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Title: Starchy foodways: Surveying Indigenous Peoples' culinary practices prior to the advent of European invasions in the Greater Caribbean

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1. Comparative culinary practices offer new perspectives on foodways in the Greater Caribbean.
2. The foodways approach to archaeobotanical investigations is an exemplary way to reconstruct culinary practices.
3. In the insular Caribbean, clay griddles were used to prepare botanical products from multiple types of plants, which now we know includes manioc.
4. The Indigenous Peoples who used the artifacts studied in this dissertation made active choices regarding which plants to use and how to prepare them.
5. At the Barillas site in Nicaragua, clay griddles were used to prepare more types of plants than only maize.
6. Similarities in culinary practices are magnified in regional studies; patterned variations (differences) in culinary practices are more conspicuous in site level case studies.
7. Given the fragmentary nature of archaeological recoveries, taphonomic preservation issues, and the types, as well as amounts of artifact samples analyzed for starch content, the results of this dissertation likely underestimate the frequency and types of plants used as part of culinary practices.
8. Many precolonial households in the Greater Caribbean had access to maize and it was possibly a preferred or valued (important or lasting belief and ideal shared by members of a group) culinary ingredient.
9. Starch analysis helps us interpret “cultural” staple plants (i.e. plants preferred, targeted, or used ubiquitously) regardless of their presumed dietary contributions.
10. Combining a study of microbotanical plant remains with cultural interpretations provides a more nuanced and contextualized perspective for our understanding of foodways.
11. Creating cassava bread from poisonous manioc seems complex before trying, but after the culinary practices are learned and embodied you may realize it is simple, but intensive work and a viable recipe for modern Caribbean people.
12. Scientific blogs are an ideal way to help PhD students relieve stress while practicing public outreach.