

# Jamaica:



a new Greenstar Village Center

solar energy, digital culture,  
health, education and  
ecommerce

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First Look: Earth Day,  
April 22, 2000



live satellite image courtesy of CNN

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## The Blue Mountains of Jamaica Swift River Valley



Far from the luxurious resorts of Jamaica is an ancient land, in the eastern hills of Jamaica, almost untouched, holding to old ways. It is a luxurious, mountainous terrain, original home of the Tainos people. They lived for centuries on the rich and varied fruit and wildlife.

On his second voyage to the New World in 1494, this tip of Jamaica was the first land sighted by Christopher Columbus. The mountains looked blue from a distance, so he called them the Blue Mountains.



Hear the voices:

[Like a Dove \(MP3\)](#)

low-resolution sample

[click here](#) for high-res samples



The British captured the island in 1755, and it remained a British colony until 1963, when it won independence. The British brought slaves to the island, and used it as a slave trading and supply post for the New World. This sad and tragic history brought the beauty of African culture to Jamaica, where it mixed with island and European peoples to produce one of the world's most fascinating fusions.

For centuries, the Blue Mountains were home to the banana and coffee industries, but the wild hills above Portland remained largely untouched, covered with a lush original tropical rainforest, flooded with birds, animals and water life that have been preserved from the modern world. The rainforest here teems with oranges, orchids, tropical apples, ferns and bamboo.

The people of these hills live as they have for over 400 years, close to the land, artistic and expressive, using music in every act of daily life. This is the land of the

Windward Maroons, independent and strong, many of them the descendants of escaped slaves.



The Swift River Re-Development Association seeks to sustain this purity, while connecting the people to the world at large, building modern conveniences of health and education, maintaining a sensitivity to environment and tradition. This Association was started and operated since the early 90's by people from the area, led by Pauline Stuart, who grew up here, and her husband Jack, a retired business executive.



Hear the voices:

[A young Jamaican poet](#)

low-resolution sample

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Greenstar came to Jamaica, and in particular to Swift River, through a careful evaluation that started with introductions by Charles Nesson, a professor at Harvard's Berkman Center, who is concerned with the development challenges Jamaica faces. Through the assistance of the U.S. State Department's "Internet for Economic Development" group, the advice of Jamaica's Minister of Commerce & Technology, Philip Paulwell and local Member of Parliament Errol Ennis, and with the key help of local writer Barbara Blake Hannah, Greenstar began to learn a little about the needs of modern Jamaica. Also instrumental in this process was Henry Miller, owner of a small hotel on the ocean in nearby Port Antonio.

We sought a rural village site with limited electrical power and communications, far from the usual tourist path, with arts, language, music and a way of life as close to their historical roots as possible. When we learned of the already strong community organizing being conducted by the Stuarts in Swift River, a strong bond of common interest was formed. Greenstar has developed digital culture programs in Swift River, provided equipment, training and advice, and is helping to create a new source of revenue for the community, to use as it decides to educate its children and improve the quality of life in Swift River.

The Stuarts maintain a wonderful website, with free original Jamaica recipes and

lots of information about the island at

<http://www.jamaicarecipe.com/>

Here's a free recipe for you: [Traditional Reggae Curried Shrimp](#).

Henry Miller's Rio Vista resort is a lovely small retreat convenient to the town of Port Antonio, near the beach and harbor. If you go to Jamaica, consider staying at an inn like Henry's, for while the luxurious international hotels of Jamaica are the equal of any luxurious international hotels in the world, it is only at places like Rio Vista that the true character of a place can be felt.

<http://www.riovistajamaica.com/>

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## The People of Swift River



Pauline Stuart says, "I was born on the banks of the Swift River and my family lineage dates back to the time of slavery. My wonderful childhood was spent swimming and roaming the mountain ranges where lots of exotic fruits abound. No major development has taken place in the village; to some extent this is a blessing, because there is no degradation of the environment."



Recently a strong community association, driven by a desire for improvement has emerged with a vision to:

- Establish a community with increased economic opportunities and stability.
- Preserve the culture, heritage, flora and fauna.
- Sustain a community that is safe for local and international visitors.
- Offer community type bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Reopen the old 18th century trading routes to the Blue Mountain for hiking
- Create a place of natural beauty for you to enjoy traditional food and hospitality, while the spirit of nature quiets you.



Hear the voices:

[Banana \(MP3\)](#)

low-resolution sample

[click here](#) for high-res samples



[help with playing MP3 music](#)

In addition to solar power panels, a computer, scanner and digital camera, Greenstar has provided a Sun Oven to Swift River, in conjunction with Sun Ovens International.

Two village women have been selected to be bakers using this clean, completely solar-powered oven, which can bake several loaves of bread at a time. We have provided an initial supply of flour, oil, salt, yeast and other ingredients, and the women will operate a small Sun Oven business, selling bread to the other women of the village.

Find out much more about the [Global Sun Oven](#).



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# Polly's Reggae-Style Cooking

Traditional Jamaican Dishes  
by Pauline Stewart

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## Curried Shrimp

from [http://www.jamaicarecipe.com/new\\_page\\_2.htm](http://www.jamaicarecipe.com/new_page_2.htm)

Jamaicans love curry especially if it is spicy and hot. I suppose this is part of our Indian heritage and culture.

Curried dishes, particularly goat and chicken, are sometimes stretched (to increase the serving amount) with potatoes or dumplings. I also like tomatoes diced in curry shrimp, because it add a nice flavour and colour. You can make a curried sauce and then add the shrimp, as shrimp needs very little cooking time. You may however add whatever vegetables you like, to your curried dishes.

## Ingredients

- 2 lbs medium shrimp shelled and deveined
- 2 tablespoons curry
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 medium onions diced
- 3 sweet pepper diced (1red 1green 1yellow)
- 3 tablespoon oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

3 stalks escallion crushed  
1 green scotch bonnet pepper (hot pepper) finely chopped  
1 medium potato (diced)  
1/2 cup water  
1 tablespoon jerk sauce or meat seasoning  
1/2 lb tomato cut in wedges

## Method

Heat oil in a frying and add crushed garlic and curry, stir-fry until it begins to simmer and smell. Do not burn.

Add salt, scotch bonnet pepper, jerk sauce, escallion to stir-fry for 1 minute.

Add water and potatoes simmer until potatoes are cooked and add shrimp.

Cook for no longer than 5 minutes.

Add diced onions, sweet pepper and cornstarch mixed with tablespoon water.

Continue to cook, stirring constantly until gravy thickens (if too thick add a little water)

Turn off heat and stir in tomato wedges and serve with white rice

Serves 4- 6 persons

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[Visit Polly's Web page](#) to see many more traditional recipes, and to register for her mailing list.

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In small rural communities like Swift River lie the roots of Jamaica's amazingly profuse and exuberant music styles, which are known and loved around the world: reggae, ska, rocksteady, dub and more. One basic style, heard through samples recorded by Greenstar on these pages, is the mento band. Mento uses home-made instruments: hand drums, bamboo saxophones, banjos, rhumba box and steel pans, and is woven into the fabric of rural Jamaica. Mento groups travel the hills, playing at weddings, celebrations, mourning at funerals, and marking spiritual gatherings.

Artists like Jimmy Cliff, Toots, Burning Spear and above all Bob Marley, have created a significant part of the culture of Jamaica through their songs of anger at political and economic subjugation, in the times of colonialism and post-colonialism.





A fitting statement was made by a Edward Kamau Brathwaite, a reggae musician, concerning the mystery of the island and its music: "Jamaica: fragment of bomb-blast, catastrophe of geological history (volcano, middle passage, slavery, plantation, colony, neo-colony) has somehow miraculously -- some say triumphantly -- survived. The secret and expression of that survival lies glittering and vibrating in our music."

The music of Jamaica began five centuries ago, when Columbus colonized the land of the Arawak Indians. After the Spanish came the English, both oppressive in their time. Jamaica has a history of injustice, international manipulation and ineffective governing, which provide the basis for the theme of redemption in Jamaican music.

The people of Jamaica started singing slave songs, and were required to sing for their masters. The song by the musical group The Israelites reflects this sadness:

By the rivers of Babylon  
There is a town  
And there we wept  
When we remembered Zion.

And the wicked carried us away, captivity,  
Required from us a song.  
How can we sing King Alpha's song  
In a strange land?





Using a digital camera supplied by Greenstar, a gallery of photographs of the region has been developed by the people. You can see this gallery at <http://www.jamaicarecipe.com/events.htm>

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Hear the voices:  
[Lift My Feet \(MP3\)](#)  
low-resolution sample  
[click here](#) for high-res samples

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Artwork from the people  
of Swift River



The artwork seen here, plus many more extraordinary pieces digitized in Swift River, will be available soon in high-resolution form on this website, for download. Fine art-quality prints on heavy paper, suitable for framing, will also be available, along with simple, practical forms: shirts, calendars and postcards.



The music you hear on these pages is in compressed MP3 format; the originals, recorded direct-to-disk in Swift River by professional engineers and producers, has a wealth of detail and presence that is missed in these samples. A standard full-length commercial music CD will be available soon: The Voice of Swift River.

To be kept informed of offers of artwork and music, and to see when these digital culture products are available for sale on this website, you may [subscribe to the free Greenstar Newsletter](#).





Hear the voices:  
[Love School \(MP3\)](#)  
low-resolution sample  
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**there's a natural mystic blowing through the air  
can't keep them down  
if you listen carefully now you will hear**

...Bob Marley, Natural Mystic

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