank you for your involvement.

Do enjoy the festivities and I now declare the Mayaro's edition of **“EAT FUH SO”** open.

July 14, 2012