

## Notting Hill Carnival

by Jane Lawson at DailyStep.com

At the end of the summer, West London comes alive with Notting Hill Carnival, the biggest street festival in Europe. The carnival takes place over two days. On the last Sunday in August, there is Children's Day, where the kids have their own parade, and on the last Monday in August, a national holiday in Britain, the main carnival parade with its colourful floats, amazing costumes and wonderful soca, reggae, samba and salsa music winds and dances its way through the streets of Notting Hill. You can see the parade in the top pictures.



The Carnival started out in the 1960s as a small festival run by Notting Hill's large West Indian community. Such carnivals are a long-standing tradition in the islands they came from, in the Caribbean. In the early 19th Century (that is, the early 1800s), islanders in the Caribbean, and particularly in Trinidad, started holding carnivals to celebrate the abolition of slavery. These carnivals were the first time that the newly-freed slaves could hold their own festivals, as they were banned from doing so before. These days, Caribbean communities all over the world continue to honour this wonderful tradition.

The air at Carnival is full of the delicious-smelling smoke of hundreds barbecues. Jerk chicken, a spicy West Indian dish, is one of the main foods on offer. You can see a man cooking jerk chicken at his roadside stall in the bottom left hand picture.

This year, around 1 million people attended the Carnival. We were quite apprehensive about it this year, as the Carnival came so soon after the awful riots that I told you about in my last audio blog. We were worried that there might be more trouble, and indeed so were all the shopkeepers in Notting Hill, who boarded up their shop windows so they could not be broken. I did not go to the Carnival this year, but I watched the TV news anxiously the next day, hoping that the 2011 Carnival had been a peaceful one. Thank goodness, it was! People just danced in the streets, as you can see in the bottom right hand picture. It was a healing time for London.

So, let's move on now from this spectacular event. [Next, in the Audio Word Study, we will look at the words TALK and SPEAK.](#)

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