

lonely planet

*World Food*  
**CARIBBEAN**



for people who live to eat, drink & travel

## SEAFOOD ALFRESCO

It took Ras Creek – with his sunbleached dreadlocks, dazzling smile and sinuous body – about two seconds to talk us into an all-day snorkeling tour, with lunch included.

We nursed placid reef sharks in our arms, hand-fed friendly spotted eagle rays and tickled tiny seahorses. Finally he led us to a glorious coral garden where, to our horror, he proceeded to hunt down our lunch: colorful tropical fish, timid rock lobsters and the luscious Queen conch. We watched through our masks with a mixture of devilish desire and terrible guilt as he caught the innocent sea creatures by hand.

Back at his modest houseboat, there was a feeling of apprehension as Ras Creek cooked up a seafood storm with nothing but a small gas stove. As he slid the conch meat out of its sexy pink shell, he teased us with island tales of this sea creature's powers as an aphrodisiac.

With the white conch meat cubed and set aside to cure in freshly squeezed lime juice, he tempted us with the scent of fresh fish and lobster that was cooking in a rich coconut curry. Aromatic white rice boiled on the gas stove as he added chopped cilantro (coriander), onion, garlic and bright green peppers for the conch ceviche. It was too much to bear – hunger triumphed. We quenched our thirst with jugs of sweet rum punch as we slowly savored every bite of this melt-in-the-mouth alfresco meal.

Surrounded by the blinding blue Caribbean, infused with its vitality, guilt was replaced with gratitude. Having totally immersed ourselves in this spectacular marine world and truly appreciated its beauty, we ate with utter respect. Sitting in silence on the deck of a rustic old houseboat, barefoot and sunburnt and totally satisfied, it felt like the finest restaurant in the world.



*Fresh conch*

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