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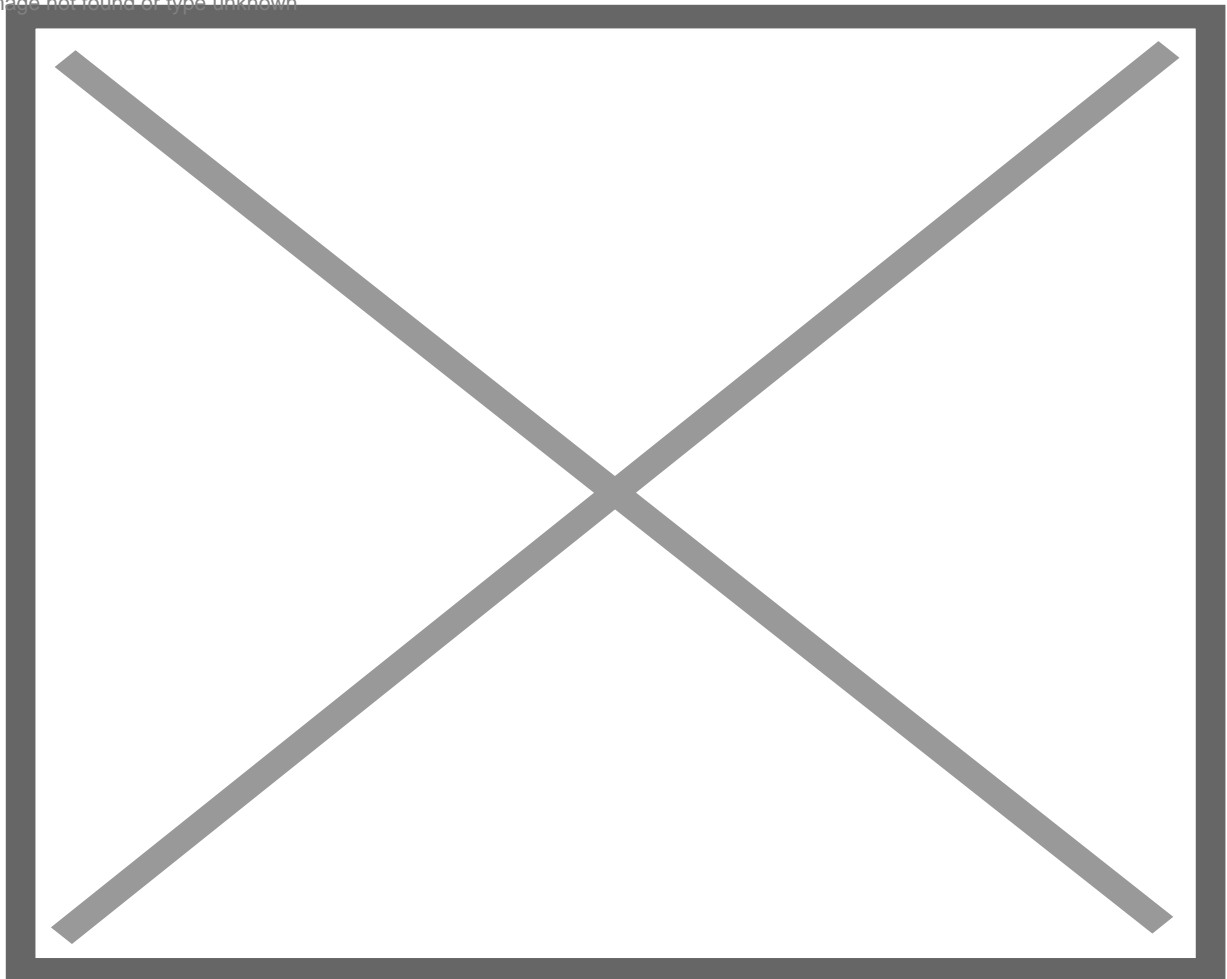
Attendees and Vendors Hope Virgin Islands Paté Festival – in its Second Year – is Here to Stay

Held on Saturday at the Agricultural Fair Grounds on St. Croix, the festival brought out hundreds to celebrate local food and entertainment

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Renita Johannes, right, baker and co-owner of Crucian Cake Queen, poses in front of her booth at the festival. By. TSEHAI ALFRED, V.I. CONSORTIUM

Vendors and attendees alike touted the second-annual Virgin Islands Paté Festival as a huge success, as it drew a large multi-generational turnout and provided a range of culinary experiences and entertainment.

Held on Saturday at the Agricultural Fair Grounds on St. Croix, the Paté Festival was hosted by SMT Enterprise and Laced Legacy. Live music from beloved Caribbean artists such as Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Nights, Deri, PUMPA, DJ Lips International, Deh Brand, Bootlegacy, and host MC Bogle, attracted throngs of attendees to the fairgrounds. Entertainment also included stilt-dancing from Moko Jumbies and attractions for children, including face painting and play castles.

While the festival largely celebrated the paté, other food vendors also had the opportunity to showcase and sell their products.

Renita Johannes, baker and co-owner of Crucian Cake Queen said she appreciated the opportunity to pursue one of her post-retirement passions — selling her products and engaging with the community. “I like selling, not necessarily making the money but selling. I used to play post office when I was younger and I always sold, I was the cashier, so I like to sell, that’s my thing. It keeps me busy,” Ms. Johannes said. Some festival-goers even asked her for specialty cakes to take them to friends and family who live outside the territory. “My cakes go all over the United States,” she said. Ms. Johannes's cakes have been brought to U.S. states, including Florida and Washington, and even intentionally to Denmark Canada, and other Caribbean islands.

One elderly attendee, who preferred for her name not to be disclosed, said the event allowed her to leave her house and socialize. “I got to get out. I don’t have any babies,” the woman said. “I like to come out and a lot of people I met, I ain’t seen them for years,” she continued. However, the attendee critiqued the muddy and uneven grounds as a hindrance to accessibility.

The owners of Smokey’s Barbeque, a food vendor at the event who sold patés along with other local food and drink, said they were successful during the last festival and wanted to come back for this year’s event. In 2023, “I said I’m just going to come with a medium amount of stuff and it sold out,” said Wayne Scotland, who leads the business with his mother. “My mom started it then I started helping her but as she got older I took over and started making the patés, chicken legs, and kebabs,” Mr. Scotland explained. Although their inventory was not depleted as quickly this year, Mr. Scotland nevertheless said the event was a success – and that his special curry conch paté sold out. Mr. Scotland said he hopes the event is hosted again next year. “It’s going great, it’s just hot,” Mr. Scotland told Consortium journalists.