

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Carnival Food, Arts & Crafts Fair 2018: 'A Magnificent Sight To See With Woodworker Creativity'

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ST. THOMAS -- The Carnival Food, Arts & Crafts Fair is undoubtedly one of the most anticipated cultural events of St. Thomas' Carnival celebration. Many gush about the foods, some fantasize about the stews and soups, and others show up to collect custom made arts and crafts at the fair.

Visitors this year were delighted to learn that the entire area was blanketed in WiFi for the first time in its history. Internet service at the fair was powered by the Virgin Islands Next Generation Network (viNGN) and Viya. Emancipation Gardens became one of several spots on island to offer free internet access to the public during the hurricane recovery. Tourists regularly frequent the garden on heavy ship days to connect to the internet and

explore Downtown Charlotte Amalie.

The Consortium's coverage of the first Jazz in the Park of 2018 [earlier this month](#) saw vendor participation shrink by more than half, but the Food Fair that usually generates a larger crowd saw the space used expanded from previous years; with some vendors occupying empty lots on Norre Gade, adjacent to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial Park.

With pumpkins, lemongrass, tamarind stew, 'magic' brownies and campaign pamphlets on display, residents could choose from a wide variety of foods, drinks and personal propensities while browsing around the square.

By noon, Emancipation Gardens and the area surrounding much of Fort Christian was crawling with people searching for their favorite dishes, garments and crafts. Last year, farmers expressed concerns that their harvests would be significantly reduced following the storms in September. This year the Food Fair hosted more booths and tables than it did last Carnival. Businesses on Main Street opened their doors, with some offering as much as 50 percent off on select merchandise -- including local discounts.

People were keen to ask around for their favorite tart, keeping in mind some deserts can only be found during Carnival and the holidays. Dishes that were heavily requested at this year's event were conch, paté, coconut tart, tamarind stew, passion fruit juice, tamarind juice and I-tal, the customary vegetarian/vegan dish celebrated by the Rastafarian movement.

With this year's event falling on an election year, booths and campaign teams came out in full swing. Staffers managing the event, and supporters donning special black t-shirts that read, "Mapp Potter: Building stronger, building smarter" enveloped Emancipation Gardens on Wednesday afternoon.

Local crafts presented at this year's fair include patterned cultural garments, custom wooden sculptures, custom glass sculptures, handmade jewelry, sandals, paintings and more. [St. Croix is poised to have its own Food Fair next month](#) after being cancelled before the island's Christmas Festival began last year.

This year's Food Fair theme was "A Magnificent Sight To See With Woodworker Creativity", as the fair's organizers honored woodworkers. The event saw the expected turnout of dignitaries, with Governor Kenneth Mapp and Senate President Myron Jackson joining the VI Carnival Queen and others for the ribbon-cutting affair.