

**“We want to share  
our story with  
the world, and  
we want people  
to know that  
we are Africans.”**

—Miguel Baró

## PHILANTHROPY AND SUPPORT

The Smithsonian Institution—the world’s largest museum, education, and research complex—shares a strong commitment to inclusivity and catalyzing conversations by reaching audiences across the nation and the globe. Our programs are innovative and help people better understand their place in the world, using technologies to engage learners from all walks of life. We are changing the way that people experience programs and museums.

Founded in 1967, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival is dedicated to promoting the understanding and sustainability of living cultures. At the Festival, musicians, dancers, instrument makers, artisans, and other cultural practitioners engage visitors through daily workshops, master classes, discussion sessions, and performances. The public—both on site and across digital platforms—is encouraged to participate in activities and share stories about the ways in which local living culture connects them to each other and to the larger world.

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## OUR CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

The Folklife Festival receives approximately 30% of its infrastructure costs from the federal government. Every year the remaining 70%—as well as all of its program-related expenses—must be raised from outside sources. Your generous support enables us to continue promoting culture of, by, and for the people!

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SMITHSONIAN  
**FOLKLIFE  
FESTIVAL**

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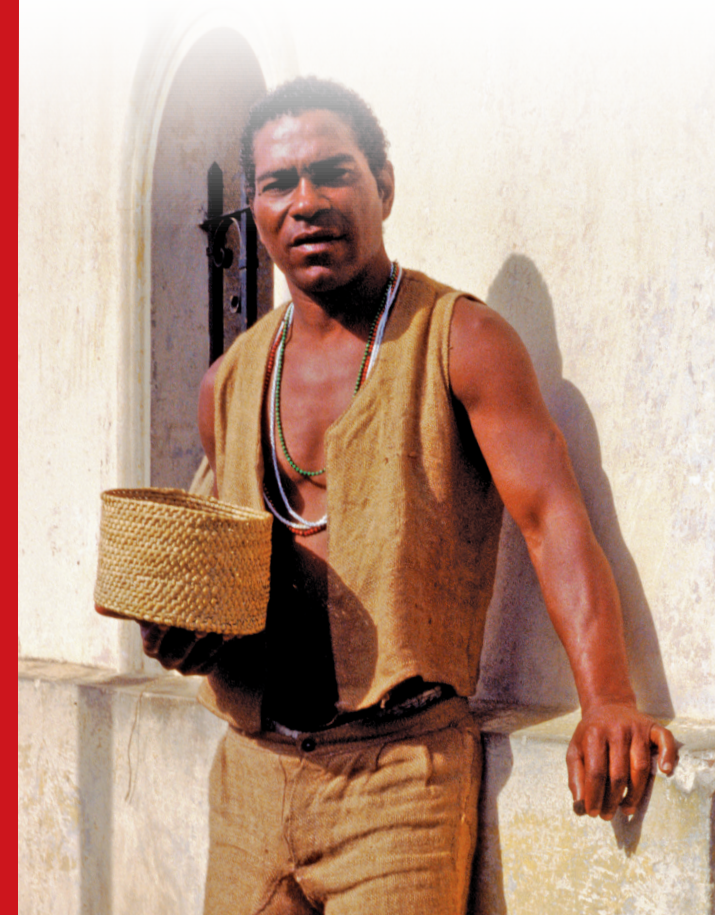


**JUNE 25–28 and JULY 1–5, 2020**  
(June 24– Community Preview)

SMITHSONIAN  
**FOLKLIFE  
FESTIVAL**

**BENIN  
IN  
CUBA**

SACRED KNOWLEDGE IN ARARÁ COMMUNITIES



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In celebration of the determination and creativity in the African Diaspora, *Benin in Cuba* will explore how the small but significant Arará communities on the island use traditional knowledge of herbal medicine, religious expression, music, and dance to sustain a living connection to their African heritage. Their resolve protects their understanding of life as a series of vital exchanges with the natural world, people, and spirits around them. Their perseverance has become one of the defining characteristics of their communities.

At the 2020 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, alongside another program about Benin, we will feature musical groups from Matanzas City, Havana, Perico, and Jovellanos. These include Ojúndegara, the family musical group that continues the legacy of Estabán Baró, who wrote to the King of Dahomey in 1926 and asked to be repatriated. The program will feature performances, demonstrations, dance workshops, and master classes.

Taken together, the Arará communities represent a vibrant if little-known aspect of Cuba's rich African legacy. Famous for their knowledge and their exclusivity, these communities continue to exert enormous influence in African-based religious communities precisely because they have resisted the outside forces that push for assimilation.

This program covers three themes that explore the history of Arará communities in Cuba and reveal their relationship to Benin and beyond:

- ☀️ **Connections to Benin** explores how Arará communities came to Cuba and how individual families have maintained and honored their African heritage.
- ☀️ **The Power of Performance** examines the musical forms and styles unique to Arará communities as well as the ritual practices for which they are famous in Cuba.
- ☀️ **Dispersed Knowledge** looks at how different communities maintain and transmit traditions about herbal medicine, ritual, and music.

## PROGRAM IMPACT

Through exploring the Arará cultural presence in Cuba, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival will attract a broad and diverse audience, providing an on-site and online welcome that reinforces the message, "African cultural knowledge is thriving in Arará Cuba."

- ☀️ *Benin in Cuba* will bring 25 Arará community members to the Festival in June and July of 2020.
- ☀️ Some 10.5 million visitors from across the United States and around the world are expected on the National Mall and online.
- ☀️ A comprehensive marketing campaign will include advertising in local and national news outlets, special events, and extensive social media to attract new audiences to explore and enjoy the program.
- ☀️ A companion online digital strategy will create and share unique digital content to millions of additional visitors.
- ☀️ Online programming and Festival signs will be presented in both English and Spanish, as many African Americans and U.S. Latinos engage African-inspired religious traditions.



# BENIN IN CUBA

SACRED KNOWLEDGE IN ARARÁ COMMUNITIES