



In conversation with...

NICOLE DENNIS

Nicole Dennis runs *Nicole's Table*, a cookery school based in her home on Antigua. Hidden Beaches specialist Sarah asked her about Caribbean cuisine and life on the island

How did the idea for *Nicole's Table* cookery school come about?

Before my husband and I moved to Antigua, we would take cooking classes for fun. After we moved to the island, I worked as a personal chef for a number of years before we came up with the idea of running classes of our own. We found the perfect house with plenty of space and a garden to grow spices and fresh vegetables. I've been teaching full time for three years now.

What made you choose to come and live in Antigua?

My parents. I'm from Montserrat originally [another Caribbean island, southwest of Antigua], having moved to the

USA for work. When Monserrat's Soufrière Hills volcano started venting in 1995, my parents moved their business to Antigua and eventually we moved here to join them.

What do you love the most about *Nicole's Table* cookery school?

All the people I meet. I have been lucky to have welcomed fun, interesting people looking to experience how locals live. It takes you off the beach and right into a local home. They come with their own curiosities about learning something new and tasting new flavours. We have a rule here: everything has to be served with a sense of humour.

What do you love most about Antigua?

When we first moved here we had a beach bag in the back of our car everywhere we went, so we were always ready to visit the nearest beach – although now we do take the beach for granted. We have a very comfortable lifestyle here, which is good for our children and us.

What dish should everyone try when they visit Antigua?

I like roti and curry, which is one of the things we make in my cooking lessons. It's one of the meals that I make every time I come home after

travelling. Although I would also suggest red snapper, one of the best fried fish.

Why should Audley travellers come to Antigua over other islands in the Caribbean?

The beaches: Antigua is known for having 365 beaches, one for every day of the year, and if you enjoy sailing you can spend days hopping between them on the gentle trade winds. The other thing is that it's not hugely developed, although you'll still find fine-dining restaurants, great bars and colonial architecture.

TRAVEL TIP

"Antigua has a strong selection of small hotels that offer a more personal experience – it's not as built up as some other Caribbean islands."