# References and sources on Haitian cultural traditions: Dances, gastronomy and myths

If your proposal is an Extended Research Proposal, please keep "Extended:" in the title. Otherwise, please remove it.

Steevenson Monice
Secrétaire Générale, KREPISAJ

Cherlie Saintilus
Coordonnatrice, KREPISAJ

## Abstract

In this research we propose ...

This research aims to document endangered traditional Haitian dance rhythms, particularly Rada, Lejou, Annavankat, and Kwazele 8, which are still practiced in rural areas of the South, Southeast, and Artibonite departments. These ancestral artistic expressions are threatened by oblivion and remain largely undocumented.

The project also extends to mythical figures from Haitian folktales, Vodou traditions, and carnival, as well as ancestral Haitian dishes, which are central elements of the country's culinary identity.

The research approach includes:

- Field investigations (interviews with practitioners, video recordings, documentation of traditional dishes and mythical figures).
- A historical and cultural analysis, based on the few existing documents.
- The production of a bilingual publication (French and English) and a documentary.

The final work will be distributed in book form to public libraries and ten Francophone communities during the next WikiConvention Francophone and published on Wikisource. Videos and photos will be shared on Wikimedia Commons, and research articles will be published online through partner media outlets

## Introduction

**Problem Statement**

Haitian traditional dances, ancestral dishes, and mythical figures are insufficiently documented and risk disappearing due to the lack of transmission and written sources. Yet, these elements represent a significant cultural and anthropological heritage essential to Haitian and Caribbean identity.

**Relevance to Wikimedia Projects**

This project will enhance Wikipedia, Wikimedia Commons, Wikisource, and Wikibooks by providing:

- Multimedia content (images, videos).

- Historical and ethnographic data.
- Oral testimonies and traditional recipes.

**Research Questions**

- What are the historical and cultural origins of the Rada, Lejou, Annavankat, and Kwazele 8 dances?
- What are their unique characteristics and rituals?
- How do practitioners and communities perceive the importance of preserving these traditions?
- How can multimedia and written documentation support cultural transmission?

**Date**: The proposed works begin on July 1, 2025 and end on June 30, 2026.

## Related work

Existing research on Haitian cultural heritage has primarily focused on voodoo, folklore, and general cuisine, with little documentation of the specific dances, mythical figures, and ancestral dishes covered in this study.

- **Traditional dances:** While scholars like Jean Fouchard have explored Haitian dance, the Rada, Lejou, Annavankat, and Kwazele 8 rhythms remain largely undocumented.
- **Mythical figures:** Ethnographic studies mention folklore but lack visual documentation and community perspectives.
- **Ancestral dishes:** Research focuses on popular Haitian cuisine, neglecting lesser-known traditional recipes and preparation techniques.

This project fills these gaps by providing multimedia documentation, integrating community perspectives, and enhancing open knowledge through Wikimedia projects. It contributes to the preservation and accessibility of Haitian intangible heritage.

## Methods

This study employs a **mixed-methods approach**, combining **ethnographic fieldwork, surveys, interviews, multimedia documentation, and journalistic writing** to address the research questions on traditional Haitian dances, mythical figures, and ancestral dishes.

### 1. Data Collection

**Ethnographic Fieldwork**

- Conducted in rural communities of **South, Southeast, and Artibonite**, where these traditions are still practiced.
- Visits to cultural events, local ceremonies, and family gatherings to observe **dances, rituals, and food preparation** in their authentic contexts.
- Video and photo documentation of **dancers, storytellers, and traditional cooks** to capture movement techniques,

oral history, and cooking methods.

**Interviews & Oral Histories**

- **Semi-structured interviews** with practitioners (dancers, elders, voodoo priests, carnival performers, and cooks) to document their knowledge and experiences.
- **Focus groups** with local communities to discuss the **cultural significance and evolution** of these traditions.
- **Oral history recording**, including **songs, myths, and dance-related stories**, for preservation and analysis.

**Surveys**

- **Structured questionnaires** designed to assess the **community's perception of cultural heritage, transmission challenges, and willingness to contribute to documentation efforts**.
- Participants selected through **snowball sampling**, starting with key practitioners and expanding within communities.
- Data collected through **in-person and online surveys**, ensuring participation from **urban and diaspora communities**.

## 2. Data Analysis & Documentation

**Qualitative Analysis**

- **Thematic coding** of interview transcripts to identify recurring **cultural symbols, meanings, and historical references**.
- Comparative analysis of **dance movements, mythological narratives, and culinary techniques** across different regions.

**Historical & Comparative Analysis**

- Cross-referencing oral histories with **existing academic literature, archives, and historical documents**.
- Analysis of **visual and textual sources** to track changes in **dance styles, character depictions, and recipes** over time.

**Multimedia Processing & Wikimedia Documentation**

- **Editing and annotation** of videos and images for Wikimedia Commons.
- Translation and transcription of interviews for **bilingual publication (French & English)** on Wikisource and Wikibooks.
- Integration of **structured data into Wikidata** for linking **cultural elements with existing knowledge databases**.

**Journalistic Writing for Reliable Sources**

- Using **recorded interviews and research findings**, we will produce **press articles** to strengthen the availability of **verifiable and reliable sources** on these topics.

- Articles will be published in **local and international media**, providing **credible references** that can be used for Wikipedia and other documentation projects.

**3. Community Participation & Ethical Considerations**

- Participants will **retain ownership and credit** for their contributions.
- **Free, prior, and informed consent** will be obtained for all recordings and interviews.
- Workshops will be held post-research to **share findings with local communities** before publication.

By using a participatory, open-access, and media-inclusive approach, this study ensures that **Haitian intangible cultural heritage is documented, analyzed, and preserved for future generations**, while also improving **source reliability for Wikimedia projects**.

## Expected output

Our project will generate a diverse range of **academic, multimedia, and public-facing outputs** aimed at **documenting, preserving, and disseminating knowledge** about Haitian traditional dances, mythical characters, and ancestral dishes.

**1. Bilingual Research Publication (French & English)**

**Format**: Printed book and digital version (Wikisource, Wikibooks).
**Audience**: Researchers, historians, cultural institutions, educators, and Wikimedia contributors.
**Benefit**:

- Provides **structured documentation** of **Rada, Lejou, Annavankat, Kwazele 8**, mythical figures, and traditional dishes.
- Serves as a **reliable academic reference** for future research and educational initiatives.
- Distributed to **public libraries and ten Francophone communities** during the next **WikiConvention Francophone**.

**2. Documentary Film (Bilingual: French & English Subtitles)**

**Format**: Online (YouTube, Wikimedia Commons), community screenings.
**Audience**: General public, educators, cultural organizations, and Wikimedia users.
**Benefit**:

- **Visual preservation** of endangered dances, rituals, and traditional food-making processes.
- Facilitates **knowledge transmission** in a dynamic, engaging format.
- Available **openly on Wikimedia Commons** to enrich **multimedia content** on Wikipedia articles.

**3. Digital Archive on Wikimedia Commons**

**Format**: High-quality images, videos, and audio recordings.
**Audience**: Wikimedia contributors, journalists, educators, and researchers.
**Benefit**:

- Provides **verified multimedia resources** for Wikipedia, Wikidata, and other educational platforms.

- Encourages **future research and documentation efforts** using open-access content.

**4. Scientific and Journalistic Publications**

**Format**:

- **Peer-reviewed journal articles** (ethnographic and historical analysis).

- **Press articles** in national and international media.
  **Audience**: Academic scholars, Wikimedia contributors, journalists, and policymakers.
  **Benefit**:

- Strengthens **reliable and verifiable sources** for Wikipedia articles.

- Enhances **public discourse** on the preservation of **Haitian intangible heritage**.

- Targets **academic journals on Caribbean studies, anthropology, and cultural heritage**.

**5. Community Engagement Events & Training Workshops**

**Format**:

- **Wiki contribution sessions** (editing Wikipedia, uploading multimedia).

- **Workshops in schools and cultural centers** to engage local youth in digital documentation.
  **Audience**: Haitian communities, educators, students, and Wiki contributors.
  **Benefit**:

- Empowers communities to **document their own heritage**.

- Trains new contributors in **open knowledge and digital preservation**.

- Ensures long-term sustainability by **engaging future generations** in Wikimedia projects.

**6. Open Data Contribution to Wikidata & Public APIs**

**Format**: Structured cultural data entries on **Wikidata**.
**Audience**: Researchers, developers, Wikimedia editors, and open-data enthusiasts.
**Benefit**:

- **Enhances accessibility** of cultural knowledge through **machine-readable formats**.

- Supports **future AI-driven projects** that require **structured heritage data**.

- Strengthens Wikimedia's **global repository on cultural heritage**.

By producing **open-access publications, multimedia archives, journalistic reports, and community-driven contributions**, this project ensures that **Haitian cultural heritage is documented, preserved, and widely accessible for generations to come**.

## Risks

1) Limited access to rural communities
2) Ensuring authenticity

**Mitigation Strategies**

1) Collaboration with local cultural associations
2) Ethical guidelines for documentation

## Community impact plan

- Workshops in schools and cultural centers.
- Contribution sessions on Wikimedia projects with Wikimedia Haiti.
- Partnerships with libraries, cultural institutions, and media.

## Evaluation

- Number of dance rhythms, dishes, and mythical figures documented.
- Level of community engagement.
- Volume of contributions (articles, multimedia content, references).

## Budget

- Links to the budgets

## References

- This is a selection of references to explore the themes of traditional dances, typical dishes, and mythical Haitian characters. However, these sources only cover part of the cultural richness studied. Due to the lack of in-depth documentation on several aspects, our work relies primarily on field research. This approach allows us to collect testimonies, observe cultural practices, and analyze local dynamics that are not always recorded in existing writings.

**On Traditional Haitian Dances**


- Aristil, S. (n.d.). *Les danses traditionnelles d'Haïti*. Centre Toussaint. Retrieved from https://centretoussaint.com/blog/les-danses-traditionnelles-dhaiti/
- Rabotin, N. (n.d.). *Allez à la rencontre de la danse haïtienne !*. Decibel Danse. Retrieved from https://www.decibel-danse.com/conseils/danse-haitienne/
- François, M. (n.d.). *La danse traditionnelle haïtienne, une ode à la culture et aux racines d'Haïti*. Haiti Wonderland. Retrieved from https://haitiwonderland.com/haiti/culture/la-danse-traditionnelle-haitienne-une-ode-a-la-culture-et-aux-racines-d-haiti/187
- Beralus, M. (n.d.). *Des pas de danse haïtiens menacés*. AyiboPost. Retrieved from https://ayibopost.com/des-pas-de-danse-haitiens-menaces/
- Élie, X. R. (n.d.). *Voyage au cœur de la danse folklorique*. Le Témoin Haïti. Retrieved from https://letemoinhaiti.com/home/article/voyage-au-coeur-de-la-danse-folklorique/
- Honorat, M. L. (1955). *Les danses folkloriques haïtiennes*. État.
- Fouchard, J. (1973). *La méringue, danse nationale d'Haïti*. Leméac.

*révolution dans les rues d'Haïti*. Soul Jazz Books.

**On Traditional Haitian Dishes**


- Appolon, G. A. (n.d.). *Les Délices de la Cuisine Haïtienne : 20 Plats Incontournables*. Haiti Wonderland. Retrieved from https://haitiwonderland.com/haiti/cuisine/les-delices-de-la-cuisine-haitienne--20-plats-incontournables/24
- Pierre, L. M. (n.d.). *Découvrez 7 incontournables délices culinaires haïtiens à savourer*. Dekouvri Ayiti. Retrieved from https://dekouvriayiti.com/api/articles/articles/5/
- Richard, G. (n.d.). *Exploration culinaire : savourez les délices de la cuisine haïtienne, reflet de son héritage*. Le Territorial. Retrieved from https://leterritorial.com/article/exploration-culinaire-savourez-les-delices-de-la-cuisine-haitienne-reflet-de-son-heritage/promotion-du-patrimoine-amp-du-tourisme/221
- Dorélien, G. (2023). *60 recettes de cuisine haïtienne et d'ailleurs*. Amazon Digital Services LLC - Kdp.
- Jean, M. (n.d.). *Cuisine et savoir vivre à l'usage des familles, des éducateurs, des hôteliers et des restaurateurs* (Vol. 2). Université du Texas.


**On Mythical Haitian Characters**


- Casséus Paul, E. (1978). *Panorama du folklore haïtien (présence africaine en Haïti)*. Éditions Fardin.
- Denis, J. (2018). *Rites et ritualisations*. Presses de l'Université Laval.
- Gordon, L., Constantino, D., & Fleming, R. (2010). *Kanaval : Vaudou, politique et*