GECCU BUZZ

Vol.4



FEATURING:

1. A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON
2. ORIGINS OF NINE MORNINGS
3. VINCY CHRISTMAS RECIPES
4. CHEF RANDALL MONDESIR RECIPES
5. TIPS FOR EATING HEALTHY DURING CHRISTMAS
6. 2023 HIGHLIGHTS
7. GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES
8. SAFE CLEANING AND DISINFECTION TIPS

CHAIRPERSON GREETINGS
PEGGY DA SILVA



Dear Esteemed Members,

As the festive season unfolds its magic, it is with immense joy and gratitude that I, Chair of the Education Committee, extend heartfelt Christmas greetings to every cherished member of our beloved institution, the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines General Employees Co-operative Credit Union (GECCU). I extend these greetings on behalf of the members of the Education Committee, management, and staff of GECCU. May this festive season bring you good health, immense joy, prosperity, and treasured moments with your loved ones.

The Education Committee at GECCU is committed to fostering financial literacy and empowering our members with knowledge that extends beyond banking transactions. Despite the year's challenges, your engagement and enthusiasm helped to motivate us.

Christmas is a season of love, and what better way to prove our love than through giving? So, as we gather around the Christmas tree and exchange gifts, let us take a moment to reflect on the spirit of generosity, kindness, and the sense of community that defines the Christmas season. Let us not forget those in our communities who may be less fortunate. In the true spirit of Christmas, consider extending a helping hand to those in need, embodying the principles of cooperation and compassion that form the foundation of our credit union.

Let this Christmas serve as a reminder to appreciate the bonds we share as members of a cooperative. We are more than just members; we are a community that thrives on unity, support, and the collective strength of its individuals. Together, we have built a resilient and thriving credit union that stands as a testament to our shared values and commitment to each other's success.

I express heartfelt thanks to all for your time, dedication and contribution to the growth and development of our noble Credit Union. May this Christmas season fill our homes with love, laughter, and our lives with prosperity. Thank you for being an integral part of our GECCU family; a gem we are proud to call our own. We look forward to 2024 with great anticipation and enthusiasm as we celebrate our diamond anniversary; a year of continued growth, collaboration and shared success.

Henry Ford puts it succinctly, "If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself."

With festive cheer,

Peggy Da Silva

Sis. Peggy Da Silva
Chairperson,
Education Committee
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
General Employees Co-operative Credit Union (GECCU)

ORIGINS OF NINE MORNINGS

The way that different countries around the world celebrate Christmas each year is pale in comparison to that of St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Nine Mornings festival. This uniquely inebriating festival celebrated during the nine mornings from December 16th to December 24th, has the ability to make persons willingly leave what is considered the best hours of sleep to converge around the island from the early mornings of 4:00 a.m. to sing, play games, dance and engage in other festivities for nine consecutive mornings preceding Christmas Day. The origins of the festival are still shrouded in mystery although persons theorize that while the slave masters went to church, the slaves, who had to remain outside, found ways to entertain themselves. The other theory is that after Roman Catholic priests in the 1920s held early-morning mass or novenas, churchgoers returned home singing and dancing, exchanging holiday greetings with each other.

The event is celebrated across the island in different villages and includes community lighting competitions, carols and street games and relies heavily on audience participation for its success. It is dubbed "A Unique Vincentian Tradition" due to its one of a kind model that seeks to keep community spirit alive in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Nine Mornings festival is celebrating its 110th anniversary in 2023.











A VINCY CHRISTMAS
BLACK CAKE RECIPE

Ingredients:





1 lb Sugar
1 lb Raisins
1 lb Currants
1/2 lb Cherries
1/2 lb Mixed peel
1 lb Prunes (pitted)
8 eggs
1 tsp Baking powder
1 cup Nuts
1 lb Margarine
1 1/4 lb All-purpose Flour
2 cups Browning
1 bottle Black wine
1 bottle Strong rum (or brandy)
1 tsp Cinnamon
1 tsp Clove
1 tsp Grated ginger
1 cup Orange juice
1 can Pineapple Chunks (Optional)
1/2 tsp Grated nutmeg
Vanilla essence

Instructions:

Blend the fruit together and mix thoroughly with black wine and strong rum. Let the fruits sit covered at room temperature for 2 weeks. Sift the flour and baking powder together. Cream the margarine, sugar, vanilla, and spices until fluffy; then add the eggs and beat vigorously. Gradually fold in the flour, followed by all the other dry ingredients and the fruit mixture with browning. Mix thoroughly, then add pineapple chunks if needed. Grease the tins and line them with wax paper or brown paper. Grease them well, then lightly flour.

Bake in a moderate oven at 275 °F for 2 1/2 hours or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove from the oven and pour 1 cup of black wine and rum mixture on the cake. Soak for three days with the remainder of the rum mixture.



A VINCY CHRISTMAS
PUMPKIN PUNCH RECIPE



Total Time: 20 minutes



Ingredients:

- 2 cups cooked, pureed pumpkin
- 4 cups evaporated milk
- ¾ cups guiness
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- Dash of bitters
- Condensed milk (sweeten to taste)

Instructions:

1. If using fresh pumpkin, peel and cube it. Place it in a pot with just enough water to cover the pumpkin. Add a pinch of salt and boil until tender. Allow it to cool, then puree it. You'll need 2 cups of pureed pumpkin.

2. In a blender, combine the pumpkin puree, milk, Guinness, and nutmeg. (For an extra kick, you can add local strong rum)

3. Add bitters and sweeten to taste.

4. Chill the mixture, and it's ready to serve. You can also serve it over ice.

5. To garnish, add a dash of cinnamon to each glass.

A VINCY CHRISTMAS
BUTTERY GARLIC POTATOES

Ingredients:



6 small red Potatoes, quartered
1/4 cup melted butter
1 tsp seasoned salt
1 tsp dried Parsley flakes
1 tsp minced garlic
Serving size: 4

Instructions:

Place potatoes in 2 quarts microwave safe dish. Mix butter, seasoned salt, Paprika, Parsley, and garlic together. Pour over potatoes and toss to coat evenly.
Microwave uncovered on high for 8 - 10 minutes or until potatoes are tender stirring frequently.





CHEF RANDALL MONDESIR

SANTA'S CHICKEN DELIGHT



Ingredients & Instructions:

Cut the chicken in half.
Mix the following ingredients:
- 2 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 grated red onion
- 1 tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tsp rosemary
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp salt

Rub the chicken with the mixture.
Bake at 250°F for 45 minutes.
Enjoy!

CHRISTMAS HAM MEDALLION

What can we do with left over Christmas ham, or ham creation. How about a Ham Medallion?
Per Serving:
- **5 oz ham, cut into bite-sized pieces**
- **1 tsp red onion**
- **1 tsp chives**
- **1 tsp red, yellow, and green bell peppers**
- **1/2 tsp mashed garlic**



1. **Mix all the ingredients together in a small bowl.**
2. **Combine 4 oz of boiled or roasted breadfruit with 1/2 tsp parsley, a pinch of salt, and a pinch of black pepperForm it into a disk.**
3. **Pan-fry the breadfruit disk in butter.**
4. **Serve ham on breadfruit disk.**

Enjoy!

EATING HEALTHY DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

The festive season tends to remind us about the joy of sharing food, spending time with friends and family, but central to most of our Christmases are festive foods and drinks. However, we also know that indulging in foods during the Christmas season it can be a challenging time to eat well.

Research shows that with the extra calories consumed across all the celebrations during the festive season, we can gain on average around 2lbs to 5lbs. But don't worry, it is possible to eat, drink and be merry without over doing it.

The festive season tends to remind us about the joy of sharing food, spending time with friends and family, but central to most of our Christmases are festive foods and drinks. However, we also know that indulging in foods during the Christmas season it can be a challenging time to eat well.

Research shows that with the extra calories consumed across all the celebrations during the festive season, we can gain on average around 2lbs to 5lbs. But don't worry, it is possible to eat, drink and be merry without over doing it.

Here are some tips to avoid calorie over-consumption for the festive season:
1. Serve a variety of vegetables to provide essential nutrients which are low in calories, don't add butter or salad dressings instead use chopped herbs or lemon juice for added flavor. Fill up a third of your plate with vegetables.

2. Avoid or limit alcohol. If you do have an alcoholic drink, have it with food. Alcohol can lower blood sugar and negatively interact with medications. Do not drink and drive.

3. Be Safe! Prepare, cook and store foods safely.

4. Use fresh foods versus processed foods, as fresh foods contains less sugar, fats and sodium. If you must use processed foods, use food less in the nutrients mentioned. Strain and rinse processed foods when possible.

5. Limit your portion sizes, eat off a small plate instead of a large one.

6. Replace sugar sweetened beverages with plain water or natural fruits juices low in sugar. Fruits and vegetables can be added to water such as limes, ginger, mint leaves and cucumbers to make flavored water.

7. Replace snacks high in fats, sugars and sodium for healthier snacks, such as fruit salads, unsalted unsweetened nuts and popcorn for example.

8. Use healthy cooking methods like steaming, boiling, grilling and baking.

9. Do not forget to move! Encourage the whole family to get out for a walk at some point, ideally, after dinner to aid digestion. The more activity, the better, so take along any new outdoor gifts, like bikes, scooters or footballs.

And most importantly, have a happy, healthy, nutritious festive season!



2023

















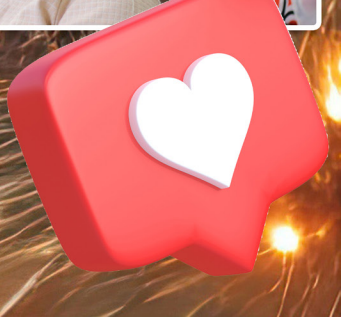












Highlights













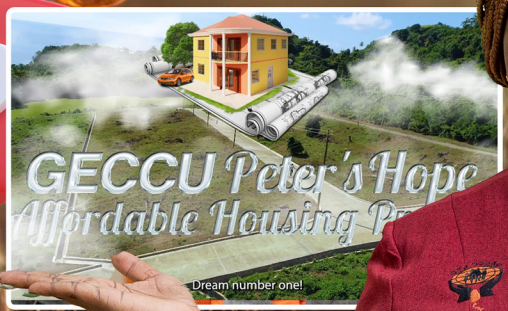

GECCU








GECCU
Market


GECCU Peter's Hope
Affordable Housing
Dream number one!


GECCU
everything
VINCY
EXPO +
Best Booth
2023

GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES

Food hygiene refers to the practice a food manufacturing business applies to safeguard public health from any risks of food borne illnesses that can be caused by contamination. Some of these hygiene practices include:

- Hand washing
- Personal Hygiene
- Time and Temperature
- Production, transportation, Preparation, storage, and food servicing
- Cleaning and Sanitizing
- Control of pest in and around the environment.

Food safety are measures that are put in place to ensure that food for sale and human consumption are safe and free from contaminants.

There are several steps that must be adhered to, to ensure that food is safe.



These steps include:

- **Cleaning** - Clean your hands and surfaces very often. Germs that cause food poisoning can survive in many places and spread around your kitchen. Therefore, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before, during, and after preparing food and before eating. Always wash hands after handling uncooked meat, chicken and other poultry, seafood, flour, or eggs. Additionally, wash your utensils, cutting boards, and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item.

- **Separating** - Avoid cross contamination. Raw meat, chicken and other poultry, seafood and eggs can spread germs to ready-to-eat food unless you keep them separate. When grocery shopping, keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and their juices away from other foods. Keep raw or marinating meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods in the refrigerator. Store raw meat, poultry, and seafood in sealed containers or wrap them securely so the juices don't leak onto other foods. Use one cutting board or plate for raw meat, poultry, and seafood and a separate cutting board or plate for produce, bread, and other foods that won't be cooked.

- **Cooking** - Always cook food to the right temperature. Food must be cooked so that the internal temperature gets high enough to kill germs that can make you sick. The only way to tell if food is safely cooked is to use a food thermometer. You can't tell if food is safely cooked by checking its color and texture (except for seafood). Use a food thermometer to ensure foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature, usually 165°F for meat products.

- **Chilling** - Always refrigerate your food quickly. Bacteria can multiply rapidly if food is left at room temperature or in the "Danger Zone" between 40°F and 140°F, for longer than 4hrs. Never leave perishable food out for more than 2 hrs. Package warm or hot food into several clean, shallow containers and then refrigerate. It is always wise to place small portions of food in the refrigerator since they will chill faster.



HUMAN TRAFFICKING
SOROPTIMIST INTL SVG

The Three Elements of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB)
It is possible to identify a case or incident of human trafficking by establishing if three key elements of the definition (in Article 3 of the Trafficking Protocol and from the national legal framework) are present.

The Act – Recruitment or Transportation or Transfer or Harbouring or Receipt of Persons.

The Means – Threat or Use of Force or Coercion or Abduction or Fraud or Deception or Abuse of Power or Abuse of Position of Vulnerability or Giving or Receiving Payments or Benefits.

The Purpose – Exploitation which includes, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, and servitude or the removal of organs.

Many persons are targeted because they are from a vulnerable societal group, appear very trustworthy, don't have family support and are financially challenged.

Common deceptive practices used to recruit/traffick humans include:
- Seduction and romance.
- False job advertisements e.g. Modeling or babysitting job.
- Lies about educational or travel opportunities.
- Sale by family.
- Recruitment through former slaves.
- Abuse of religious beliefs.
- Abduction.
- Forced pregnancy or sale.



Signs of Human Trafficking
Victims of human trafficking will likely not disclose what they are experiencing. This is why having an awareness of the signs and remaining vigilant is crucial.

A person who has been trafficked may:
- Show signs of physical and emotional abuse, including injuries and low self-esteem.
- Appear malnourished, have untreated medical problems and have an unkempt appearance.
- Live in overcrowded and dirty conditions.
- Avoid eye contact and social interaction.
- Act like they have been instructed by someone else, particularly with what to say in conversations, and like they have been coerced into doing something.
- Appear to be monitored or watched closely by someone else.
- Have little or no official documentation, including a passport.
- Have little or no personal possessions. For example, they may wear the same dirty clothes every day.
- Ask for permission or struggle to make a decision on simple things, such as to use the toilet.
- Be distrustful of authorities.

It can happen to friends and even family. Always lend a listening ear to what experiences they are going through to guide them in the right path and avoid falling prey to traffickers.

Please look for the signs in victims and save a life from Modern-Day Slavery. Contact the Royal St.Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force if there are suspicions and evidence.

SAFE CLEANING AND DISINFECTION GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES

This guidance is intended for all, whether you own a business, run a school, or want to ensure the cleanliness and safety of your home. It provides a general framework for cleaning and disinfection practices that can be used during the Christmas Season or any other time of the year.

Before you begin on any stage of cleaning, you should do a quick walk through around the house, or other spaces to be cleaned, and take note of what needs to be done in each area. Doing this will make the cleaning task easier and faster.

You don't need to waste your time guessing on what to do since you already know what to tackle. If you have someone to assist you do the cleaning, you can also list down as to who will take care of certain chores. Instead of doing all the cleaning in one day, spread out the cleaning process for several days. Having a Christmas cleaning list will help you make your cleaning more organized and efficient at the same time.

Cleaning and disinfection

Cleaning refers to the removal of dirt and impurities, including germs, from surfaces using soap or detergent. Cleaning alone does not kill germs, but thorough cleaning will significantly decrease their numbers and lower the risk of spreading infection.
Sanitizing reduces germs on surfaces to levels that are safe. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces.

Establish a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, service counters,bathrooms, and athletic areas based on their use. Commercial kitchens, medical facilities, and childcare facilities need to follow their specific regulations for appropriate cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection.

How to clean and disinfect

- Sanitizers and disinfectants do not work if the surface has organic matter or dirt.
- Clean with soap, water, and a microfiber cloth to remove most microorganisms.
- When possible, chose safer fragrance-free disinfectants and sanitizers.
- Hydrogen peroxide or alcohol-based products are safer for human health and do not cause asthma.

When using alcohol or bleach as disinfectants, here are some things to consider:

- Use 70% isopropyl alcohol
- Use 1/3 cup 6% bleach added to 1 gallon of water with a 1 minute wet contact time.

Bleach is not a cleaner and bleach solutions for sanitizing and disinfecting are only to be used on cleaned and rinsed surfaces. When mixing bleach from concentrate, an emergency eyewash and good ventilation are required.



- Do not mix bleach or other cleaning and disinfection products together. This can cause very dangerous fumes.
- Quaternary ammonia products and bleach can cause asthma.
- Apply disinfectants to high touch surfaces.
- Always read the label of the product and follow its instructions, including application method, before using the product.
- Applying products using a different method than the label calls for ,could affect the efficacy and safety of the product.
- Use the proper concentration of disinfectant.
- The disinfectant must stay wet on the surface for the time required by the label in order to kill organisms.
- Follow the product label's hazard warnings and instructions for personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, eye protection, and ventilation.
- Use disinfectants in a well-ventilated space. As much as possible, disinfect surfaces when workers and visitors are not present. Thoroughly air out the area before occupants return.





Playgrounds and Children's toys

- Do not spray disinfectants on outdoor playgrounds. Clean if needed. Require children to wash their hands with soap and water when they come inside or prior to eating or drinking.
- Wash soft or porous children's toys in the highest water temperature appropriate for the item and dry completely.
- Clean hard plastic toys thoroughly. In general, thorough cleaning with soap and water is all that is necessary. Disinfectants can be harmful to children, especially if small children put them in their mouths.

Select chemicals carefully and consider:
- Is it corrosive?
- Is it a skin, eye, or respiratory irritant?
- Does it leave a residue?
- Is it toxic by skin absorption, ingestion, or inhalation?

Soft (porous) surfaces
Surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes require only routine cleaning appropriate for the surface.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions to launder items.
- Use the warmest water possible and dry completely.







Keeping Our Promises To You!

GECCU BUZZ VOL.4 CREDITS

Special thanks to:
Education Committee Members
Sis. Peggy DaSilva - Chairperson
Bro. Keith O'Neil- Vice Chairperson
Bro. Meriah Samuel - Secretary
Sis. Janice King – Assistant Secretary
Bro. Hugh Colin Sam
Sis. Diana Browne
Sis. Thelsea John
Sis. Jeussana Bacchus
Sis. Dionne John
Sis. Aberdeen Roberts
Sis. Danny-Lee Francis
Bro. Asif Bailey

Layout and Design
Bro. Asif Bailey

Photography
Bro. Asif Bailey
Duane Bailey
VC3

SCAN ME

WWW.GECCU.COM

@geccultd