



Dominica Miranda Forde

"Imagine you are the Minister of Tourism for your island. What would you do, and what projects could you create, to help bring locals and tourists closer together?"

The opportunity to be the Minister of Tourism for Dominica would be a great privilege, especially as government has decided that tourism is the way to develop the country. To achieve that goal, as Minister I would concentrate on promoting my country to the best of my ability. The best way to do this is to make the experiences of those who visit enjoyable and unforgettable, so that they will spread the word on how lovely the country is. This is possible if tourists and locals become closer together.

One way of bringing tourists and locals closer together is by tourists getting more involved in local activities. Dominica is one of the islands in the Caribbean with proud descendents of the first settlers, the Caribs. They are well known for their crafts. These people inhabit a small portion of the island called the Carib Territory. This is a popular tourist attraction site. As Tourism Minister, I would put a program where a small group of Caribs can demonstrate to tourists how to create simple crafts which they will attempt and take home as souvenirs. I will put in place a committee to develop the program and ensure that it is successful.

Dominica is a truly blessed nation with an abundance of fruits. As tourism Minister I would have a program where the tourists can be engaged in basic agriculture, being guided by local farmers. I believe the tourist would enjoy learning how they are grown and picking them from trees. They can enjoy their labour by having the fruits they have picked as an appetizer or dessert the next day at the hotel or even better, cooks can teach them how to make a simple beverage or dish from the fruits they have harvested. This would be the “key” that unlocks the door to Agricultural Tourism. Tourists learning to cultivate crops would be given an incentive, such as half price given on airfares to return to the island to harvest what they have cultivated. These programs will bring tourists and locals closer together by greater interaction between the two.



Dominica is the perfect tourism destination for those who want to relax and want immediate relief from stress. Instead of the usual hot spring bath, I would encourage more locals to open boutiques for hot stone or natural oil massages, where through their work a bond can be formed with tourists. My support would be to provide money for locals to start their businesses.

Dominica has been recognized as one of the top five dining destinations in the world. It is perfect for tourists who love diving and whale watching. To help bring locals and tourists closer together, as Minister of Tourism, I would go further by encouraging dive operators and fishermen to form an association, whereby the tourist would experience more. For example, instead of just going whale watching, they would learn to fish while they are in the open water and later enjoy their catch at the hotel. The tourism industry is a very fragile industry and as Tourism Minister I would frequently train tour guides and our operators on ways to better interact with tourists, since these are the people who come into direct contact with the tourists. I would also educate the public on the importance of having close relations with tourists which may help bring more tourist dollars to the island.

“As Tourism Minister I would frequently train tour guides and our operators on ways to better interact with tourists, since these are the people who come into direct contact with the tourists.”



Grenada Kaze'll Banfield

"Imagine you are the Minister of Tourism for your island. What would you do, and what projects could you create, to help bring locals and tourists closer together?"

My country Grenada, until recently, has depended on agriculture and tourism for most of its foreign exchange. However, after the devastation by two hurricanes in the last four years it has grown more dependent on tourism.

To develop our tourism industry, as Minister of Tourism, I think that greater effort should be made to bring locals and tourists closer together. To begin, I would encourage and develop a Home Stay Program. Tourists wishing to stay overnight can choose to stay at the home of a local for a small fee. To establish this, interested home owners would be trained through special programs in hosting guests. The government would also inspect and help repair homes where visitors would stay. As a result, visitors and locals would get a good opportunity to socialize with each other. Through this, they can learn more about each other and their different cultures.

Another important project that I would undertake to bring our people and visitors closer together is a foreign language program. Special classes in the teaching of foreign language would be given to persons directly involved in the tourist industry. Classes would also be given in school so that people can begin to learn the language from an early age. This I think will increase the opportunity for locals and visitors who speak a foreign language to better understand each other.

In addition, visitors would find it easier to get important information about things and places of interest. Persons speaking the languages can earn money as tour guides and interpreters. Furthermore, I think the visitors would feel more at home and relaxed.



Lastly, I will also want to work on the development of a National Adventure Club. Locals who like to hike, fish, or go on other adventures, would be organized to form this club. They would be encouraged to attend the foreign language classes which would assist in better communication. Visitors interested in such things can join them on some of their expeditions or can pay individuals to take them on hikes and other adventures. This would develop friendships and closeness between Grenadians and our visitors. Information on both the Adventure Club and the Home Stay Program would be available on brochures as well as on the internet. Persons involved could even open their personal websites so as to keep in touch with previous visitors.

In conclusion, I must say that those three activities would greatly benefit my country. Friendships can develop between locals and visitors which would encourage them to return with additional visitors. Locals may have a chance to travel on exchange visits. Opportunities would be created for more of our people to benefit directly and indirectly from tourism, all of which would make the Isle of Spice a more exciting and friendlier tourist destination.

"Special classes in the teaching of foreign language would be given to persons directly involved in the tourist industry."



Guyana

Kevin Camacho

"Imagine you are the Minister of Tourism for your island. What would you do, and what projects could you create, to help bring locals and tourists closer together?"

Being the Minister of Tourism of my country, Guyana, my responsibilities are not limited. Arranging projects to develop the tourism industry and promote the culture of our country is a full-time job.

Firstly, I have to decide on a team of dedicated, hardworking, enthusiastic, and cooperative staff to promote our tourism industry.

I will then arrange our first executive meeting of which I will be the chairman. We will then appoint members of the committee of management to appropriate positions to carry out duties that may be assigned to them so as to have an effective and efficient tourism industry.

We would arrange a national exhibition to expose our country's local industries and products and at the same time promote our national rainforest, waterfalls and water ways to both local and overseas tourists. For example, the world's highest single drop fall of seven hundred and forty-one feet stands Kaieteur Falls, which is a natural wonder of the tropical rainforest located on the Potaro River, a tributary of the famous Essequibo River which has three hundred and sixty-five islands.

Also our Mashramani celebration is another colorful and spectacular event which can also attract thousands of locals and overseas visitors. It is being celebrated annually on the 23rd of February.

Promoting other local cuisine by way of a food fair and cultural festival is another way of attracting tourists to our country.

Some of our local food and beverages consist of our famous "pepper-pot" made with casareep from cassava, by our Amerindian tribe found in the Pomeroon areas. Pepper-pot consists of different types of meat, like cowheel, oxtail, shin and brisket and of course pig trotters and hock.

We also have cook-up which originates from our African ancestors and is also made with different types of meat including pickled pigtail and salted beef.

In relation to our beverages, Mauby and Gingerbeer, just to name a few is some of our locally made beverages. For the locals and tourists who consume alcohol we have our famous El Dorado Demerara rum and our Brewery fresh Banks Beer.

After promoting any successful event I would thank my entire staff for all the hard work they have done and all the overseas people for their tremendous support and encourage them to return to our beautiful country, Guyana, with other friends and relatives and enjoy our rich Guyanese hospitality. I remain your Minister of Tourism Hon. Kevin Camacho.



"Promoting other local cuisine by way of a food fair and cultural festival is another way of attracting tourists to our country."