



Trinidad & Tobago

POP 1.3 MILLION / 868

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Veni Mangé (p759)
- ➔ Chaud Café (p759)
- ➔ Breakfast Shed (p757)
- ➔ Kariwak Village (p776)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Kariwak Village Holistic Haven (p776)
- ➔ Mt Plaisir Estate (p768)
- ➔ Castara Retreats (p781)
- ➔ Miller's Guesthouse (p778)

Why Go?

Trinidad and Tobago are an exercise in beautiful contradiction. In Trinidad, pristine mangrove swamps and rainforested hills sit side by side with smoke-belching oil refineries and ugly industrial estates. Tobago has everything you'd expect from a Caribbean island, with palm trees and white sand aplenty, yet it's relatively unchanged by the tourist industry. Combined, this twin-island republic offers unparalleled birdwatching; first-class diving; luxuriant rainforests perfect for hiking, waterfall swimming and cycling; and electric nightlife, with the fabulous Carnival easily the biggest and best of the region's annual blowouts.

But don't expect anyone to hold your hand. The oil and gas industry leaves tourism low on the priority list, so it's up to you to take a deep breath, jump in and enjoy the mix.

When to Go

Feb–Mar High season sees hordes of visitors arrive for Carnival, while summer (July and August), Easter and the Christmas period are also busy.

Oct–mid-Dec & Apr–Jun Shoulder seasons mean fewer crowds and cheaper accommodations, but a good chance of some rain.

Trinidad and Tobago's southerly location keeps temperatures consistent year-round, with a daily average of 27°C (80°F). The rainy season (June to November) and the dry season (December to May) are the major weather variations. As the islands sit outside the hurricane belt, severe storms are very uncommon.



Trinidad & Tobago Highlights

- 1 Port of Spain** (p752)
Partying at the Caribbean's best Carnival, and sampling the live-music scene, from steel-band music to soca extravaganzas and calypso beats.
- 2 Northern Range** (p766)
Scouting the waterfalls, wildlife and ruggedly gorgeous Trinidad coastline.
- 3 Diving** (p784)
Submerging yourself among

the underwater canyons and shallow coral gardens in Tobago, particularly around Speyside.

- 4 Asa Wright Nature Centre** (p767)
Grabbing your binoculars to spy on Trinidad's prolific birdlife.

- 5 Pigeon Point** (p775)
Dipping your toes into whiter-than-white sand and turquoise waters at Tobago's most popular beach.

- 6 Grande Riviere** (p768)
Peeking at leatherback turtles laying eggs on the beach (March to June) and holding your breath as the hatchlings make a bid for the sea (May to September).

- 7 Boat Ride** (p772)
Following Tobago's Caribbean coastline to snorkel at hidden coves and eat fresh fish at a beach barbecue.

TRINIDAD

Tours

Island Experiences

TOURS

(☎ 756-9677, 625-2410; www.islandexperiences.tt.com; tours US\$55-155, beach shuttle US\$30-40) Gunda Harewood and her multilingual guides offer islandwide tours covering all the main sights, plus 'eco-cultural' trips, which reveal lesser-known places and impart local knowledge and lore. Island Experiences also offers trips out to the Bocas islands and Tobago options. There's a useful shuttle service to and from Maracas and Las Cuevas beaches, too.

Paria Springs

ADVENTURE

(☎ 620-8240; www.pariasprings.com; US\$105-150; 🏠) Run by a local mountain biker

and wildlife expert, tours include kayaking/stand-up paddling through Caroni and Nariva swamps, hiking and waterfall climbing in Chaguaramas, waterfall rappelling/canyoning in the Northern Range, visiting Gasparée Cave and Lopinot, hiking or swimming in Guanapo Gorge, and various mountain-biking options island-wide.

Caribbean Discovery Tours

TOURS

(☎ 624-7281, 620-1989; www.caribbean-discovery-tours.com; US\$100-150) Tours are conducted in a rugged Land Rover 4WD. Options range from sunrise birdwatching at Aripo Savannah to farming/culinary trips in hilly Paramin, a bean-to-bar chocolate tour in Brasso Seco and a foodie experience. Nariva Swamp hiking and kayaking, too.