Trinidad and Tobago

Overview

- AIG Travel rates Trinidad and Tobago as a MODERATE threat location due to elevated rates of crime and kidnapping.

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is a two-island country of more than 1.3 million inhabitants; it is located off the northeastern coast of Venezuela in the Lesser Antilles archipelago of the Caribbean Sea. Trinidad, the larger island of the two, is home to the country’s capital and sociopolitical, economic and cultural center, Port of Spain, while Tobago is much smaller and has fewer inhabitants. Indo- and Afro-Trinis and Tobagonians account for nearly 80 percent of the country’s population. Low-level ethnic tensions exist in country despite its cultural diversity. Although the official language of Trinidad and Tobago is English, the majority of Trinis and Tobagonians speak either Trinidadian or Tobagonian Creole, an English-based creole language that reflects the multicultural heritage of the country; however, a number of other languages, including those of African origin, Spanish and Chinese, are also spoken on the islands. In addition, Christianity, namely Roman Catholicism, is the predominant religion in Trinidad and Tobago, although a number of other religions, including Hinduism, those of African origin and Islam, are also practiced in country.

There are a number of security concerns of which individuals in Trinidad and Tobago should be aware. Crime is a HIGH threat in country with a reported increase in incidents of both petty and violent crime in recent years, primarily due to the prevalence of criminal gang activity nationwide. Petty crime including pick-pocketing, bag-snatching and the theft of unattended items poses the most significant threat to individuals in Trinidad and Tobago; however, violent crimes as well as express kidnapping and kidnap for ransom are also of HIGH concern, especially for individuals of perceived affluence. In addition, the threat posed by terrorism is generally LOW, as there have been no attacks or significant threats in recent years. Civil unrest, primarily related to socioeconomic issues, occurs sporadically throughout the country and generally concludes without incident, presenting a LOW risk to travelers. Political stability and corruption are both MODERATE risks as a result of ongoing ethnic tensions in government as well as continuing corruption in politics and local security forces.

Infrastructure concerns are MODERATE in country, as roadways and services are widely adequate in urban centers but typically decline in quality in more rural areas. In addition, Trinidad and Tobago has the potential to be affected by the North Atlantic hurricane season from June to November.

Political conditions
Political

- Political stability poses a MODERATE concern in Trinidad and Tobago, primarily due to mild ongoing ethnic tensions within the government.

Trinidad and Tobago is a parliamentary democracy and a member of the British Commonwealth. The president is popularly elected and head of state, while the prime minister is head of government. The government has three branches: executive, legislative and judicial. The country’s Parliament consists of two chambers, the Senate (31 seats) and the House of Representatives (41 seats). The members of the Senate are appointed by the president, while the members of the House of Representatives are elected by popular vote every five years. The current president of the country is Paula-Mae Weekes, who assumed office in March 2018 and is the first woman to hold the position. Weekes was declared the winner of the 2018 election without need for a vote as she was the only candidate. The current prime minister is Keith Rowley, who was elected in September 2015.

The majority of Trinidadians and Tobagonians vote along ethnic lines for parties composed primarily of those of the same race. As such, the majority of Afro-Trinidadians support the ruling People’s National Movement (PNM), and the majority of Indo-Trinidadians support any of the numerous Indian-majority parties such as the United National Congress (UNC). Although a number of the country’s political parties have sought to broaden their political base within the populace’s multi-ethnic composition, such divisions continue to cause political tensions that cause a decrease in the efficacy of the government. In September 2015 elections, the opposition PNM party, headed by Keith Rowley, seized power from the ruling People’s Partnership (PP) coalition, headed by former Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar of the UNC, winning the prime ministry as well as 23 seats in the country’s 41-seat House of Representatives. The next elections are scheduled for September 2020.

Crime is a prevalent concern in the country’s politics, primarily due to the growing prevalence of gang- and drug-related activities nationwide. Although multiple parties have campaigned to improve security conditions throughout the country, ongoing issues of corruption among government officials and security forces as well as economic concerns have hindered such progress. In 2018 Minister of National Security Edmund Dillon announced the implementation of the National Crime Prevention Programme. The program focuses on strengthening existing communities, organizations and government structures and has an emphasis on use of intelligence to proactively combat crime.

Trinidad and Tobago maintains a healthy diplomatic relationship with neighboring countries and islands. In addition, it enjoys significant trade, technical, economic and social benefits as a member of various international organizations such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the United Nations, the Organizations of American States (OAS) and the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Economy

Trinidad and Tobago has traditionally been one of the most prosperous countries in the Caribbean due to its large hydrocarbon reserves, which account for more than 80 percent of its exports. However, the sharp drop in energy prices beginning in 2014 has had an adverse effect on the country’s economy and has caused a recession. In response, the government has introduced austerity measures to balance the loss of revenue. The country’s economy was deemed to be out of the recession in 2018, a result attributed to these measures. As the economy has improved, the measures have been somewhat relaxed, with efforts to provide further social benefits including personal allowances and food credits a topic of debate for the 2019-2020 budget. Moreover, rising crude prices as well as increased natural gas production is expected to contribute to economic recovery.

Apart from the energy industry, the country’s main trading partners are neighboring islands that import
products such as manufactured goods and cement. The economy is open to trade and investment; however, bureaucratic inefficiency has slowed down government spending on modernization, fiscal freedom and social welfare.

**Corruption**

- Corruption remains a MODERATE concern, primarily among security forces but also within the government.

Political corruption is a significant concern in Trinidad and Tobago. Corruption is largely related to drug trafficking, as the country is a drug transit point in the Caribbean. While the government has attempted to institute anti-corruption legislation, the success of these measures remains questionable in the face of rising crime rates, poor property right protections and delays in the judicial system. Corruption has been documented within the national police force, which has been reported to solicit bribes, and the country notably experienced significant difficulty appointing a police commissioner due to corruption in national security forces from 2012-2018. Former National Security Minister Gary Griffith was installed as police commissioner in 2018 following an earlier removal from office due to allegations he conspired with three other national security officials to assassinate a local journalist. Griffith’s appointment has caused some concern in country amid ongoing reports of impunity and corruption in police forces, though he has implemented measures intended to combat this, including the formation of an anti-corruption task force within the police service.

Corruption in the judiciary branch has significantly affected property rights. Citizens have allegedly been stripped of their land and homes by corrupt officials and police, generally through loopholes in the national legal code. The most recent claims of unjust land seizure sparked protests on the island of Tobago as landowners faced property seizures to accommodate expansions to A.N.R. Robinson International Airport (TTCP/TAB).

Transparency International, a non-governmental organization that monitors global corruption, gave Trinidad and Tobago a score of 41 out of 100 in its 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The CPI measures levels of perceived corruption ranging from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (extremely transparent). Trinidad and Tobago’s score suggests moderate levels of corruption, and the country was rated as the 78th least corrupt out of 180 surveyed.

**Security issues**

**General crime**

- Crime is a HIGH concern in Trinidad and Tobago due to the growing prevalence of gang- and drug-related activity throughout the country.

Crime remains the most significant security concern for individuals in Trinidad and Tobago, primarily due to the growing prevalence of gang- and drug-related activities throughout the country. Incidents of petty and violent crime have increased in recent years as a result of illicit activity. In addition, a number of crimes go unreported or undocumented due to fear of retaliation as well as corruption among government security forces. Although the government has made multiple attempts to improve the security situation by passing legislation aimed at reducing crime rates in previous years, including nationwide state of emergency declarations, such measures have not yet proven effective. Rates of violent crime in particular have seen a consistent increase in recent years. Concerns of petty and violent crime are significantly elevated in metropolitan areas including the capital Port of Spain and San Fernando.

More than 200 criminal gangs have been identified as operating on the islands, and gang-related illicit
activity is heavily linked to serious crimes including homicide. The growing prevalence of criminal gang organizations has the potential to undermine government authority in high-risk areas of the country including Port of Spain and nearby Laventille. In some cases, these organizations have become so institutionalized that they now represent alternative governing structures within portions of these areas.

Despite the prevalence of violent incidents, petty crime, including pick-pocketing, bag-snatching and theft of unattended items, poses the most significant threat to individuals in Trinidad and Tobago. While the majority of such crimes are opportunistic in nature, individuals may be targeted due to their perceived wealth. Criminals are known to actively target areas where foreign nationals congregate such as hotel lobbies, restaurants, crowded bars and popular tourist locations. In addition, criminals often work in pairs in which one distracts the victim while the other steals the victim’s belongings. Local criminals are frequently armed with guns or knives, and non-compliance with criminal demands may result in violence.

Trinidad
Travel to the Port of Spain areas of Chaguanas, the city center, Laventille, Morvant, Sea Lots, South Belmont, as well as to Arima, Barataria, Enterprise and Tunapuna towns is not advised due to the threat of gang-related crime. In addition, Churchill Roosevelt Highway from Piarco International Airport (TTPP/POS) to Port of Spain has seen an increase in armed hijackings and should be avoided after dark. ATMs and parking lots at shopping malls and supermarkets have been scenes of muggings and assaults in the past. Scenic overlooks and isolated beaches on Trinidad, such as Fort George, Pitch Lake and Las Cuevas beach, are not adequately policed. Armed robberies have been reported in Queen’s Park Savannah in Port of Spain, and visitors should avoid crossing this park alone, specifically at night. In addition, the Cocorite neighborhood of Port of Spain and the town of La Brea, located in southern Trinidad, has also seen an increase in crime targeting tourists.

Tobago
The likelihood of being affected by crime on the smaller island of Tobago is lower than on Trinidad; however, there has been a marked increase in criminal activity, particularly robberies, which have often been accompanied by violence as well as sexual assault. Violent home invasions have also been reported at upscale homes and villas, which may sometimes be rented to tourists. Police have lowered response times and typically take all incidents of crime, particularly those affecting foreign nationals, seriously. Despite generally prompt police response, particular caution is advised in the Bacolet, Courland and Englishman’s Bay areas.

Terrorism

- **The threat of terrorism in Trinidad and Tobago is LOW as there are no domestic or transnational terror groups operating in country.**

There are no known domestic or transnational terror groups operating in Trinidad and Tobago. However, there is a concern that some citizens have traveled to Syria and Iraq to fight for the Islamic State (IS). Due to a concern that fighters may return to Trinidad and Tobago, the government formed a National Counterterrorism Strategy in 2016 and created a new position for a Minister of National Security.

Officials have arrested individuals allegedly responsible for planning attacks in Trinidad and Tobago, though in recent years no attacks have been successfully carried out. The most recent incident occurred in May 2019 when a wave of bomb threats were reported at several schools across the country. Security officials responded immediately and investigated the threat. Additionally, in February 2018 officials arrested four
individuals suspected of planning to disrupt the country’s annual Carnival celebrations. The celebrations were carried out without incident, and no further details were released regarding the individuals’ plans.

Civil unrest

- **Incidents of civil unrest are a LOW threat. Demonstrations are primarily held on Trinidad, though some small-scale protests have taken place on Tobago.**

Protests and demonstrations, related to both political and socioeconomic issues, occur sporadically in Trinidad and Tobago and have occasionally been accompanied by violence. Although most protests occur on Trinidad, the threat of unrest occurring on Tobago cannot be ruled out. A majority of protests are held near Parliament building in downtown Port of Spain or outside the Prime Minister’s Offices in the St. Clair neighborhood. In early April 2019 dozens of citizen activists staged protests near A.N.R Robinson International Airport (TTCP/TAB) on Tobago in response to planned expansions. The activists largely voiced discontent over a combination of land seizures and perceived lack of information on the details of the project. These protests were carried out peacefully and presented minor disruptions to the area, which is typical of demonstrations in country.

Kidnapping

- **There is a HIGH kidnapping threat in Trinidad and Tobago due to the prevalence of criminal gangs throughout the country.**

Kidnap for ransom cases are reported on occasion and generally target wealthy local businesspeople, particularly those of Indian descent. The Jamaat al-Muslimeen (JM) group is believed to be responsible for some cases, but other gangs perpetrate the vast majority. These groups are largely involved in drug trafficking; however, larger organizations have increasingly relied on kidnapping for profit generation. Although foreign nationals are not generally directly targeted, some foreigners have been kidnapped in the past.

The form of kidnapping most likely to affect foreign nationals is express kidnapping. In these cases, victims are robbed of their possessions and forced to withdraw cash from ATMs, either until they reach their card limit or until they empty the account. Express kidnapping gangs have also been known to work in conjunction with taxi drivers or use false taxis to entrap unsuspecting victims.

In recent years, concerns of human trafficking have been raised on the islands. Incidents reported have typically involved Venezuelan nationals seeking refuge on the islands, generally women and young girls. The island’s Special Operations Response Team (SORT) and Anti-Kidnapping Unit (AKU) have carried out rescue operations as recently as April 2019. The primary tactic used to lure victims in these cases includes impersonating security officials, though Trinidad and Tobago’s director of Police Complaints Authority (PCA) has also publicly spoken on the growing number of complaints regarding the involvement of corrupt police officers aiding and facilitating trafficking activities. Other tactics include paying younger men and women to pose as helpful citizens and frequenting areas where potential victims may congregate, including shopping malls, parks and parties before abducting the individual. Use of drugs including scopolamine is possible, though reports are limited.

Travel logistics

Entering the country

Entry Requirements
• All travelers to Trinidad and Tobago require a passport valid for at least six months beyond the intended date of departure from the country.
• All nationals require a return or onward airline ticket and evidence of sufficient funds to finance their stay as well as proof of accommodation for the duration of their visit to the country.
• Visas are not required for travelers on business or tourist visits for up to three months who are from the EU, Canada or U.S. as well as for most nationalities of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and British Commonwealth countries. All other nationalities require a visa.
• Travelers arriving from a country with risk of yellow fever are required to provide proof of yellow fever vaccination.
• As entry requirements are subject to change, all travelers are advised to consult their nearest Trinidad and Tobago diplomatic representation for further information.

Political/Security Risks
AIG Travel rates Trinidad and Tobago as a MODERATE threat location due to elevated rates of crime and kidnapping.
• Political stability poses a MODERATE concern in Trinidad and Tobago, primarily due to mild ongoing ethnic tensions within the government as well as issues of corruption.
• Corruption remains a MODERATE concern, primarily among security forces but also within the government.
• Crime is a HIGH concern in Trinidad and Tobago due to the growing prevalence of gang- and drug-related activity throughout the country.
• The threat of terrorism in Trinidad and Tobago is LOW as there are no domestic or transnational terror groups operating in country.
• Incidents of civil unrest are a LOW threat. Demonstrations are primarily held in Trinidad, though some small-scale protests have taken place in Tobago.
• There is a HIGH kidnapping threat in Trinidad and Tobago due to the prevalence of criminal gangs throughout the country.

Infrastructure
Infrastructure concerns in Trinidad and Tobago are MODERATE. The road network is adequate, although roads outside major urban centers are often poorly maintained. Similarly, while most public services and utilities are well-established in major cities, such services are limited or unavailable in rural areas.
• Electricity infrastructure in Trinidad and Tobago is generally good; however, sporadic power outages and voltage fluctuations are known to sporadically occur across the country.
• The country has a developing telecommunications sector. Fixed-line telephones are widely available, although cellular phone usage has surpassed the number of landlines in recent years. Internet connectivity is available in most urban centers but is generally limited or unavailable in rural areas.
• Water and sewage treatment services are available on both islands, though restrictive supply schedules are often implemented during the nation’s dry season, which typically lasts from December to May, in an effort to conserve resources.

Air travel
There are two international airports in Trinidad and Tobago. Piarco International Airport (TTPP/POS) is located 20 mi (32 km) southeast of the capital Port of Spain on Trinidad island. The second airport, A.N.R. Robinson International Airport (TTCP/TAB), is smaller and is located on the southwestern portion of Tobago in the town of Crown Point. Services at the airports include banking, restaurants and retail stores. Car rental is also available. Taxis and shuttle buses operate between the airports and major cities. There is a departure tax of approximately 110 TTD for all passengers leaving the country. Individuals are advised to confirm whether or not this tax is included in the price of airfare prior to booking.
Expansions and improvements to A.N.R. Robinson International Airport are scheduled to take place beginning November 2019. The project’s completion date is unclear, though disruptions to services at the airport are likely to continue into 2020.

Small charter flights operate between the islands daily. Tickets can be purchased on site; however, visitors are advised against using these services as they are generally poorly maintained and unreliable.

**Getting around**

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- **Road** – Roadways in major towns and cities are modern and well-maintained. However, road conditions in rural areas of the islands are variable and often lack adequate lighting or signage. Nighttime road travel outside of urban centers should be avoided due to these concerns as well as the ongoing threat posed by pedestrians and animals on roadways.
  - **Self-Driving** - Traffic drives on the left, and seatbelts are required to be worn by all passengers. The legal minimum driving age is 17 years old. Visitors need a current driver’s license and an international driving permit (IDP), which can be used for up to 90 days after arrival to drive on the islands. While roads in cities are generally well-maintained and adequately lit, driving at night in mountainous and/or rural areas is not advised as road conditions outside of metropolitan areas are more variable. Drivers do not typically signal lane changes and tend to be aggressive. Horns are used as a way of greeting. Vehicle rental is available at airports and in major cities. When renting a vehicle in country, travelers will be required to be at least 25 years of age and possess an IDP and a valid credit card. However, some rental agencies may allow renters of at least 21 years of age to rent a vehicle. All motorists are required by law to possess liability insurance and have all proper documentation on hand while driving.
- **Bus** - There are bus services available throughout the island. There are government-owned as well as privately owned buses, minibuses – called maxi-taxis – and vans. Such forms of transport are relatively inexpensive, although there are some security risks associated with these modes of transport, including pick-pocketing and theft of personal belongings. These methods of transportation may also be unreliable and have limited service hours.
- **Taxi** - Taxis are widely available on the islands. Taxis are normal passenger vehicles and can be identified by the letter H at the beginning of the vehicles’ license plates. Drivers are also uniformed and generally wear white shirts, blue or black pants and a yellow identification pass. Taxi fares in Trinidad and Tobago are not regulated by the government, though most taxi companies have fixed rates based on trip distance. Travelers are advised to agree on a price prior to entering a taxi. Hailing taxis on the street is inadvisable as unofficial taxis operate in country, and have been implicated in multiple instances of crime, including assault and express kidnapping, in recent years.
Water – Ferries operate between cities of Port of Spain and Scarborough daily; it is a three-hour ride between ports. Cars can be loaded onto the ferries. Water taxi services that travel between San Fernando and Port of Spain are also available. Ferry schedules are generally consistent but are subject to change. There have been no reports of security incidents in recent years, though travelers are advised to ensure that proper safety equipment, including flotation devices, are available prior to boarding.

Culture

- Indo- and Afro-Trinidadian and Tobagonians account for nearly 80 percent of the country’s population. Low ethnic tensions exist in country despite its cultural diversity.
- Although the official language of Trinidad and Tobago is English, the majority of Trinidadians and Tobagonians speak either Trinidadian or Tobagonian Creole, an English-based creole language; however, a number of other languages, including those of African heritage, Spanish and Chinese, are also spoken on the islands.
- Christianity, namely Roman Catholicism, is the predominant religion in Trinidad and Tobago, although a number of other religions, including Hinduism, those of African heritage and Islam, are also practiced in the islands.
- Locals will typically greet one another with a head nod, though in more formal situations a handshake may be appropriate.
- Punctuality is not stressed in casual social situations, though it is expected in more professional settings.
- Anger is generally not shown in public.
- Same-sex relations are legal in Trinidad and Tobago as of April 2018. However, LGBTQ individuals may experience instances of discrimination or harassment in country.
- Beachwear is typically only acceptable at beaches and pools. Appropriate cover-ups should be worn outside of these locations.
- Clothing is required on all public beaches and swimming sites, though private resorts may have different rules.
- Cursing and use of foul language is illegal in Trinidad and Tobago and may be punishable by fines or imprisonment.
- Camouflage clothing and items are not allowed in Trinidad and Tobago and will be confiscated by security officials, typically at the airport upon entry to the country.
- There are severe penalties for drug-related crimes. Packing and maintaining contact with luggage at all times is important to ensure criminals do not attempt to stow illicit substances in unattended baggage.

Important Dates in 2019

- 1 January – New Year's Day
- 30 March – Spiritual Baptist Liberation Day
- 19 April – Good Friday
- 30 May – Indian Arrival Day
- 5 June – Eid al-Fitr
- 19 June – Labor Day
- 20 June – Corpus Christi
- 1 August – Emancipation Day
- 31 August – Independence Day
- 24 September – Republic Day
- 27 October – Diwali/Deepavali
- 28 October – Diwali Holiday
- 25 December – Christmas Day
- 26 December – Boxing Day

Health concerns
The provision of healthcare in Trinidad and Tobago is limited outside the main urban centers. Although the country has a network of public and private hospitals, district health clinics and community centers, these facilities are more readily available on Trinidad. Both islands have supply shortages of certain types of medical equipment and medicines. Serious medical conditions may require evacuation to another country with better medical facilities. Private clinics, which offer specialized care in a range of areas, can be found in Trinidad’s main cities, but medical treatment at such facilities is expensive. Some doctors or medical centers may expect immediate payment for services, whether travelers have medical insurance or not. In addition, patients may be expected to prove their ability to pay before service is provided. Most hospital personnel are fully conversant in English. Pharmacies are available on both islands and generally have an adequate supply of various medications, though some may experience shortages. Travelers should take all prescription medication with them in case of shortages.

Avian influenza, also known as bird flu, is a highly contagious viral disease that is primarily transmitted by poultry and migratory birds. The disease can be spread through close contact with birds as well as from undercooked poultry and eggs. Avian influenza is endemic to the islands, with most cases reported following the winter months of June-January.

Chikungunya is a viral infection transmitted by the Aedes mosquito and is a concern nationwide. Dengue fever is an infectious disease carried by Aedes mosquitoes, occurring predominately in densely populated and rural areas. The disease is prevalent in Trinidad and Tobago due to the tropical environment of the islands, which can harbor mosquitoes. Zika is a viral disease transmitted primarily through Aedes mosquito bites, from mother to fetus during pregnancy and through sexual contact. The virus is present in Trinidad and Tobago.

Vaccinations are recommended against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, measles, rabies, typhoid and yellow fever. A yellow fever vaccination is required for travelers arriving from a country where yellow fever is present.

Travelers should ensure that their routine vaccinations are up to date for influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus. Individuals should visit a doctor or clinic that specializes in travel-related medicine at least four to six weeks prior to their intended departure. This timeframe should allow any prescribed vaccinations to take effect. Travelers should visit a medical professional even if their departure is within four weeks. Comprehensive medical insurance, including provision for medical repatriation or evacuation, is strongly recommended. Travelers should bring with them an appropriate supply of any prescription medication accompanied by written doctor's instructions that explain the purpose and justify the quantities.

There have been no recent outbreaks reported in Trinidad and Tobago.

Travelers should consume only sterilized or bottled water; this precaution extends to water used for brushing teeth, making ice and washing foods. Individuals should not bathe or swim in rivers or lakes. Unpasteurized milk should be avoided, and fruits and vegetables should be consumed only if they have been peeled or cooked. Food from street vendors and undercooked meat and fish should be avoided.

The emergency response number for an ambulance in Trinidad and Tobago is 811.

**Natural hazards**

Trinidad and Tobago is susceptible to the North Atlantic hurricane season, which generally lasts from June to November. The hurricane season runs near simultaneously with the country’s rainy season from May to October, thus exacerbating the threat of flooding and landslides. Local officials are generally well-prepared for approaching storms and issue warnings and implement emergency procedures ahead of time.
Earthquakes also occur occasionally and may prompt tsunamis. Volcanic eruptions as well as a number of other underwater explosions may also result in tsunamis. Tsunamis can move at very high speeds and threaten any low-lying coastal area.

Money

- **Currency** – The official currency is the Trinidad and Tobago dollar (TDD), which is divided in 100 cents. Banknotes are available in 1, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 dollars. Coins are available in the amounts of 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 cents.
- **Foreign exchange** – Currency exchange is widely available at banks, international airports, ports of entry and at exchange facilities. Foreign currency exchange services may not be as readily available outside major urban centers.
- **ATMs/Credit Cards** – ATMs are available throughout most cities. ATMs are located at most bank branches, shopping malls, hotels and at most major tourist locations. Major international credit cards including Visa and MasterCard are generally accepted at most larger hotels, shopping centers, restaurants and tourist-oriented institutions in urban centers. However, local vendors and smaller retail shops may only accept cash as payment.
- **Tipping** – A 10-15 percent tip is appropriate for service; taxi drivers are typically tipped 10 percent of the fare. Some hotels, restaurants and other entertainment establishments are known to add a 10 percent service charge on services rendered.
- **Business hours** – Typical business work week and hours are Monday to Friday from 08:00 – 16:00. Banks are generally open Monday to Friday from 10:00 – 16:00. However, workdays and operating hours vary depending upon each particular business sector.

Contact Information

- International dialing code: +1 868
- International dialing prefix: 011
- Police: 999
- Ambulance: 811
- Fire: 990

Cultural factors

General

Indo- and Afro-Trinidadian and Tobagonians account for nearly 80 percent of the country’s population. Low ethnic tensions exist in country despite its cultural diversity. Although the official language of Trinidad and Tobago is English, the majority of Trinidadians and Tobagonians speak either Trinidadian or Tobagonian Creole, an English-based creole language; however, a number of other languages, including those of African heritage, Spanish and Chinese, are also spoken on the islands. Christianity, namely Roman Catholicism, is the predominant religion in Trinidad and Tobago, although a number of other religions, including Hinduism, those of African heritage and Islam, are also practiced on the islands.

Etiquette and norms

- Locals will typically greet one another with a head nod, though in more formal situations a handshake may be appropriate.
- Punctuality is not stressed in casual social situations, though it is expected in more professional settings.
- Anger is generally not shown in public.
Same-sex relations are legal in Trinidad and Tobago as of April 2018. However, LGBTQ individuals may experience instances of discrimination or harassment in country.

Dos and don'ts

- Beachwear is typically only acceptable at beaches and pools. Appropriate cover-ups should be worn outside of these locations.
- Clothing is required on all public beaches and swimming sites, though private resorts may have different rules.
- Cursing and use of foul language is illegal in Trinidad and Tobago and may be punishable by fines or imprisonment.
- Camouflage clothing and items are not allowed in Trinidad and Tobago and will be confiscated by security officials, typically at the airport upon entry to the country.
- There are severe penalties for drug-related crimes. Packing and maintaining contact with luggage at all times is important to ensure criminals do not attempt to stow illicit substances in unattended baggage.

Useful information

Useful information

- Public holiday
- Weather forecast
- Maps
- Go to Trinidad and Tobago
- Electricity: 115 volts, 60 Hz

Contact details

Important contact details

- International dialing code: +1 868
- International dialing prefix: 011

Emergency numbers

- Police: 999/
- Ambulance: 811
- Fire: 990

Embassies

Australian High Commission
18 Herbert Street
St. Clair, Port of Spain
Tel: +1 868 822 5450
Fax: +1 868 822 5490
Email: ahc.portofspain@dfat.gov.au

British High Commission
19 St. Clair Avenue
St. Clair, Port of Spain
Tel: +1 868 350 0444
Chinese Embassy
76 Long Circular Road
Maraval, Port of Spain
Tel: +1 868 622 6976
Fax: +1 868 622 7613
Email: chinaemb_tt@mfa.gov.cn

French Embassy
7 Mary Street
St. Clair, Port of Spain
Tel: +1 868 232 4808

German Embassy
19 St. Clair Avenue
St. Clair, Port of Spain
Tel: +1 868 628 1630

Japanese Embassy
5 Hayes Street
St. Clair, Port of Spain
Tel: +1 868 628 5991
Fax: +1 868 622 0858
Email: embassyofjapan@po.mofa.go.jp

Mexican Embassy
12 Hayes Street
St. Clair, Port of Spain
Tel: +1 868 622 1422
Fax: +1 868 682 8488
Email: embttobago@sre.gob.mx

Saudi Arabia does not maintain a diplomatic presence in Trinidad and Tobago. Individuals should contact the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Venezuela for assistance.

Saudi Arabian Embassy in Venezuela
Calle Andres Pietri
Quinta Makkah, Urbanizacion Los Chorros
1071 Caracas, Venezuela
Tel: +582 122 390 290
Fax: +582 122 396 494
Email: veemb@mofa.gov.sa

South African High Commission
4 Scott Street
St. Clair, Port of Spain
Tel: +1 868 622 9869
Fax: +1 868 622 7089
Email: sahctt.general@dirco.gov.za

United States Embassy
15 Queen's Park West
Port of Spain
Health advisory

Health infrastructure

The provision of healthcare in Trinidad and Tobago is limited outside the main urban centers. Although the country has a network of public and private hospitals, district health clinics and community centers, these facilities are more readily available on Trinidad. Both islands have supply shortages of certain types of medical equipment and medicines. Serious medical conditions may require evacuation to another country with better medical facilities. Private clinics, which offer specialized care in a range of areas, can be found in Trinidad’s main cities, but medical treatment at such facilities is expensive. Some doctors or medical centers may expect immediate payment for services, whether travelers have medical insurance or not. In addition, patients may be expected to prove their ability to pay before service is provided. Most hospital personnel are fully conversant in English. Pharmacies are available on both islands and generally have an adequate supply of various medications, though some may experience shortages. Travelers should take all prescription medication with them in case of shortages.

Pre-travel recommendations

The following vaccinations are recommended or required if travelling to Trinidad and Tobago:

- Hepatitis A (recommended)
- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Measles (recommended)
- Rabies (recommended)
- Typhoid (recommended)
- Yellow fever (recommended; required for travelers arriving from a country where yellow fever is present)

Travelers should ensure that their routine vaccinations are up to date for influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

Individuals should visit a doctor or clinic that specializes in travel-related medicine at least four to six weeks prior to their intended departure. This timeframe should allow any prescribed vaccinations to take effect. Travelers should visit a medical professional even if their departure is within four weeks.

Comprehensive medical insurance, including provision for medical repatriation or evacuation, is strongly recommended. Travelers should bring with them an appropriate supply of any prescription medication accompanied by written doctor's instructions that explain the purpose and justify the quantities.

Significant diseases

The following are some of the more significant diseases that might affect travelers to Trinidad and Tobago:

- Avian influenza, also known as bird flu, is a highly contagious viral disease that is primarily transmitted by poultry and migratory birds. The disease can be spread through close contact with birds as well as from undercooked poultry and eggs. Avian influenza is endemic to the islands, with most cases reported following the winter months of June-January.
- Chikungunya is a viral infection transmitted by the Aedes mosquito and is a concern nationwide.
• Dengue fever is an infectious disease carried by Aedes mosquitoes, occurring predominately in densely populated and rural areas. The disease is prevalent in Trinidad and Tobago due to the tropical environment of the islands, which can harbor mosquitoes.
• Zika is a viral disease transmitted primarily through Aedes mosquito bites, from mother to fetus during pregnancy and through sexual contact. The virus is present in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Recent outbreaks**

• There have been no recent outbreaks reported in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Food and water safety**

Travelers should consume only sterilized or bottled water; this precaution extends to water used for brushing teeth, making ice and washing foods. Individuals should not bathe or swim in rivers or lakes. Unpasteurized milk should be avoided, and fruits and vegetables should be consumed only if they have been peeled or cooked. Food from street vendors and undercooked meat and fish should be avoided.

**Emergency response**

The emergency response number for an ambulance in Trinidad and Tobago is 811.