



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
The True Caribbean

Press Kit



cherylandrews

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

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TRINIDAD & TOBAGO FAST FACTS

Location	Trinidad & Tobago is located in the southeastern region of the Caribbean, seven miles from Venezuela
Capital Cities	Port of Spain, Trinidad Scarborough, Tobago
Population	Trinidad: 1.25 million (estimate) Tobago: 54,000 (estimate)
Ethnic breakdown	40% Indian/South Asian, 37.5% African, 20.5% Mixed, 1.2% other
Language	English (official), Caribbean Hindustani (a dialect of Hindi), French, Spanish, Chinese
Climate	Temperatures range from 70 to 90 degrees year-round. Rainy season is June through December
Money	The national currency is Trinidad & Tobago dollars (TTD). U.S. currency is widely accepted.
Exchange rate	Trinidad & Tobago dollars float with the U.S. Dollar Rate of exchange as of September 2009 is approximately 6.25 TT to 1 USD
International Airports	Trinidad: Piarco International Airport Tobago: Crown Point International Airport

Airlines

Trinidad

American Airlines, Air Canada,
Caribbean Airlines, Continental Airlines,
LIAT

Tobago

Caribbean Airlines

Entry Requirements US and Canadian citizens need a valid passport and onward return ticket

Tourism information For more information on Trinidad & Tobago call 800.816.7541 or visit www.gotrinidadandtobago.com or www.visittobago.gov.tt



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2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

TOBAGO CARNIVAL REGATTA

February 18 – 20

The regatta attracts both the serious racers and the fun-seeking sailors, all going to Tobago with the same purpose, to truly experience the comrade that takes place during Tobago Sail Week. During *Lay Day*, sailors will no doubt be ready for some competition of a different kind Hula Hoop, Salsa, Limbo, Slip n Slide, to name a few. Fuelled by the Angostura Pepsi bar and heckled by the on-lookers, these Landlubber activities will prove that even the worst sailors can win something!

CARNIVAL

March 7-8

Over the past two centuries, Trinidad's Carnival has developed into one of the most colorful and culturally diverse pre-Lenten celebrations in the world. The biggest part of its mystique lies in its unique ability to bring people from all walks of life and backgrounds together for a celebration of culture, calypso and cuisine. In 2008, the annual Carnival season starts right after Christmas, and culminates on Monday, March 7 and Tuesday, March 8.

HOLI

March 1

Holi, Holika Dahan, or the festival of color, sees Trinidadian Hindus celebrating good harvests and the Earth's fertility, playing childish pranks and getting very messy.

GOAT RACES

April 25-26

This is a unique, unusual and to some, a seriously competitive sport on the island of Tobago. Every year, on the Tuesday after Easter, the Buccoo village prepares for the exciting sporting event and renovates itself into a sporting arena. Complete with a 100-yard track and a growing number of spectators from all over the world, the Buccoo Goat Race Festival combines excitement, entertainment and sportsmanship from an out of the ordinary sporting event.

TOBAGO JAZZ EXPERIENCE

April 23-May 1

Tobago Jazz Experience in Tobago is always buzzing with activity. The line-up instantly attracts the real soul and jazz lovers with headliners that included the exceptional talents of Erykah Badu, Chaka Khan and George Benson.



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TOBAGO UNDERWATER CARNIVAL

May 16-23

Tobago will be taking the party beneath the sea this year with its second dive festival. Themed Underwater Carnival, the event is designed to showcase the destination's rich and diverse ecosystem and the explosion of marine life that can be found off the island's shores. Hosted by the Tobago House of Assembly Tourism Division (THA), the Association of Tobago Dive Operators and with the support of the Tourism Development Company (TDC), the week-long event is scheduled to take place from May 16-23, 2011.

GANGA DHAARAA

Late June

The oldest river festival in the world, remembering an ancient cataclysmic ecological event when a severe need for fresh water threatened to destroy human civilization. There are seven ghaats, or locations, along the riverbanks where over 25 activities are held and worship is done in traditional yellow clothing.

TOBAGO HERITAGE FESTIVAL

July 16 – August 1

Tobago's traditional culture and lifestyle are celebrated in the annual Heritage Festival, with events at villages and community centers across the island. It is an outpouring of joy and creativity. The festival celebrates the age-old beliefs and traditions of the Tobagonian people in their original village settings. Each village presents an aspect of the island's heritage and shows off its versatility in song, dance, drama, cooking and costuming.

EMANCIPATION DAY

August 1

This public holiday marks the abolishment of slavery throughout the English speaking Caribbean in 1839. Since 1985, natives celebrate this day every August with a strong emphasis on African-oriented cultural events. In addition, the Great Race, a power boat race from Trinidad to Tobago takes place during this weekend.

SANTA ROSA FESTIVAL

August

The Santa Rosa Festival celebrates the cross-cultural relationship between the Amerindians and Christianity. About 300 descendants of the Carib Amerindians who settled the Caribbean long before Columbus arrived, form a community near Arima carefully protecting their cultural traditions. The festival features a procession headed by the Carib Queen, a lunch with traditional Amerindian food and a display of arts and crafts.



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EID-UL-FITR

August 31

On this day, the Muslim community of Trinidad & Tobago celebrates the New Year. The holiday focuses on the sighting of the new moon by a holy Imam. Once the new moon has been sighted, the Muslim's go through an entire day of feasting to break the month long fast. Visits to relatives and friends are made, gifts are exchanged and lavish dinners are prepared on this day of celebration.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

August 31

On this day, the dual island nation of Trinidad & Tobago celebrates their independence from Britain in 1962. The entire country comes together for this event and enjoys a variety of festivities including a military parade, a steelband parade, national awards, a calypso competition and much, much more.

PANYARD SENSATIONS

September (Exact dates TBD)

This is an annual festival that highlights Trinidad & Tobago's national instrument, the steel pan, and the many practitioners of this remarkable art form. The event is hosted by the Tourism Development Company limited (TDC), in conjunction with Pan Trinbago Incorporated.

PARANG FESTIVAL

September – January 2012

Christmas is also time for "parang," Spanish / Venezuelan carols traditionally associated with house-to-house visiting and hospitality. Parang, performed by costumed bands and singers, can be heard at concert halls, hotels and private parties during the season and at the annual major national competition.

DIVALI

October 26

Known as the "Festival of Lights," this is one of the major holidays celebrated by the Hindu community of Trinidad & Tobago and all over the world. The festival commemorates the return of Lord Rama back to his kingdom after fourteen years of exile as well as light over darkness. In honor of the goddess of light and the return of Lord Rama, the Hindu's light deyas (clay pots filled with oil) and string a breathtaking amount of tiny lights through trees, homes and buildings. Music, dance, greetings, gifts, fireworks and sparklers also mark the festival.



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HOSAY FESTIVAL

December 6

Islamic festival observed by Shi'a Muslims throughout the world. This tradition takes a more solemn religious tone as it is considered a time of mourning for the martyred.

CHRISTMAS

December 25

Christmas is a season that is celebrated by everyone regardless of religious faith, and is marked by extraordinary hospitality. Apart from the traditional Christmas cuisine, other customary specialties include sorrel, a crimson colored soft drink obtained from a local flower, ponche de crème - a sweet milk and rum-based drink, pastelles – spicy meat filled corn patties, ginger beer and black fruit cake.



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TRINIDAD & TOBAGO CARNIVAL FUN FACTS

Did you know.....

- Trinidad Carnival isn't simply a two-day festival, it's a season that builds from Christmas onwards
- Carnival revolves around masquerade (mas bands), steelpan, calypso, soca, fetes (parties), and competitions
- Trinidad & Tobago Carnival is always the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday
- 2010 dates are Monday, February 15 and Tuesday, February 16
- A Kiddies Carnival takes place the Saturday before Carnival Monday
- Official kick-off starts at 4 a.m. on Carnival Monday with j'ouvert morning where participants parade through the streets of Port of Spain covered in mud, oil and paint
- Carnival Competitions include:
 - International Soca and Groovy Soca Monarch (music and performers)
 - Calypso Monarch (music)
 - Chutney Monarch (soca and Indian music blended)
 - Panorama (steelpan)
 - King and Queen of Carnival (costume)
- On Carnival weekend more than 700,000 lbs. of ice is consumed (approximately 350 tons, equivalent weight of 65 full grown African elephants)
- Official Carnival route is 10 miles long, however, most bands do between 5 and 7 miles
- The music trucks which lead the mas bands through the streets generate about 110-120 decibels. For you to understand what that sounds like, stand about 200 ft. from a jumbo jet when it takes off!
- More than 60,000 masqueraders take to the streets every year
- Over 36,000 visitors made the pilgrimage to Trinidad for Carnival in 2009
- More than 60% of the population participate in the event (spectators and revelers)

For more information on Trinidad Carnival and the destination, visit www.gotrinidadandtobago.com.





Unique Sites and Attractions of Trinidad & Tobago

The Pitch Lake – This natural phenomenon, situated in the village of La Brea in southwest Trinidad, has fascinated explorers, scientists and locals since its discovery by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1595. About 250 feet deep at its center, it is estimated to have reserves in excess of 6 million tons, from which approximately 180 tons of pitch are mined daily. On a good day, the output can reach 240 tons. Far from being water, the “lake” is 40 percent pitch, 30 percent water and 30 percent colloidal clay. The only liquid source is the self-replenishing center, known as “The Mother of the Lake.” A gift of nature and a national treasure, The Pitch Lake provides the entire country, and many of the neighboring islands with pitch for building roads. The Pitch Lake is open daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. For tours and information, call (868) 648-7697 or (868) 784-3817.

Hanuman Murti – Standing a towering 85-feet tall, the red and pink-colored statue of the Hindu deity, epitome of wisdom, righteousness and strength, is said to be the largest such statue outside of India. Located in Carapichaima, in central Trinidad, the Hanuman Murti is a “must-see” religious site. The Hanuman Murti stands on the grounds of the Dattatreya Yoga Center and Mandir and attracts devotees offering gifts and performing the ritual of *pradakshina*, or walking clockwise in a holy temple while uttering the sacred Hanuman mantra. The Hanuman Murti took two years to construct and was consecrated in 2003.

The Magnificent Seven – These extravagant structures were originally built as family homes by wealthy Trinidadian men to symbolize their success and elevation in society. All but one of these lavish creations was built in 1904. The buildings are situated on lots located directly across from the Queens Park Savannah. One of the most impressive is *Queens College*. Designed by Daniel Hahn, former alum of the institution, the structure is described as being of German Renaissance style. Next door to the Queen’s College is the far more modest *Hayes Court*. Serving as the residence for the Anglican Archbishop, the building also has the distinction of being the only structure built in 1910. Adjacent to Hayes Court is the French Renaissance inspired *Mille Fleur*. The building was abandoned for several years and has since been acquired by the government with plans to restore it to its former splendor. *White Hall* is viewed as an impressive three-story structure that shimmers and glows in the sunlight. The building is currently being used as the Prime Minister’s office. One of the most popular of all these fabulous creations is the *Stollmeyer’s Castle*. Enjoyed by many for its fairytale style design, the building is described as completely bizarre based on its mix of French, German and Scottish influences. Originally known as the *Ambard’s House*, *Rumoor’s* whimsical domed roofs, arched windows and iron-gate posts are reminiscent of an elaborate gingerbread house. The final member of this remarkable collection is the residence of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Port of Spain.

Main Ridge Rainforest Reserve – Located in Tobago, the reserve is the oldest in the Western Hemisphere. It was established in 1765 as a means to preserve the watershed of the island. The forest offers great biodiversity including many species of birds, mammals, frogs and non-poisonous snakes. Local tour operators offer rainforest excursions into the reserve primarily along the Gilpin Trace trail. Nature enthusiasts and birdwatchers walk into relatively undisturbed forest and feast on the flora and fauna. The reserve has consecutively won the award for World’s Leading Ecotourism Destination by the World Travel Awards from 2003 to 2007.



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Buccoo Reef/Nylon Pool – Buccoo Reef is the largest coral reef in Tobago and was designated as a marine park in 1973. The popular dive site contains a reef system of five flats separated by deep channels. A spectrum of color is offered by the coral gardens and the marine life supported by the reef. A major feature is the Nylon Pool, a veritable tranquil paradise in the ocean. It was given the name by Princess Margaret after her visit there in 1962, who thought the water was as clear as her nylon stockings. This unique feature of the reef complex allows swimmers to enjoy their own private swimming pool. Depths are no greater than 7-10 feet at high tides. Local folklore promises that a swim in the waters of the Nylon Pool will make you look five years younger.

The Caroni Swamp – Considered to be Trinidad’s largest mangrove wetland, the Caroni Swamp is situated just south of the capital Port of Spain on the island’s western shore. Spanning approximately 20 square miles, it is home to over 200 avian species, the most famous resident being the Scarlet Ibis, Trinidad’s national bird. During the day the birds are said to feed 11 miles away in Venezuela and then return to the island at dusk to roost. In so doing converting the mangroves from a sea of green to scarlet red – a spectacle that has become a “must see” for tourists visiting the island. The swamp is a maze of channels and although the Scarlet Ibis is the feature attraction, there is a vast number of wildlife that inhabit the mangroves including fiddler crabs, oysters, four-eyed fish, tree boa and spectacled caiman.

Queen’s Park Savannah – This extensive open area located just north of Trinidad’s city center, is “the world’s largest roundabout”. Occupying approximately 260 acres of land, the Savannah is over 180 years old, making it the oldest recreation ground in the West Indies. It was originally part of the Paradise Estate owned by the Peschier family. In 1817, then Governor Sir Ralph Woodford acquired the property and converted it into a city park keeping a portion of land in the center as a burial ground for the members of the Peschier family. The Savannah, considered the heartbeat of Port of Spain, plays host to larger musical events and is the epicenter for the annual Carnival festivities. As the city’s largest green space, locals can be seen jogging, cycling and walking their dogs at any hour of day or night. On the weekends and after 4 p.m. during the work week, the Savannah comes alive with football and cricket games, jogging, and couples and families talking strolls or having picnics. It is home to coconut vendors whose trucks that line the street on the western side. Other vendors sell roasted corn, oysters, pholourie and sno-cones.



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Eco-Adventure in Trinidad & Tobago

Bird Watching

Bird watchers from around the world come to Trinidad & Tobago to catch a glimpse of the island's 425 diverse species. Birders can begin their journey in Trinidad at the **Caroni Bird Sanctuary**, located at the Caroni Swamp, the protected site of the national bird, the Scarlet Ibis. Then it's off to the **Asa Wright Nature Center**, a 270-acre conservatory, and the **Pointe-a-Pierre Wild Fowl Trust**, a nature conservatory dedicated to the breeding and reintroduction of various bird and waterfowl species to the wild. In Tobago, birders should scope out the **Grafton Caledonia Sanctuary**, the **Main Forest Ridge Rainforest** and **Little Tobago Island** where rare bird species can be found.

Hiking

Both islands feature areas that have trails ideal for hiking such as **Paria** and **Salybia** in Trinidad. The **Paria River** runs from the mountains of the Northern Range and hikers frequent the river's mouth because of its waterfall, serenity and surrounding forest. **Salybia** has winding pathways full of Mora trees leading hikers to the North Eastern coast of the island. After trekking through the **Salybia** trail hikers can enjoy the **Rio Seco Waterfall and Pool**. Tobago's hiking trails include **Argyle Waterfall** where hikers can discover the island's highest falls at the end of an easy 15-minute hike along a trail lined with cocoa trees and **The Main Forest Ridge**, the oldest reserve in the Western Hemisphere that runs along the island's central ridge.

Kayaking

Trinidad & Tobago have many different locations to kayak, from roaring ocean waves to serene swampland where many species of birds and wildlife can be seen. Popular areas for kayaking in Trinidad include the **Nariva Swamp** on the East coast, **Chaguaramas** on the West and **Paria Bay** in the North. In Tobago kayaking is spectacular in **Speyside** where one can paddle for about an hour across to **Little Tobago Island** or along the island's West Coast that features deserted beaches along the route.

Biking

Trails on both islands provide a pathway for both experienced and inexperienced bikers. In Trinidad, bikers can ride along highways from **Diego Martin** in the West all the way to the East and South of the island. **Chaguaramas**, an area that is surrounded by rolling hills, provides the perfect terrain for cyclists; more experienced riders prefer the challenging trail leading to **Cerro del Aripo**. Tobago offers scenic trails as well as ones with drops and steep mountains such as **Indian Walk**, **Gru-Gru Boeuf** and **Chocolate Cake**.

Cave Exploration

Most of Trinidad's Northern Range comprises of limestone caves such as the **Sea Caves** at **Las Cuervas Beach**. Other places of interest include **Dunstons Caves**, located on the **Asa Wright Nature Reserve** that house an oilbird colony, and the **Aripo Caves**. The **Gaspree Caves**, which lie below the ground on the island of **Gaspar Grande** off of Trinidad's northwest coast where pirates and smugglers once used to secure stolen treasures. These limestone caves feature a crystal clear pool that adds to the mystery of the caves.



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AFFORDABLE CHARM IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Budget friendly accommodations for vacationers to this twin-island Caribbean nation

Port of Spain, Trinidad –Travelers looking to get more of Trinidad & Tobago’s authentic local flavor and warm Caribbean hospitality can stay at any one of the destination’s cozy bed & breakfast hotels. Whether hanging out in the capital city Port of Spain, enjoying the electric nightlife and epicurean diversity or exploring nature on the tranquil shores of Tobago, guests will have the opportunity to carve out a personalized experience while visiting the twin-island destination.

Forty Winks Inn, Trinidad

Conveniently located near the vibrant capital city of Port of Spain, Forty Winks Inn is the ideal location for a discerning yet financially savvy traveler. Established in 2003, the hotel combines the charm and intimacy of a small property with services of a larger hotel. Rates start at \$93.50 USD including taxes. For more information, visit www.fortywinkstt.com or call 868.622.0484.

Monique’s Guesthouse, Trinidad

Established by Monica and Michael Charbonnè in 1975, Monique’s is a family-owned and operated hotel that was once their private residence. Surrounded by lush tropical landscape, the hotel offers guests spacious accommodations and warm Caribbean hospitality in a relaxed atmosphere. Nightly rates start at \$84 plus taxes. For more information, visit www.moniquestrinidad.com or call 868.628.3334.

Adventure Eco-Villas, Tobago

Situated on a 12-acre reserve and organic farm, Adventure Eco-Villas is the ideal location for those nature-lovers on the hunt for budget friendly accommodations. Surrounded by Tobago’s tropical flora and fauna, guests at the villa will also have the opportunity to go birding watching. In addition, Adventure Eco-Villas is conveniently located near many of the destination’s restaurants and only 20 minutes away from the airport and the capital city of Scarborough. Rates start at \$105 USD. For more information, visit www.adventure-ecovillas.com or call 868.639.2839.

Scarborough House, Tobago

Located within walking distance of beaches, restaurants and entertainment, Scarborough House, owned and operated by the Scarborough family, provides vacationers with a unique experience and personalized attention to suit their needs. With the comfort and amenities of a ‘down-home’ atmosphere, the guest-house offers every convenience for the business or leisure traveler. Nightly rates start at \$52 USD plus taxes. For more information, visit www.scarboroughhousejs.com or call 868.639.9039.



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Popular Trinidad & Tobago Beaches

Maracas Bay, Trinidad

About an hour from Port of Spain, the drive to this area is a treat in itself, winding through the Northern Range with views of forests where species such as howler and capuchin monkeys, ocelot, Amazon parrots, and wild pigs can be found. Half-moon-shaped Maracas Bay is home to a tranquil, well-maintained beach of fine sand, whose palms frame a horizon of unforgettable sunsets. The beach at Maracas Bay offers a full day of fun and is the place to see and be seen in Trinidad. Maracas Beach is the most popular beach in the North. It is about 45 minutes from Port of Spain. The beach is about 1850 m long and has off white sand. Waves are an average height of 1.0 m. and are ideal for surfing. Facilities are well maintained and include a large car park, tables, benches, changing rooms with showers, toilets and lockers. Visitors can enjoy the tasty local food from nearby vendors or bake & shark on the pits provided. On the hill above the Bay there is a restaurant and bar from which the visitor can enjoy the scenery and tranquility.

Las Cuevas Beach, Trinidad

Approximately three and a half miles east of Maracas Bay is the popular Las Cuevas Bay Beach. Sheltered by the curved embrace of the Northern Range, the surf at Las Cuevas is gentler than that at Maracas Bay. A snack bar, picnic tables, benches, changing rooms and shower facilities are available to visitors and lifeguards are on duty from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

Pigeon Point, Tobago

Picture a small peninsula with tall swaying coconut trees, with open palm-thatched huts on a beach that slopes gently down to the sea, where you can sit and dig your toes into the sand, or take a stroll around the northern corner of the point and feel the fresh Caribbean breeze on your face. That's Pigeon Point Beach, located on the leeward side of Tobago, Pigeon Point is perhaps the island's best sea and land encounter with over 1600 meters of white sand. The island's most famous beach can boast of powdery white sand and leaning coconut palms. Located on a private coconut estate, the small admission fee entitles you to use of the beaches facilities. There is a gift shop, washroom/ showers, snack shop and entertainment stand. One of the most memorable landmarks of Tobago is the little coconut palm covered shelter at the end of the jetty.

Englishman's Bay, Tobago

The beach at Englishman's Bay, on the leeward side of Tobago, is buffered by verdant headlands that cradle a U-shaped beach stretching about a mile. On the southern end of the strand, a freshwater stream flows from the island's lush rainforest interior to the sea. And just offshore, brilliant coral reefs ripple with tropical fish. There are no official facilities here, apart from a small snack cart run by a local selling pies and drinks. But when it comes to a secluded spot to lay out your towel in completely untouched surrounds, few beaches can hang with Englishman's Bay.



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Key Carnival Events

J'Ouvert Morning

J'Ouvert, the official start of Carnival, begins around 4 am after Dimanche Gras and culminates a few hours after sunrise. This traditional mas, or 'ole mas', originates in the 1780s carnival of the French settlers in the Caribbean. A combination of costumes, oration and choreography were adopted and transformed into a selection of carnival characters mixed with history and personality to create what Trinidadians know as j'ouvert.

Today j'ouvert brings out hundreds – thousands – of band members (locals and tourists) celebrating the beginning of Carnival by covering themselves with oil, grease, paint, chocolate and/or mud and “parading” through the towns and villages of Trinidad to the sounds of soca and calypso until the sun comes up.

With so many people in the streets, j'ouvert morning may seem intimidating at times but to put it simply, it is the loudest, messiest and maybe most intimidating fun you will ever have at 4 a.m. in the morning!

Once j'ouvert is over, it's time to grab breakfast, catch a few hours of sleep (if you're lucky) and then venture back onto the streets of Port of Spain and join your masquerade band.

Panorama

Created in 1963, Panorama is competition that celebrates the development of the steel pan. This event is the ultimate test of pan beating the Saturday before Carnival officially begins. The best of the best compete in front of the crowd of spectators and judges. Each band performs one song for the allotted time of ten minutes. The bands are judged on a scale of 100 points: 40 for arrangement, 40 for general performance, 10 for tone and 10 for rhythm. Winners are awarded in the following categories small, medium and large band.

Kiddies Carnival

Carnival Saturday belongs to the children. This is when the masqueraders of the future come out to play, dressed in costumes. Thousands of excited children, from tiny tots to teenagers, take to the streets, their proud parents waving enthusiastically from the sidelines. Kids participate from as early as parents can get them into costume, sometime even strollers are decorated. DJ music blasts from the street corners; the sun blazes down on a sea of bright colors as the nation's youth leaps and dances and generally has a great old time — just “playin' mas”.

Playing Mas (Carnival Monday and Tuesday)

Mas, short for masquerade, bands consist of thousands or more people ‘jumping up’ in the streets of Port of Spain. Band members are adorned in glittery, colorful, scantily clad costumes. Each band has its own historical, mythological or tropical theme with various sections of the band depicting aspects of the theme. Carnival Monday, a warm-up for Carnival Tuesday, marching begins around midday after j'ouvert morning and is used as a dress rehearsal (headpieces and full costume are not required) for Carnival Tuesday as well as a qualification for judging.



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Carnival Tuesday promptly at 8 a.m. and masqueraders are in full costume ready and waiting to strut their stuff and wine wildly in front of the judges.

The National Carnival Commission lays out the route through Port of Spain where band members “chip” (a shuffling of the feet forward in a half walk, half dance motion that allows band members to sway to the rhythm of the music) their way through the city. Bands are judged in three categories: small, medium and large.

Kings and Queens

These costumes that weigh between 50 – 200 lbs usually depict colorful, dragons that breathe fire, butterflies that bounce and flutter, and insects with glowing eyes and antennae’s, are the leaders of the masquerade bands. Designers spend months creating these spectacular and stunning costumes that can reach up to 30 feet high and are usually attached to wheels making mobility easier for the brave soul who will spend two days parading and dancing in it on the streets of Port of Spain.

Upon presenting their works of art to judges, designers enhance their stage show presence (and chances of winning!) with special effects such as lasers, fog, light shows, fireworks and musical sound effects.



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Trinidad & Tobago: The Culinary “Melting Pot”

Culinary aficionados can travel around the twin island nation of Trinidad & Tobago and taste the colorful history that has left an influence of Arabic, Spanish, African, Chinese, Polynesian, Thai, East Indian, Cajun, and indigenous Amerindian in the cuisine of Trinidad & Tobago. From India to the Southern Pacific and the British Isles to Africa, Trinidad & Tobago has welcomed settlers from around the globe with their culinary influences in tow.

Asian

East Indians brought pungent curry spices—Cumin, Masala, Madras and Turmeric. In India, curry means gravy but in Trinidad it has a very specific meaning - it’s more than just a spice – it describes the Trinidadian way of life: full of flavor and excitement. Local ingredients combined with traditional Chinese recipes result in an exotic variation of ‘Chinese food,’ particularly unique when compared to similar dishes served in North America. The island is renowned for Thai and Chinese restaurants that serve Asian dishes flavored with the specific blends, resulting in a rarity of mixtures. Whether the choice is ‘fancy-dining’ or ‘roadside eating,’ the palate is sure to be delighted with exquisite foreign flavors.

European

The flair of the French meets the spices of the islands, and the *Pelau* is born – stewed chicken or beef, cooked down with rice, pigeon peas, pumpkin, brown sugar, onions and garlic, creating a tasty, local mainstay. Corned beef and cabbage, another common, home-styled dish, originates from Ireland in the British Isles.

African

For the most hearty of ‘Creole’ dishes, the African influence is apparent in stews, callaloo (a local spinach soup), fish and “provisions” (root/starchy vegetables such as potatoes, pumpkin, cassava).

It is easy to see why the term ‘melting pot’ has its very own meaning on this floating paradise of tropical mountains, multicultural influences and international flavors.



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DIVE WITH DOLPHINS, SWIM WITH SHARKS OR MINGLE WITH MANTA RAYS IN TOBAGO

Located at the southernmost tip of the Caribbean lies Tobago: the “little sister” island to Trinidad and the ultimate divers den. Known for its unspoiled beaches, relaxed atmosphere and underwater appeal, Tobago offers water adventurers fascinating coral formations, countless fish and invertebrates, and exceptional water conditions.

Tobago provides an ideal location for divers because of the slow flow of the Guyana current that moves up the eastern coast of South America divides around Trinidad and washes the south and east coasts of Tobago. Warm water rich in nutrients provide a haven for a wide range of marine life making it possible for divers to catch a glimpse of barracudas, dolphins, whale sharks, turtles, porpoises, even the occasional manta rays as well as butterfly fish, queen and French angels and parrotfish. Tobago is also one of the few places in the world where divers can regularly dive with manta rays.

Diving is concentrated in five main areas around the island:

- Speyside
- St. Giles Islands
- Man O’ War Bay
- the North Coast
- Columbus Passage.

Tobago has a few true coral reefs, such as Angel Reef and Buccoo Reef where divers can find thousands of barrel, rope and tube sponges on the reef, which are home to countless invertebrates, hydroids and fish. The coral in Tobago is in excellent health and large sizes such as the brain coral heads (reported as being the largest in the world) are estimated to be hundreds of years old and span more than 13 feet across. For more information on diving in Tobago, visit www.tobagoscubadiving.com.



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
The True Caribbean

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Getting Married in Trinidad & Tobago

Application Requirements for Marriage License in Trinidad & Tobago

1. Both parties must be non-residents of Trinidad and Tobago.
2. Parties must establish residence in Trinidad and Tobago no less than three (3) days (the period of residence is calculated from the day after the date of arrival in Trinidad and Tobago).
3. Both parties must attend one of the following offices, in either Trinidad or Tobago, not less than 24 hours before the intended time of marriage, in order to make a statutory declaration and pay applicable fees - **\$55 USD**, during their office hours.

TRINIDAD

Registrar General's Office
Registration House
South Quay, Port of Spain
Trinidad
Tel. (868) 624-1660
Opening hours:
8:30 am to 3:30 pm,
Monday to Friday,
except public holidays

TOBAGO

Registrar General Division
Central Administrative Services, Tobago (CAST)
Jerningham Street, Scarborough
Tobago
Tel. (868) 639-2652-7
Fax. (868) 639-2505
Opening hours: 8:30 am to 3:30 pm, Monday to
Friday, except public holidays.

4. The following documents must be presented with applications:
 - a. Proof of residence-passport and airline tickets
 - b. Identification for the applications-passports
 - c. If divorced, original or notarized copy of decree absolute. A notarized English translation if not in English.
 - d. If widowed, original death certificate of spouse. A notarized English translation if not in English.
 - e. Deed poll or other proof of name change where name differs on documents.



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Historical Buildings in Port of Spain

Brian Lara Promenade

The Brian Lara Promenade, which runs the width of the city center, compliments downtown Port of Spain by adding a relaxed laid-back flavor to the bustling streets of the city. Originally called Plaza de la Marina, it was translated into the English Marine Square when the British captured Trinidad and later renamed Independence Square in honor of Trinidad gaining independence from Britain. In recognition of Brian Lara's achievement of a world record 400 runs in a cricket Test match, it was subsequently renamed. The Promenade now features free outdoor concerts, film festivals, celebration ceremonies and craft shows.

Union Building

The Union Building, located on the corner of Independence Square and Abercromby Street, is over 100 years old and still displays the street signs from the 19th century. Abercromby Street (originally spelt 'Abercrombie'), was named after Sir Ralph Abercrombie, the first British Governor in Trinidad who took possession of the island from the Spanish in 1797. The iron rings cemented into the building were used in the 19th century by owners to secure their carriages. King Street remains a mark of history, although it was later renamed to Independence Square.

Old Fire Station Tower

Originally built in 1896/1897 and refurbished and renovated in 1999/2000, the old Fire Station is an excellent example of the preservation of a historic building which has been elegantly blended with the modern architectural landscape of the city. For 10 years (1989-1999) it was the home of the Trinidad Theatre Workshop which was founded and directed by West Indian poet and Nobel Prize winner, Derek Walcott. It has recently been incorporated into the National Library Complex and remains a historic gem in the city of Port of Spain.

Cathedral of the Holy Trinity

The Holy Trinity Cathedral, one of Port of Spain's oldest landmarks and the first Anglican Church in Trinidad, was originally built to cater for the British forces on the island. The Cathedral which exists today reflects Georgian and Gothic architecture; it is supported by hammer beams of carved mahogany with splendid stained glass windows. The foundation stone was laid on Trinity Sunday in 1816; it was completed in 1818 and consecrated on May 25, 1823. The original Trinity church was a wooden structure that was destroyed by fire in 1808.

The Red House

The Red House that we see today was constructed between 1904 and 1906 and is currently the seat of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. However, it was first constructed in 1844 and as Trinidad was preparing to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, it was inadvertently coated with red paint in anticipation of the event and was hereafter referred to as the Red House. Although it was destroyed by fire during the riots of 1903, it stands as a symbol of enduring democracy in the islands.



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Woodford Square

Situated in the heart of the city, Woodford Square is renowned as a place of political and religious gatherings, entertainment, discussions and craft markets. Formerly known as Brunswick Square, it was renamed after Governor Sir Ralph Woodford, who was responsible for rebuilding the square and much of the city after the 1808 fire. In light of the independence movement led by the political party, People's National Movement, the Square was dubbed "The University of Woodford Square" by the leader and became a place of many political gatherings.

Hall of Justice

Located north of Woodford Square and east of the Red House, the Hall of Justice was purposely designed to add to the character of downtown Port of Spain and to enhance its surroundings by being charming and dignified but without being dominating. It is representative of Trinidad and Tobago's independent Judiciary. The Hall of Justice was formally handed over to the government on 1985 and now houses the Court of Appeal, the Civil and Criminal Divisions of the High Court, the Tax Appeal Board and their respective supporting staff.

The (Old) Public Library

The first national library of Trinidad was established in 1851 when Lord Harris, Trinidad's governor from 1846 to 1854, put forward the ordinance to the Council of Government. It was not until 1902 that it moved to this site on Knox Street. This library was built with a simple arcaded second story, with the arcade providing shaded passageways for both the upper and lower levels of the library. The ground floor comprised a public reading-room, a lending library and a small office for the librarian. In 2003, the library moved to its new complex on the corner of Hart and Abercromby streets.

Greyfriar's Church

Nestled in the heart of downtown Port of Spain, Greyfriar's Church marks the introduction of Presbyterianism to Trinidad. In 1837, this church was established to serve British settlers, most of whom were Presbyterian Scots. The Trinidad Presbyterian Association, formed in 1834 petitioned the Governor, Sir Ralph Woodford for a ministry dedicated to them. Woodford was a major contributor to the development of Port of Spain in the 19th century; the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity and the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception were also built under his governorship.

The Treasury Building

This building was the first site of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago in 1966. On Emancipation Day 1934, thousands of slaves stormed into Port of Spain and gathered in front of the Treasury Building which featured the Government House on the upper level, to protest their new "apprentice" status. Four years later, in this same location, the Emancipation Proclamation was read announcing the beginning of the end of slavery. In 2007, crowds once again returned to the front of the Treasury building in commemoration of Emancipation Day. Today, it hosts divisions of the Ministry of Finance.



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EXPLOSION OF COLOR, CREATIVITY AND CULTURE: THE HISTORY OF TRINIDAD CARNIVAL

History

The evolution of Trinidad's Carnival from a French masquerade ball to a rollicking street festival started before Trinidad was even colonized. Centuries ago, a religious tradition began in Italy of having outrageous costume balls before Lent, a forty-day period before Easter dedicated to soul-searching and repentance. Because Catholics were to abstain from eating meat during Lent, the event was named Carnival derived from the Latin word "*carnevale*" which translates "farewell to flesh." The tradition of the wild parties spread to many countries in Europe including France and Spain and as those countries colonized the New World – they took Carnival with them. French plantation owners who had elaborate masquerade balls introduced carnival to Trinidad in the late 1700's.

Over the years, Trinidad's Carnival has developed into one of the most colorful and culturally mixed pre-Lenten celebrations in the world. Prohibited from joining the plantation balls, African slaves celebrated their own Carnival in private. When slavery was abolished in 1838, the freed Africans took their Carnival celebrations to the streets. As each new immigrant population entered Trinidad, a new flavor was added to the annual event.

Influences

African influences can be seen in all aspects of Carnival from the costumes and characters to the music. A favorite Carnival character is the Moko Jumbie, which is historically tied to West Africa. Men, women and children balance on stilts often increasing their height to 15ft and lead Carnival bands through the streets. Calypso, influenced by African rhythms and now a traditional form of music in the Caribbean, began in Trinidad & Tobago as a subtle protest against British rule.

East Indian influences on Trinidad's Carnival can be tasted, heard and seen throughout the Caribbean nation. Chutney, an upbeat East Indian form of music developed in Trinidad, can be heard throughout the year with competitions during the Carnival season and tassa drums, a goatskin covered drum style also from India, are part of many parades and performances.

Carnival Today

The 20th century brought the invention of the steel pan, an instrument made from used oil drums. Months before Carnival begins, steelbands, composed of one to two hundred pan players, practice for parades and Panorama, the national competition. Women, kids and men of all ages and races can be found practicing in panyards where visitors can listen, eat and drink while the band practices into the night.

Preparations for Carnival start months in advance. Fetes (parties), band launches (fetes to show off a groups costume designs), steel band practice, costume making and calypso tents (calypso concerts) start as early as three months in advance of the actual Carnival dates.

From traditional mas characters such as the Dame Lorraine, the Bat, the Dragon, Fancy Sailor, and the Fireman to "bikini mas", a bikini style costume extravagantly decorated with feathers and beads, to the award winning costume designs by Peter Minshall (Callaloo Company), Wayne Berkeley and Richard Affong, Trinidad's street parade is like no other. The wonderful thing about Trinidad's Carnival is that anyone can participate. Called revelers, participants can sign up with a variety of groups. Mas bands (short for masquerade) are organized groups of costumed revelers. The mas bands provide costumes, pre-and post carnival parties and more. Many bands offer websites where one can review the costumes and join the fun.



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Golfing in Trinidad & Tobago

The Mount Irvine Bay Golf Course, Tobago

The Mount Irvine Bay Golf Course is an award-winning, championship quality 18-hole course with spectacular views of the Caribbean Sea, carved out from the grounds of an old coconut plantation. The course was designed by the late Commander John D. Harris and considered to be his finest work. It is regarded as one of the premier golf courses in the Caribbean. Established in 1968, the course is set within gently rolling countryside along the north coast of Tobago, with a view of the sea from every hole and an abundance of massive coconut palm trees. For more information visit, www.mtirvine.com/golf/golf.asp.

Millennium Lakes Golf & Country Club in Trincity, Trinidad

The PGA-designed 18-hole par 71 championship course features an ample amount of lakes, deep fairways and greenside bunkers. At a length of approximately 6,500 yards, the course is broken up into eleven par 4 holes, four par 3 holes and three par 5 holes. The clubhouse is home to a pro shop, restaurant, sports bar, bag storage facilities and locker rooms for both men and women. Millennium Lakes hopes to draw non-golfing visitors and spouses to experience the relaxing ambiance of the restaurant and the entertaining atmosphere of the sports bar. For more information on Millennium Lakes Golf & Country Club, visit www.millenniumlakes.com or call 868-640-8337.

St. Andrews Golf Club, Trinidad

St. Andrew's Golf Club (also called 'Moka'), located in the hills to the north of Port of Spain, Trinidad, has one of the finest championship quality, 18 hole golf courses in the Caribbean. Listed as a registered club in 1892, St. Andrew's narrow fairways, contoured greens and mature, tropical trees, strategically positioned, provide a stern test to break par. For more information, visit www.golfrtrinidad.com.

Tobago Plantations Golf and Country Club, Tobago

Tobago Plantations Golf and Country Club has been designed to be Tobago and reflects its glorious Caribbean atmosphere. The flat terrain has been sensitively modified to utilize indigenous plants and increase the habitat diversity for wildlife. There are characteristic pot bunkers sunk into the greensides, such as on the 3rd hole, a Par 4 beauty that goes out onto the peninsula to enjoy panoramic views of Scarborough, the capital of Tobago, and the adjacent Atlantic Ocean. For more information, visit www.tobagoplantations.com.



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Trinidad & Tobago: the birthplace of Steel Pan, Calypso and Soca

Calypso

Calypso, a lilting medium for political and social satire, can be traced back to the arrival of the first African slaves brought to work in the sugar plantations of Trinidad. Forbidden to talk to each other, and robbed of all links to family and home, the African slaves began to sing songs. They used calypso as a means of communication and to mock the slave masters. Well-known calypso artists include Trinidadian natives The Mighty Sparrow, long-time King of Calypso and David Rudder, the new generation King of Calypso. Calypso, in turn, has given birth to soca, characterized by saucy lyrics and wickedly infectious rhythms.

Soca

Soca, a modern form of calypso with an up-tempo beat, is a fusion of calypso with Indian rhythms. Trinidadian native Garfield Blackman (also known as Lord Shorty), created Soca in 1941 when it looked like interest in calypso was starting to dwindle. By combining Indian rhythm instruments such as the dholak and tabla with traditional calypso music, Blackman created a new energetic musical mix that today is the music associated with the Eastern Caribbean. Some of the most popular soca recordings include *Hot, Hot, Hot* – Arrow (1983) and *Dollar Wine* – Collin Lucas (1991). Soca has recently been making its way into mainstream music with the help of performers such as Machel Montano and Destra Garcia.

Steel Pan

Not only is Trinidad & Tobago home to two forms of music but the islands also gave birth to the steel pan, the only musical instrument invented in the 20th Century. Half a century ago, Trinidadian percussionists invented pan by hammering out the ends of discarded oil drums. Today you'll find musicians practicing at panyards throughout Port of Spain, especially in weeks proceeding the island's world-famous winter Carnival. Steelbands also compete at the Pan Ramajay Festival in May. October heralds the World Steelband Music Festival and Schools Steelband Festival, and in November the Pan Jazz Festival unites the country's leading pan players with international jazz stars.



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TOBAGO VILLAS

The Villas at Stonehaven

Designed in 18th century French plantation style by renowned architect Arne Hasselquist, each three-bedroom villa is elegantly furnished in solid mahogany traditional colonial style furniture and surrounded by well-landscaped tropical gardens. Each spacious bedroom boasts an en suite bathroom and private balcony. All villas have a private infinity pool, mahogany and granite kitchen, a sitting room as well as a spacious verandah and pool deck to enjoy the tropical breeze and Caribbean sun. For more information visit www.stonehavenvillas.com.

Ohana Villa

"Ohana" Hawaiian for "family rest house" is a traditional West Indian style villa with a hint of the Far East. Designed by Trinidadian architect John Otway, the villa was constructed almost entirely out of varnished yellow pine by local craftsmen. The property sits high up on the end of a small sandy cove that provides open and dramatic views of the ocean and neighboring island of Trinidad. The palm tree and bougainvillea lined driveway guides guests to the entrance portico which opens into the "Tranquility Courtyard" with bamboo and boulders around which the house was built. The four bedroom villa features 2 swimming pools, Jacuzzi, koi pond, large gazebo, and a semi-private beach below the house that is accessible only by three villas. For more information visit www.ohana-villa.com.

Villa Romanca

Romanca is a majestic coral stone villa gracing an acre of a landscaped hillside on Tobago's well established palm-fringed Mt. Irvine golf course. The villa features 7,000 sq. ft. of living space including four spacious, ensuite bedrooms, each with its own unique theme and open air shower, a large formal dining room and lounge area with a fully equipped, modern kitchen. A second lounge area opens out to the pool terrace that features an infinity pool and Jacuzzi. The villa also has a game room with pool table and a gymnasium. For more information visit www.romanca.org.

The Palms Villa Resort

The Palms Villa resort invites guests to experience luxury accommodations in one of Tobago's most idyllic locations. The resort combines tranquil, tropical surroundings with the charm and sophistication of modern furnishings. Each of the resort's five two-storey villas come equipped with three spacious bedrooms, ensuite bathrooms, a private pool, kitchen and entertainment center. Additional amenities include washer and dryer and wireless internet. For more information visit www.thepalmstobago.com.



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“TRINI” TALK

Bacchanal - Big party, confusion, heavy quarreling, good party

Band (mas) - A group of Carnival masqueraders with costumes designed on a related theme. A band can have 4,000 people divided into 25 sections, each with its own theme and several music trucks. Each band has a huge King and Queen costume. Carnival Tuesday will see about 20 large bands go across the stage in competition.

Commesse- Confusion, controversy

Cunumunu- A foolish person

Cutters - Finger food, snack, hors d'ouveres

Dingolay- To dance with joyful indifference

Down the Islands - Excursion to West End Islands and area

Freshwater Yankee- A person who spends a short time in the U.S. and returns with a heavy American accent

Fete - Party

Grog - Rum

Gyul -Trini pronunciation for the girl

Jab Jab - A type of Carnival devil costume; jabs people with his fork and demands money from passersby.

Jus' Now - Wait a minute, in a little while

Las' Lap (Last Lap) - Last minute street partying on Carnival Tuesday which goes until midnight when Ash Wednesday begins.



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Lime or Limin' - Hanging out, loafing, having fun (i.e. let's go down to the corner and lime)

Maco- Someone who minds other people's business

Mamaguy - To put someone on, to make fun of

Mas - Masquerade

Moko Jumbie - Stilt dancers, an African tradition carried over to Trini carnival. Their costumes represent jumbies, or spirits, of African mythology

Road March - Kind of Trinidad's song of the year, or best song of Carnival. As the costume bands cross the stage in the Queen's Park Savannah, the song that most bands dance to is declared Road March for the year, and wins a large cash prize.

Screw Pan- An angry look on a person's face; usually makes them look humorously ugly

Sweeties - Candies

Vex - Angry, cross or upset

Wee - Ours

Wine - to rotate hips in a suggestive manner



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MEET ME IN TRINIDAD

Trinidad is the business and industrial epicenter of the Caribbean, home to the world famous Carnival, and birthplace of the steel pan drum. Aside from booming trade and commerce, heart pounding music, and vivacious culture, Trinidad gives businesses a wide variety of options for meetings. With professional guidance provided by the Trinidad & Tobago Convention Bureau (TTCB) and easy access from major U.S. cities as well as most Caribbean countries plus unique cultural and eco attractions, Trinidad is the ideal location for company meetings, conferences and retreats.

Hyatt Regency Trinidad

The 428-room Hyatt Regency Trinidad, within Trinidad and Tobago's redesigned Waterfront Development (an 8-acre mixed-use development along the waterfront of Port of Spain), offers expansive state-of-the-art meeting facilities with 43,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, a 16,000 square-foot grand ballroom and a 10,000 square-foot multi-purpose facility, full-service restaurants with lobby bar and lounge, rooftop bar and grill, 9,000 square-foot spa and fitness center, and a rooftop pool and terrace. For detailed information on the new Hyatt Regency Trinidad, visit www.hyatt.com.

Hilton Trinidad & Conference Center

The Hilton Trinidad & Conference Center is located in 25 acres of landscaped gardens with views of the capital city of Port of Spain. Overlooking Queen's Park Savannah, the northern mountain range, and the beautiful Gulf of Paria, this Caribbean landmark is also conveniently close to the bustling business and shopping area of Port of Spain. This unique "upside down" hotel features 18 different event and conference facilities with over 40,000 square feet. For more meetings information visit www.hiltoncaribbean.com/trinidad or call 868-624-3111.

Crowne Plaza Hotel

The Crowne Plaza Hotel is located at the center of the city near the Port of Spain waterfront. The hotel offers easy access to financial and commercial districts, downtown shopping, museums and cultural sites. Crowne Plaza features 233 guest rooms, five suites, executive floors and 11 different event and conference facilities with over 23,000 square feet. For more meetings information visit www.cplazahotel.com or call 868-625-3366.

Courtyard by Marriott

Guests experience modern comfort in an atmosphere of genuine Caribbean hospitality at the Courtyard by Marriott, Port of Spain. This charming 119 room hotel, located near the heart of the bustling capital city, features three meeting rooms, a friendly and attentive staff and business center with complimentary high speed internet access. Other features include gym, restaurant and outdoor pool. For detailed information, call 868-627-5555 or visit www.marriott.com.



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The Cascadia Hotel & Conference Center

Nestled in the foothills of the Northern Mountain Range on 25 acres of magnificent lush hillside surroundings, Cascadia is a five minute drive from the historic Queen's Park Savannah and eight minutes from the capital city of Port-of-Spain. The hotel features 68 rooms, five meeting rooms and one grand ballroom as well as state-of-the-art equipment and dedicated support staff to ensure the highest standards of service and attention to detail. For more meetings information visit www.cascadiahotel.com or call 868-623-3511.

The Chancellor Hotel & Conference Center

This warm 30 room hotel complete with Spanish style courtyard and fountain is nestled in the foothills of St. Ann's five minutes from downtown Port of Spain. Ideal for smaller meetings and events, the hotel features suites, executive rooms, and conference facilities able to accommodate 60 people. For more meetings information visit www.thechancellorhotel.com or call 868-623-0883.

About The Trinidad & Tobago Convention Bureau (TTCB)

The Trinidad & Tobago Convention Bureau (TTCB) offers comprehensive information on the islands' venues, hotels, sites and attractions. Established in August 2009, the TTCB's goal is to position the twin-island nation as the meetings, conferences and events capital of the southern Caribbean by acting as an intermediary between meeting coordinators, local chapters of international organizations, domestic business chambers and hotels. In addition, the bureau will spearhead campaigns designed to market and increase exposure of Trinidad & Tobago as the destination of choice for regional and international meeting planners.



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Unique Boutique Hotels

Coblentz Inn, Trinidad

This boutique hotel features rooms inspired by the island with an abundance of cultural influences. Each themed room opens a window onto the landscape of Trinidad & Tobago's rich heritage and showcases the historical, social and cultural diversity of the island. Themed rooms include:

- The Government House - a tribute to Trinidad & Tobago's rich political history
- Central - a room that glitters with the opulence of Indian palaces
- Down the Islands - a whimsical room inspired by the small islands located off the northern shores of Trinidad
- Old House - a commemoration to the island's colonial past

The hotel also features one of Trinidad's finest restaurants, Battimamzelle, serving Creole and international cuisine. For information visit www.coblentzinn.com.

Asa Wright Nature Centre Lodge, Trinidad

The original estate house of a former coffee-cocoa-citrus plantation has been beautifully remodeled over the years as a comfortable headquarters where guests gather to watch the incredible birdlife from the fabled verandah. Observation time is punctuated by a high tea in the afternoon and ends with a traditional complimentary rum punch cocktail as the sun sets over the Arima Valley. This main house and its several cottages nestled nearby in the lush flower-filled grounds are home for one of the world's best birding adventures. Not the classic Caribbean resort, the centre's "swimming pool" is a natural grotto on a free-running rainforest stream where guests can relax and escape from the tropical heat. All of the cottages feature rooms with private verandahs and guests can also retreat to their private oasis to observe the brilliantly colored birds found on the centre grounds. For more information visit www.asawright.org.

Footprints Eco Resort and Spa, Tobago

This 62 acre property is a designated nature preserve with a variety of hiking and bird watching trails. With the use of materials such as teak, wallaba slabs and native recycled hardwood the resort has maximized the consumption of local yet natural building materials. The buildings on the property have been constructed on columns and wooden walkways have also been installed along the seafront to minimize silt runoff that causes erosion. All rooms are equipped with solar water heaters, gas stoves and photovoltaic lighting. The hotel also grows fresh organic herbs and vegetables on the property. It is surrounded by the virtually untouched Culloden Reef that begins a few feet from the shoreline of the property and is available for guests to snorkel and scuba dive. For further information visit www.footprintecoresort.com or call 868.660.0416.

Kariwak Holistic Haven Hotel, Tobago

A holistic haven and hotel, Kariwak Village has carved a distinctive niche with its award winning 2 acre garden bursting with tropical shrubs, foliage and flowering trees filled with bird song, dominated by the thatched roof ajoupa and its teak floor ... the venue for Tai Chi, yoga, gentle stretching exercises, Buddhist meditation sessions and similar holistic activities. The Kariwak kitchen is supplied with abundant fresh herbs from the garden, those same herbs are lovingly transformed into delicious Caribbean meals which are served with a friendly smile in the open air restaurant. For more information visit www.kariwak.com or call 868.639.8442.



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