

## District Guide

Trinidad and Tobago are an unusual blend of cosmopolitan urbanity and Old World charm. While these islands are the birthplace of calypso, limbo and the steelband, countries from almost every continent have influenced the culture and heritage. In Trinidad, there is a certain sophistication that is not found elsewhere in the Caribbean, while the lush tropical environment of Tobago offers scenic beauty and excellent diving.

Adjacent to South America, Trinidad and Tobago were once attached. Together they form the southernmost islands of the Lesser Antilles chain. Often claimed the best islands in the Caribbean for ecotourism, their flora, fauna, geological formations and wildlife are similar to the South American mainland in many ways.

### Port of Spain

As the capital city, Port of Spain is where you will find historical buildings, formal parks, museums, zoos, the commercial district and the Cruise Ship Complex. At [Woodford Square](#), soapbox politicians expound the probing issues of the day. Central to the city is the [Queen's Park Savannah](#), the largest park on the islands. This venue combines athletic and cultural activities, inclusive of an aerobic centre, concert hall, Carnival stage, football and cricket fields, jogging tracks; in addition to housing some of the finest restaurants and casual pubs. [The Magnificent Seven](#) is a row of Colonial great houses built in various European styles circa 1900. Also of architectural interest are the [Queen's Royal College](#); Whitehall, the Prime Minister's office and the George Brown House on the south side of the Savannah.

### Port of Spain Suburbs

Port of Spain was developed around the Harbour that is protected by the hills of the Northern Range. The city's oldest suburb is actually the birthplace of the modern day [Carnival](#). It is a community that is influenced greatly by African traditions. The crowded 'hill' district is home to the Shrine to Our Lady of Laventille and the residence of Trinidad's leading bands, the Witco Deperadoes.

In the southwest, Maraval Road is the suburb that features small businesses, restaurants, and where modest residential houses line the streets. On Marli Street, one can find the US Embassy.

St Clair is a residential community that developed in the 1960s. It is home to the Canadian, British and French Embassies and the Queen's Park Oval, a popular cricket ground.

Ariapita Avenue that runs the length of Woodbrook, east to west is being reinvented and is often described as a smaller version of New York City's Greenwich Village. Here you will find entertainment venues and restaurants that feature every conceivable type of cuisine.

Western Main Road to the Sea at Cocorite is an East Indian immigrant district. It features Moslem Mosques, a Hindu mandir and Christian churches and is a busy commercial and shopping area.

The Maraval valley was first settled by French families and today features attractive shopping, restaurants, bakeries and several guesthouses. The St. Andrew's Golf Course is an 18-hole course that can be found at the far end of the Maraval valley.

### Chaguaramas

This district features wooded hills and uninhabited valleys, which have remained relatively undeveloped. Chaguaramas Public Golf Course is a challenging 9-hole course, which is within walking distance of Edith Falls. The Trinidad and Tobago Yachting Association is based here and there are a number of marinas that accommodate boats from all over the world. The underground limestone caverns on Gasparee Island [Gasparee Island & Gasparee Caves](#) may be visited here as well.

### **North Coast**

The [Northern Range](#) is a rocky coast that includes a dense rainforest. Here you will find one of Trinidad's favourite beaches at [Maracas Beach](#) and El Tucuche; one of the highest peaks is situated between Maracas and Las Cuevas. Nestled within the Arima Valley is the [Asa Wright Nature Centre \(The\)](#), which provides birdwatchers with access to the colony of oilbirds.

### **East-West Corridor**

The Eastern Main Road traverses along the Northern Range from Port of Spain to Matura and Manzanilla. The towns along this strip all seem to have converged into one continuous urban sprawl. At the Fernandes compound you can tour the Angostura distillery. If you are nature lover or picnicker, the sacred region of the Maracas Waterfall is very popular. [Mount St. Benedict](#) Church and Monastery is the oldest Benedictine Monastery in the Caribbean and overlooks St. Augustine and the Caroni Plains in this district as well.

### **Crown Point**

Tobago's tourism mecca is at Crown Point. Here you will find many hotels, guesthouses and beaches. Store Bay is one of the most popular beaches on the Island. Known for its excellent snorkeling, it is a haven for brain coral, trunkfish, parrotfish and baby squid. Families will enjoy [Pigeon Point](#) where the waters are calm and watersports, restaurants, entertainment and shopping are all within close proximity.

### **Scarborough**

The small capital town of Scarborough houses 50,000 locals. Cruise passengers frequent this port of call for shopping, the Botanical Gardens, [Fort King George](#) and [Tobago Museum \(The\)](#).

### **The Lowlands**

Tobago's biggest resort project can be found at the Lowlands. The [Hilton Tobago](#) houses 200 guestrooms and a championship golf course. The additional phases are scheduled to include a 120-berth marina and a yacht club.

Unique architecture, religious diversity, cultural traditions and cosmopolitan populations accentuate the towns and cities. Virtually a melting pot Trinidad and Tobago are home to Africans, Chinese, Hindus, Muslims, Indians, Syrians, Portuguese, Spanish, French and the English. Collectively called 'Trinbagonians', they co-exist in harmony and pride of their multicultural heritage. The national psyche is one of peace and their inherent enjoyment of life can be found in all of their neighbourhoods.

[http://aavacations.wcities.com/en/guide/gen\\_intro/370/guide.html](http://aavacations.wcities.com/en/guide/gen_intro/370/guide.html)

## **Recommended Tours**

### **Tour Ariapita Avenue**

A great place to start any walking tour of Trinidad is a stroll along what is commonly known as, "The Avenue. Ariapita Avenue, the main street that runs through Woodbrook, Port of Spain in Trinidad, is often described as a smaller version of New York's Greenwich Village. It extends from the Hasely Crawford Stadium in the west, to the ice factory in the east. This district has been laid out in a very orderly grid, so it is difficult to get lost. The walk will take you past some 20 restaurants. Between the diverse cuisine and the range of pricing, you can choose from fast food to fine dining. During [Carnival](#), costumed bands march along this broad thoroughfare. The graceful character of the older buildings that only ascend two stories add an ambiance of Old World charm.

### **Walking tour in Tobago**

Try the five-mile walk from Roxborough to Parlatuvier and Bloody Bay through the Main Ridge Forest Reserve. Here you find limited traffic as you travel through forests that are home to many different species of birds including the famous humming birds. Here you will also find King's Bay where you can swim and enjoy the scenic waterfalls.

### **Bus Excursions**

If you want to tour like the natives, hop on one of their brightly painted maxi-taxis with a name like "Wild Child. A well-paved route spanning approximately 28 km from Port of Spain to Arima, called the Priority Bus Route is used almost exclusively for buses and maxi-taxis. In the case of the maxi-taxis, the operators have to have special passes to use this route. It is an easy and cost-efficient way to tour the East-West "Corridor" of Trinidad.

### **Driving Tours**

Car rentals are available from rental companies at the airports or in the downtown areas. The highway network is efficient and connects Port of Spain in the north, to [Arima](#) in the east and San Fernando in the south. Remember to drive on the left and drive defensively since locals have a tendency to run red lights and neglect signaling. In Tobago, when you travel from Crown Point to Scarborough, the speed limit is only 30mph. Here the roads are very narrow and have a tendency to wind and turn. Always be on the look out for crossing animals.

A scenic drive in the hills of Trinidad will provide you with exciting vantage points to view the city, sea and mountains. If you travel up Lady Young Road about two miles from the [Queen's Park Savannah](#), you will reach a lookout point that is over 500 feet above sea level. Further up on Lady Chancellor Road you will be able to view the shrine of Our Lady of Laventille. By taking the Fort George Road as far as it will go, you will then need to walk about an hour to [Fort George](#). From here you can continue on foot to the top of the hill, where there are spectacular vistas of Port of Spain; and on a clear day you can see Venezuela.

### **Tours and Taxis**

The budget minded can travel inexpensively on shared-route taxis. The tour operators that are available can provide a number of eco-tours. Consider the Caroni Swamp, the [Nariva Swamp](#), the hike to Paria or the Asa Wright Nature Centre for bird watching. Sailing, turtle watching, game fishing and boat charters can also be arranged by inquiring at the concierge or activities desk of your hotel.

A trip to Charlotteville on Tobago can be accommodated by a maxi-taxi for USD 3. There are exhilarating views along the way from Scarborough, and the village is situated on a horseshoe bay and offers a splendid beach. From Charlotteville, it is a 15-minute walk to Pirate's Bay, which is a great venue for snorkelling.

### **Beach Walks**

On Trinidad's northern beaches you can walk for miles along the East Coast lined by coconut palms. Here you may find strong currents and riptides. If calmer waters are more to your liking, try the beaches on the southwestern region. It is always wise to wear insect repellent and sunscreen and to be aware that the many beaches are not manned by lifeguards nor offer public facilities. In Tobago, [Pigeon Point](#) is considered the island's most beautiful beach. Since the land is private, adults are charged 2USD and children .50USD. Here you will find huts, tables, benches lockers, bars, shopping and watersports.

Written by Ron Callari, July 2, 2001

## **Bird Watching and Eco Tourism**

For avid bird lovers, there are extensive tours to showcase over 400 species in Trinidad and 210 in Tobago. The species of birds include the Tufted Coquette, Toucan, Yellow Headed Parrot, Red-billed Macaw, Osprey and of course the Scarlet Ibis which is the national bird. Some of the recommended tours in Trinidad are the [Pax Guest House](#), Mount St Benedict, which offers birding packages and accommodations on their 600-acre tropical rain forest in North Trinidad. Similarly, the Asa Wright Nature Centre and Lodge, near the Eastern Borough of [Arima](#), offers the most accessible colony of oilbirds on their 200-acre conservation in North Trinidad. The centre offers buffet-lunch, 2 hour guided tours and visitors are encouraged to bathe in its waterfall and pool. The [Point-A-Pierre Wild Fowl Trust](#) in South Trinidad offers daily tours around their resource and learning centre, that protects endangered waterfowl.

Those wanting to take an adventure by boat to a smaller island off the coast of Tobago can enjoy an exclusive wildlife sanctuary on an island called [Little Tobago](#). All of the nature reserves are equipped with knowledgeable guides, nature trails and maps.

The adventure does not stop here, as there is the flora and fauna for the nature lovers who enjoy ecological wonders, tropical flowers, magnificent trees and rich plant life. In April and May the hills are alive with the flamboyant pink and yellow colours of the Poui tree. Both islands offer botanical gardens that are free to the public and have accessible information about the plant life, without the use of guides. There are several trails to explore, with tour guides to take you through the lush, green tropical forest.

Other tours of interest include one to the famous [Pitch Lake](#), located in La Brea, South Trinidad. As the name suggests, the lake is an endlessly replenished supply of pitch or natural asphalt that is used to cover roadways. Tours can be arranged from major hotels and through local operators.

Another delight of the twin isles is that the East Coast beaches. Here you will find protected beaches that play host to [Leatherback Turtle Egg Nesting](#), which takes place from March to August every year. Access to the protected beaches is only made available through guided tours. Visitors can get close to the leatherback turtles as they lay their eggs.

Waterfall hikes are very popular with tour groups. The Paria Waterfall in Trinidad offers one of the most scenic hikes on the northern coastline. Other options are the Maracas Falls, Maracas; Salybia Waterfall, Arima and the Rincon Waterfall in Las Cuevas. In Tobago there is the Argyle Waterfall in Roxborough

## **Diving**

Tobago is the place for underwater adventure; you can dive, snorkel, see, touch and experience the untold treasures of the blue waters. Every known species of coral, including the world's largest brain coral, which is 12 feet high and 16 feet across, lies at the bottom of the Tobago Ocean floor. Popular underwater tours are to the Angel Reef, Japanese Gardens, Blackjack Hole and The Sisters, all of which can be found off the coast of Tobago near Speyside.

<http://aavacations.wcities.com/en/guide/tours/370/guide.html>

## Trinidad Carnival

### 'The Greatest Show on Earth'

Various venues, Trinidad, TT +1 868 623 1932

Trinidad Carnival is without doubt the most beloved national festival. The build-up begins after Christmas and climaxes on the Monday and Tuesday before Lent. It is an exhilarating celebration of the island's culture with numerous events, including calypso and soca music competitions and happening seasonal parties across the country. Port of Spain is the nerve centre for all the activity. By noon on Carnival Monday morning, the stage is set for the festival's climax, beginning with Jouvert and ending with the much-anticipated street parade on Monday and Tuesday in which costumed revellers take to the streets in all their colourful splendour.

**start date:** 2007-02-19 **end date:** 2007-02-20

## Arima

### A borough rich in history

(East of Port of Spain), Arima, TT

City Gate (from Port of Spain along the Eastern Main Road or Priority Bus Route (PR))B

Arima is located to the North of the island and East of the capital, Port of Spain. It is a town with much history and endless cultural diversity. The name "Arima" was given to the town by its original decedents, the Amerindians. The name "Arima" itself is Amerindian, meaning water. One of the earliest settlements in the country, Arima was founded by Capuchin priests, who came to establish a mission and convert the Amerindians. They built a church that was dedicated to a young girl from Lima, Peru named Rosa who had been canonized. By the 1800s, Arima grew in size and importance. On August 1, 1888 Arima became a Royal Borough, becoming the first and only town in the colonies that Queen Victoria had honoured by naming so.

## Queen's Park Savannah

### Capital's most popular spot

Queen's Park West, East, North and South

Port of Spain, TT Hart Street +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

The park covers an area of 400 acres and was formerly a large sugar estate. It was later purchased by Governer Ralph Woodford in the early 1800s. He later donated the land to the city. The savannah is one of the island's foremost centres of activity. Many of the city's largest buildings have the savannah as a backdrop. The pitch walk that encircles it is a haven for fitness enthusiasts and those out for a leisurely stroll. The Queen's Park Savannah is also the location for many of the country's most exciting events, including [Carnival](#) and other cultural and international concerts.

## Nariva Swamp

### A haven for endangered species

Nariva Nariva County, TT +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Authority)

This is Trinidad's most important natural reserve, located in South Trinidad in the county of Nariva, and is protected as a wetland of outstanding scientific value. The towering mangrove forest blots out the sun and aerial roots descend like tentacles over eerie waterways. In the 15km-square Bush Sanctuary, the vegetation changes to palm marshes, hardwood forest, silk cotton trees and giant water lilies. The Swamp has 58 species of mammals, including the last surviving colony of manatee on the island, red howler monkeys, weeping capuchin monkeys, giant anaconda, caiman, 32 species of bats and 171 species of birds.

## Woodford Square

### One of the most popular landmarks

At the intersection of Hart St, Frederick St, Pembroke St & St. Vincent St, Port of Spain, TT  
Hart Street (taxi) +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department)

Woodford Square, situated on lower Frederick Street is considered the capital's most popular landmarks. Formerly known as Brunswick Square, it was renamed for Governor Sir Ralph Woodford. The Square is flanked by the [Holy Trinity Cathedral](#) to the south, the [Red House](#) to the east, the [Hall of Justice](#) to the north and the bustling Frederick Street to the west. It is home to political gatherings, both formal and informal, as well as cultural events.

## Holy Trinity Cathedral (The)

### Anglican cathedral

30A Abercromby Street, Port-of-Spain, TT  
City Gate (Port of Spain-maxi-taxi); Hart St(taxi) +1 868 623 7271 Fax: +1 868 624 9827

In 1999, Anglicans in Trinidad and Tobago celebrated the 175th anniversary of one of the country's oldest landmarks. After the original building was destroyed in a fire in 1908, the church was rebuilt in its present location with help from the British Government. The foundation stone was laid on Trinity Sunday in 1916 and the church, magnificently reflects Georgian and Gothic architecture, and was consecrated on May 25, 1923. The Trinity Cathedral has recently been restored to its original majesty.

## Red House (The)

### Home of Trinidad & Tobago's democracy

West of Woodford Square in Port of Spain, Port of Spain, TT Hart Street (taxi) +1 868 623 7045

The Red House is a majestic structure located West of [Woodford Square](#) in Port of Spain. The building, which is the seat of the nation's Parliament and Senate, comprises two blocks and is connected by a double archway. The building's history has been as turbulent as it has been long. Though the original structure was destroyed, renovations have been undertaken and the Red House stands as strong and proud as the democracy it houses.

## Hall of Justice (The)

### Symbolises independent judiciary

In the centre of Port-of-Spain, East of the Red House, Port of Spain, TT Hart Street (taxi)

The Hall of Justice is located in the centre of Port of Spain, East of the [Red House](#). The structure, handed over to the government in 1985, houses the Court of Appeal, the Civil and Criminal Divisions of the High Court in Port of Spain, and the Tax Appeal Board. The modern exterior architecture was inspired from a need to construct a building that would be dignified without being too imposing.

## Magnificent Seven (The)

### Spectacular mansions around Queen's Park Savannah

Queen's Park West, Port of Spain, TT, Hart Street +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

This is a group of extravagant and eccentrically designed mansions lining the western side of the Queen's Park Savannah, built around the turn of the century. They run from south to north and comprise of the following: Queen's Royal College, a boys' secondary school; Hayes Court, the Anglican Bishop's residence; Salvatori House; Mille Fleurs; Roomor; the Roman Catholic Archbishop's House; Whitehall, the Prime Minister's office; and Stollmeyer's Castle, modelled on Queen Victoria's royal retreat at Balmoral in Scotland.

## Queen's Royal College

### One of Port of Spain's foremost landmarks

Queen's Park West, Port of Spain, TT, Hart Street (taxi) +1 868 622 1671


Its German Renaissance design and majestic clock tower make Queen's Royal College one of the country's most recognizable landmarks. The school, located around the [Queen's Park Savannah](#), was known originally as the Stuart Grammar School for Boys and was housed elsewhere in the capital in the mid-nineteenth century. Today, Queen's Royal College is one of the country's most notable boys' secondary schools and is the alma mater of several prominent nationals, including the country's first Prime Minister, Dr Eric Williams.

## Gaspree Island & Gaspree Caves

### Second in "Five Island" chain

(off the Western Peninsula) Chaguaramas, TT Port of Spain +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

Gaspree Island, also known as Gaspar Grande is one of a chain of five islands situated just off the Western Peninsula of Trinidad (better known as "Down the Islands"). On this island there exists a labyrinth of natural caves, filled with stalactites and stalagmites and ready for exploration. The area, which also houses some remnants of Colonial Trinidad, has been developed to include picnic facilities. Boats leave the mainland regularly for Gaspree Island.

 Caves: 9a-2:30p M-F, 9a-3p Sa

## Northern Range

### Trinidad's highest mountain range

Northern Range, Caura, TT, +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

A day trip to this part of the island will ensure that you come across the highest mountains in Trinidad, El Cerro Del Aripo and El Tucuche. A hike to the summit could provide the opportunity for sighting a variety of wildlife species, including agouti, maniocou (opossum), deer, quenk (wild pig) and anteaters, as well as interesting vegetation, especially above 600 metres (2,000 ft.). You can also make a trip to the Aripo Caves, which go 90 metres (300 ft.) into the ground. Nature Seekers Limited can organise this day-trip. [Pax Guest House](#) is also a great Northern Range vantage point.

## Pax Guest House

### You're guaranteed to relax amidst this guest house's peaceful surroundings

Mount St. Benedict, Tunapuna, TT +1 868 662 4084 Fax: +1 868 662 4084

You're guaranteed to relax amidst this guest house's peaceful surroundings or take one of its guided bird watching tours. Enjoy the view of exotic tropical flora and fauna while having breakfast or tea on the balcony overlooking the lush [Northern Range](#). Pax Guest House is the oldest guest house in the country, established in 1916 and well renowned for its beauty. Located in the [Mount St. Benedict](#) complex, in the cooling breezes 800ft. above sea level and with 600 acres of forest for you to explore. It is twenty five minutes from the capital city of Port of Spain.

**Rooms & Charges** 9 rooms in total. Singles From US\$ 56.25. Doubles From US\$ 93.75. Check In: 3p. Check Out: Noon. **Services & Facilities** Television, Parking, Air Conditioning. **Special Feature** Dinner and breakfast included.

## Mount St. Benedict

### The Caribbean's oldest monastery

St. John's Road, St. Augustine, TT Tunapuna (taxi) +1 868 622 4084

Established in 1912, Mount St. Benedict is the oldest Benedictine monastery in the Caribbean. Located 800 feet above the plains, the building can be seen clearly from the Eastern Main Road, The Priority Bus Route and the Churchill Roosevelt Highway. The grounds of the monastery are picturesque and offer visitors a serene atmosphere with some good nature trails. There is also a guesthouse on the grounds that serves as the ideal retreat from the everyday.

## Pigeon Point

### Tobago's most famous beach

Near Crown Point Airport, Pigeon Point, TT +1 868 639 8141

This is perhaps Tobago's most famous beach, an idyllic locale of powder-fine white sand and classic Caribbean leaning palms. There is an entrance fee of TT\$10.00 (TT\$5.00 for children) to make use of the surrounding beachfront property: facilities include change-rooms, a small restaurant and bar and seating areas. Another of Tobago's natural treasures, Buccoo Reef, is just offshore. This beach is located ten minutes north of Crown Point Airport and within walking distance of many restaurants, groceries, hotels and guest-houses. The water is calm, clear and shallow. There are vendors' booths and thatched huts for shade.

## Fort King George

### Historic Tobago fort

Fort St, Scarborough, TT, Scarborough, +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)


Fort King George is known as Tobago's main historic site. Located in the island's capital, just minutes from the Scarborough Hospital, the fort commands the hilltop over the town and a huge stretch of coast and ocean approaches. It was built by the British in the 1700s when it was also captured and occupied by the French and renamed Fort Castries. The old officers' currently houses a craft shop and the former military hospital is now home to the National Fine Arts Centre, which displays Tobago art and sculpture. The forts powder magazine, cell block and water tanks are still popular attractions.

## Tobago Museum (The)

### Chronicles Tobago's Amerindian & colonial background

Fort Street, Scarborough, TT, +1 868 639 3970

Located in the Barrack Guard House at Fort King George, the museum provides a good insight into Tobago's early Amerindian era, and its subsequently bloody colonial history. The museum has an excellent display of Amerindian pottery and shells (as well as the a skeleton of an Amerindian native). There are military relics of the colonial impetus, as well as interesting maps and documents from the era of slavery.

 9a-5p M-F

## Hilton Tobago

### Hilton on 750-acres of plantation

Southwest Coast, Scarborough, TT +1 868 624 3211 Fax: +1 868 624 4485

The Hilton Tobago is the Hilton's seventh Caribbean hotel and a AAA Four Diamond rated resort, located on the southwest coast of the 750-acre Tobago Plantations Development. It features a private beach, natural lagoon and protected mangrove forest. The guestrooms and suites are open-air and spacious and each includes a balcony or patio. The amenities (like cotton robes and a bug zapper) in the bathroom underscore the luxury of this new resort. Overlooking a sandy beach, there is also a fenced playground with wading pool adjacent to the Learning Centre. Dining is offered in two restaurants, a pub, and three bars.

**Rooms & Charges** 200 rooms in total. Doubles From [USD](#) 210. Check In: 3p. Check Out: Noon.

**Services & Facilities** Minibar, Private Beach, Laundry Service, Restaurant, Television, Parking, Safe Deposit, Bar, Computer Facilities, Internet Access, Swimming Pool, Business Facilities, Childcare Facilities, Air Conditioning, Sauna, Whirlpool, Non-smoking Rooms, Fitness Club.

**Conferences** Resort features a ballroom of 4,675 sq ft and two small meeting rooms(825 sq ft each).

### Special Feature


Each room and suite features ceiling fans, coffee maker, electronic safe, AM/FM radio, data ports, bathrooms with magnifying mirror, hair dryers and separate stall shower. The resort overlooks a PGA official championship golf course.

## Point-A-Pierre Wild Fowl Trust

Located just outside San Fernando

Petrotrin Oil Refinery, Pointe-a-Pierre, Pointe-a-Pierre, TT

Just outside San Fernando, on the grounds of the Petrotrin Oil Refinery, lies an oasis of tranquillity and beauty, with landscaped grounds, trails and two lakes, many rare species of bird. The Trust lies on twenty-five hectares of land, protects endangered waterfowl and introduces other birds back to the wild. There is a resource and learning centre as it is entrusted with the breeding of and education about waterfowl and wetlands. Tours are conducted daily for schoolchildren and the general public. Admission: TT\$5, teens \$3, children \$2


 10a-5p M-F, noon-4p Sa, 10:30a-6p Su

## Pitch Lake (The)

Trinidad's natural phenomenon

Off Southern Main Road, La Brea, TT La Brea +1 868 648 7697

The Pitch Lake, located in La Brea in South Trinidad, is often referred to as one of the natural wonders of the world. Among the many legends attached to it, one relates the tale of an indigenous tribe that was engulfed as punishment for eating hummingbirds, in which the souls of their ancestors were believed to repose. It is estimated to be more than 5,000 years old and has produced close to 20 million tons of asphalt in the past 100 years. The asphalt from the lake is used in the paving of roads and for roofing. There is a small museum at the site.

 10a-6p M-Su

## Leatherback Turtle Egg Nesting

Witness an endangered turtle in action

North and East Coasts, Trinidad, TT +1 868 662 5114 (Wildlife Section of the Forestry Division)

It's nothing short of amazing to witness the ancient ritual of female leatherback turtles heaving themselves out of the waves and onto shore to lay their eggs. There are prime locales traditionally used for turtle watching-all along the north coast from Blanchisseuse to Grande Riviere, and the east coast at Matura. These endangered giants come, from March to August, to lay their eggs.

Approximately two months later, the eggs hatch: you can make the trip again to see the baby turtles struggle down to the ocean. You must obtain a permit from the Wildlife Section of the Forestry Division to view the turtles.

## Little Tobago

Also called Bird of Paradise Island

Off North-East Coast, Little Tobago, TT Speyside (boat)

+1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

Little Tobago is a tiny island located just east of the northern tip of Tobago. The island was once known as one of the most lucrative cotton plantations operating in the late 1700s. In 1909 the new owner, William Ingram, created a bird sanctuary on the island, which he started with 24 Birds of Paradise that he brought over from Aru Island. In 1925, Ingram's heirs handed over the sanctuary to the government. Today, the island is a major bird watching and scuba diving location with several diving supply stores and boat tours available.

## Tamnak Thai

Oriental classical cuisine

13 Queens Park East Port of Spain

T: +1 868 625 9715 / F: +1 868 623 7510

## Historical Background

Trinidad was the first inhabited island of the Caribbean, having been settled by Amerindians from South America as early as 5000 BC. They called the island "Ieri", the land of the hummingbird.

Later, Trinidad and Tobago became the first Caribbean Islands occupied by both the Igneri, a peaceful subgroup of the Arawak tribe; and the hostile Caribs. In 1498, Columbus claimed the islands for Spain. However, since the Carib Indians were aggressive and warlike, they prevented the colonisation of the islands until late into the 17th Century. Over the next two centuries, the natives were taken into slavery by the Spaniards and exposed to hard labour and European plagues that virtually wiped out the entire population.

Tobago's history was equally volatile. After the Spaniards defeated the Caribs, the English, French, Dutch and various bands of pirates made attempts at dominating the island. It wasn't until 1877 that it was finally ceded to the British.

Port of Spain developed slowly attracting the Catalan Capuchin missionaries. Attempts at tobacco and cocoa production failed due to blight and competition from neighbouring islands. During the Napoleonic Wars, in 1797, the British seized the opportunity to take islands from the Spaniards and in 1815; Tobago came under British Rule and made a ward of Trinidad at the end of the century.

Immigration opened up after slavery was abolished and a new labour force was needed. Ethnic groups changed the make-up of the populace. As the islands are today, Trinidad and Tobago became a melting pot due mainly to its openness to religious freedom. Consequently the floodgates opened to Americans, Scots, Irish, French, Germans and the Swiss. By 1917 when the East Indian immigration ceased, there were more that 140,000 Indians working as indentured servants on the islands.

Bringing their own festivities and culture, the Indian influence is very prominent throughout the islands today. While the Muslims introduced Hosay, the Hindus brought [Divali](#). Indian food, such as roti and curry has become staple dishes for all Trinidadians.

Several companies of American black soldiers who had supported the British in its 1812 war against the US were given grants of land in southern Trinidad, where they founded villages and named them after the companies in which they served.

In 1853, the government brought 2500 Chinese to Trinidad to help work the plantations. The plan failed due to the excessive cost of transportation and the high mortality rate among the immigrants. The descendants of these people constitute a small but visible minority to this day on the islands.

The first political movements on the islands developed in the 1930s during the economic depression. Adult suffrage was introduced in 1946 and political parties began to take shape in the 1950s. Dr. Eric Williams became the first Chief Minister in 1958. Displeased with what he perceived as servitude to the tourist class, he vowed to avoid what he called the mistakes of his Caribbean neighbours. As a result T&T's economy did not benefit from tourism until the mid-1980s.

Trinidad and Tobago gained independence from the British on August 31, 1962. On August 1, 1976, T&T gained Republic status. In the 1970s, offshore drilling produced oil and Trinidad found a new natural resource to boost the economy. As a result, the standard of living improved immensely as literacy rates rose to the highest in the Caribbean; the road system was introduced and electricity was established throughout the islands.

In July, 1990 there was an attempted coup of the government by a 100-strong group of Islamic extremists. Not backed by any additional support from abroad, the rebellion was squelched after five days. Militant Islam has played no future role in shaping the government today and they have displayed minimal political unrest ever since.

The President is the constitutional head of state, but the executive power is split between the Prime Minister and the cabinet. This comprises a Senate with 31 members and a House of Representatives with 36 members. Since, the 1980s, Tobago has had its own 15-seat House of Assembly and was granted full internal self-government by the national government in 1987.

Trinidad and Tobago is today a model of racial harmony. It has worked hard to create a stable economy and the GDP has grown steadily since 1994. Oil continues to be the major source of revenue, and the country is using the income it generates to develop other sectors, including manufacturing, finance, insurance and tourism.

Ron Callari, July 3, 2001

### **Apsara**

**Classical Indian cuisine**

13 Queen's Park East, Port of Spain

T: +1 868 623 7659

### **Roti Palace**

**Local Indian food**

Uriah Butler Highway Valsayn

T: +1 868 645 8688

### **Hosein's Roti Shop**

**Local Indian food**

62 Eastern Main Road, Silver Mill Trinidad and Tobago

T: +1 868 674 7684

### **Jennys Wok & Steak House**

**Steakhouse & Chinese food**

175 Ciperio Street, Victoria Village

T: +1 868 652 1807

### **Patraj Roti**

**Indian and local cuisine**

159 Tragarete Road Port of Spain

T: +1 868 622 6219

### **Shirvan Watermill**

**Local & international seafood**

Shirvan Road Mt Pleasant

T: +1 868 639 0000

### **The Garden Grille Restaurant & Cocktail Bar**

**Local & international flavors**

Milford Road Lowlands

T: +1 868 639 7842

<http://aavacations.wcities.com/en/cat/150/370/category.html>

## Attractions & Landmarks

**Visiting the City: [Tourist Attractions & Sightseeing](#): Attractions & Landmarks**

**[Archbishop's House](#)** Residence of the Roman Catholic Archbishop

27 Maraval Road Port of Spain T: +1 868 622 6680

**[Arima](#)** A borough rich in history (East of Port of Spain) Arima

**[Arima Dial \(The\)](#)** A major landmark Pro Queen Street & Broadway Arima

**[Arnos Vale Waterwheel \(The\)](#)** An Outstanding Industrial Archaeological Site

East of Plymouth Arnos Vale T: +1 868 660 0815

**[Botanic Gardens \(The\)](#)** Home to island flora

Queen's Park North Port of Spain T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**[Brian Lara Promenade](#)** Named after a local sports hero Independence Square Port of Spain

**[Buccoo Reef \(The\)](#)** A protected marine park From Pigeon Point to the Bon Accord Lagoon Buccoo

T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**[Carnegie Free Library \(The\)](#)** Also called "the meeting place"

Harris Promenade San Fernando T: +1 868 652 2921

**[Caroni Bird Sanctuary](#)** Home of the Scarlet Ibis

Off of Uriah Butler Highway Caroni T: +1 868 645 1305

**[Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception \(The\)](#)** Roman Catholic cathedral

Independence Square Port of Spain T: +1 868 623 5232

**[Cleaver Woods](#)** Contains a piece of Trinidad's past Cleaver Road Arima

**[Compte de Loppinot Historical Complex](#)** One of East Trinidad's treasures

Lopinot Valley Arouca T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**[Courland Monument and Great Courland Bay](#)** Monument built by early Tobago pioneer descendants

Courland Bay Plymouth

**[Fort Bennett](#)** Black Rock's ultimate point

Off Grafton Beach Road Black Rock T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**[Fort George](#)** Boasts breathtaking city view (above Port of Spain) Port of Spain

T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**[Fort James](#)** Overlooks Great Courland Bay

Off Courland Bay Plymouth T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**[Fort King George](#)** Historic Tobago fort Fort St Scarborough

T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Fort Milford** **Remains of a Colonial Fort** Old Storebay Road Crown Point  
T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Galera Lighthouse & Family Park** **Landmark favourite**  
Northeast Point Toco Village T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Gaspree Island & Gaspree Caves** **Second in "Five Island" chain**  
(off the Western Peninsula) Chaguaramas T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Hall of Justice (The)** **Symbolises independent judiciary**  
In the centre of Port-of-Spain, East of the Red House Port of Spain

**Harris Promenade** **A tribute to a governor**  
Harris Promenade San Fernando T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Hayes Court** **Residence of Anglican Bishop**  
21 Maraval Road Port of Spain T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Holy Trinity Cathedral (The)** **Anglican cathedral**  
30A Abercromby Street Port-of-Spain T: +1 868 623 7271 / F: +1 868 624 9827

**King's Wharf** **A link between the past and the present** King's Wharf San Fernando

**Leatherback Turtle Egg Nesting** **Witness an endangered turtle in action**  
North and East Coasts Trinidad T: +1 868 662 5114 (Wildlife Section of the Forestry Division)

**Little Tobago** **Also called Bird of Paradise Island** Off North-East Coast Little Tobago  
T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Magnificent Seven (The)** **Spectacular mansions around Queen's Park Savannah**  
Queen's Park West Port of Spain T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Maracas Lookout (The)** **Minutes from Maracas Bay**  
North Coast Road North Coast T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Memorial Park** **Monument to local veterans**  
Frederick Street Port of Spain T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Mount St. Benedict** **The Caribbean's oldest monastery**  
St. John's Road St. Augustine T: +1 868 622 4084

**Mystery Tombstone (The)** **Puzzling to locals & tourists alike**  
Off Courland Bay Plymouth T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Naparima Bowl (The)** **Home to theater in San Fernando**  
19 Paradise Pasture San Fernando T: +1 868 652 4704

**National Museum & Art Gallery (The)** **Wealth of culture**  
117 Frederick Street Port-of-Spain T: +1 868 623 5941

**Our Lady Of Perpetual Help (RC) Church** San Fernando's Mother Church

Harris Promenade, High Street San Fernando T: +1 868 652 2269

**Pitch Lake (The)** Trinidad's natural phenomenon

Off Southern Main Road La Brea T: +1 868 648 7697

**Point-A-Pierre Wild Fowl Trust** Located just outside San Fernando

Petrotrin Oil Refinery Pointe-a-Pierre

**President's House** Residence & office of the president

St. Ann's Road Port of Spain T: +1 868 624 1261

**Queen's Park Savannah** Capital's most popular spot

Queen's Park West, East, North and South Port of Spain T: +1 868 675 7034 (TIDCO)

**Queen's Royal College** One of Port of Spain's foremost landmarks

Queen's Park West Port of Spain T: +1 868 622 1671

**Red House (The)** Home of Trinidad & Tobago's democracy

West of Woodford Square in Port of Spain Port of Spain T: +1 868 623 7045

**River Estate Water Wheel** A monument to the island's colonial past

Off Diego Martin Main Road Diego Martin T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Authority)

**San Fernando** Vibrant city of the south (Southern Trinidad) San Fernando

**San Fernando City Hall** A piece of history Harris Promenade San Fernando

**San Fernando Hill** Popular national landmark

Off Circular Road San Fernando T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Santa Rosa Roman Catholic Church** Named for a Peruvian saint Woodford Street Arima

**Scarborough Court House (The)** Meeting place of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA)

Jerningham Street Scarborough

**Scarborough Market (The)** Bursting with activity

Market Square Scarborough T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**St James Barracks (The)** Police training center Long Circular Road Port of Spain

**Woodford Square** One of the most popular landmarks

At the intersection of Hart St, Frederick St, Pembroke St & St. Vincent St Port of Spain  
T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department)

## **Marine Excursions**

**Visiting the City: Tourist Attractions & Sightseeing: Marine Excursions**

### **Hews Tours**

**Ocean adventure**

53 Coral Lane, Buccoo

T: +1 868 639 9058 / F: +1 868 639 7984

### **Natural Mystic Sail Charters**

**Ocean adventure**

Store Bay Local Road Crown Point

T: +1 868 639 7245

### **Nylon Pool (The)**

**Ideal bathing spot**

(near Buccoo Reef) Buccoo

T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

### **Wild Turtle Dive Safari**

**Diving facility for all levels**

Pigeon Point Road Pigeon Point

T: +1 868 639 7936

## **Guided Tours**

**Visiting the City: Tourist Attractions & Sightseeing: Guided Tours**

### **A.J.M. Tours Ltd**

**Tour operator**

Store Bay Local Road Crown Point

T: +1 868 639 0610 / F: +1 868 639 8918

### **Hews Tours**

**Ocean adventure**

53 Coral Lane, Buccoo

T: +1 868 639 9058 / F: +1 868 639 7984

### **Natural Mystic Sail Charters**

**Ocean adventure**

Store Bay Local Road Crown Point

T: +1 868 639 7245

### **Sun Fun Tours**

**Outdoor tours**

Store Bay Local Road Crown Point

T: +1 868 639 7461 / F: +1 868 639 7564

### **Tony's Guest House & Outdoor Tours**

**Convenient Accommodation & Touring Options**

Papnis Dr Petit Valley

T: +1 868 763 4230 / F: +1 868 627 0856

## Day Trips & Walks

**Visiting the City: Tourist Attractions & Sightseeing: Day Trips & Walks**

**Cleaver Woods** Contains a piece of Trinidad's past

Cleaver Road Arima

**Compte de Loppinot Historical Complex** One of East Trinidad's treasures

Lopinot Valley Arouca

T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Fort Bennett** Black Rock's ultimate point

Off Grafton Beach Road Black Rock

T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Galera Lighthouse & Family Park** Landmark favourite

Northeast Point Toco Village

T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Gasperee Island & Gasperee Caves** Second in "Five Island" chain

(off the Western Peninsula) Chaguaramas

T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Harris Promenade** A tribute to a governor

Harris Promenade San Fernando

T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Little Tobago** Also called Bird of Paradise Island

Off North-East Coast Little Tobago

T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Northern Range** Trinidad's highest mountain range

Northern Range Caura

T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Department TIDCO)

**Paria Beach & Waterfall** One of Trinidad's most popular trails

Paria Paria

T: +1 868 675 7034 (Tourism Authority)

**San Fernando** Vibrant city of the south

(Southern Trinidad) San Fernando

**Tony's Guest House & Outdoor Tours** Convenient Accommodation & Touring Options

Papnis Dr Petit Valley T: +1 868 763 4230 / F: +1 868 627 0856