

Come for Mas: Return for Business and Leisure

Affectionately labelled the land of *Oil and Music*, for decades the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) has enjoyed abundant natural resources and a culture so rich and diverse that it represents almost all of the world's major societies. It is therefore not surprising that T&T's prime cultural event, Carnival, receives the largest influx of Tourists within the Caribbean Community. T&T Carnival is indeed the mother of all Caribbean Carnivals.



Carnival

For the pre-Lenten celebration of music, masquerade and revelry held annually; events such as Fetes (Parties), Panorama, Stick Fighting Competitions as well as indigenous musical art forms such as Calypso, Soca and Chutney are precursors to the sometimes two-month long Carnival season.

Roughly 36,000 visitors arrive the month of to the two major carnival days (the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday) and room occupancy rates are typically north of 90%. As a festival that basically sells itself due to its euphoric nature; each year the largest influx of diaspora in the southern Caribbean can be seen at T&T's two International Airports (Piarco & ANR Robinson). For visitors, it is a chance to release all inhibitions and be thoroughly entertained, moreover, these non-residents are a major advertising source for the twin island state. A *Travel Motivator Study* completed by the Tourism Development Company Ltd (TDC) indicates that "Word-of-Mouth" is the leading motivator for new visitors to our shores.



The post-carnival season is growing; tourists and locals seek to recuperate from the event filled season by booking accommodation, flights or ferry rides months in advance to access Trinidad's sister isle. Tobago, known for its abundance of warm and

welcoming residents, attractions, picturesque beaches and a wide choice of ocean front hotels, villas and apartments. Event planners are progressively ensuring that there is no shortage of entertainment in Tobago particularly during this post-carnival period.

Airlift

As a major transport hub of the Caribbean, access to both islands is frequent and in some cases, visa free. Tourists may choose from over eleven (11) different airlines which facilitate travel from Western and Eastern Europe and fifteen (15) airlines facilitating the North and South American markets.

Inter-island travel between Trinidad and Tobago is also readily available for as little as US\$50 for return airline tickets and US\$15 for return adult ferry tickets.

Accommodation

Ensuring visitors are comfortable and well rested while immersed in our vibrant culture, T&T boasts several international hotel chains such as Hyatt, Hilton, Radisson and Marriott all located near the carnival parade routes and events, yet far enough to safeguard the tranquillity necessary for our guests.



History, Culture & Heritage

It is only natural that a nation of diverse ethnic backgrounds celebrate its many religions and cultures; *Phagwa (Holi)* an explosion of colours where individuals become the canvas, the *Tobago Heritage Festival* an annual even preserving indigenous culture, the celebration of light over darkness *Divali*, and *Best Village* which discovers and develop talent and traditions among villages are

just a few of the annual festivities which thousands of tourists enjoy.



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As a result of the economy's hard commodity revenues over the years, world class sport venues have been erected throughout the islands, supporting T&T's growing focus on Sport Tourism.



Sports & Recreation

Trinidad's Queens Park Oval, is one of the major venues for the *Caribbean Premier League (CPL) T-20 Cricket* and Tobago's scenic terrain is known for hosting the *Union Cycliste Internationale* sanctioned *Tobago's International Cycling Classic* annually; Trinbagonians are serious about sport, from football to golf, netball and rugby, all of which have seen the islands participate on the world stage.

Food & Nightlife

From the exhilarating energy generated after sporting events held within the capital city, win, lose or draw locals and tourists alike head to St. James and Ariapita Avenue (a street lined with Bars and Pubs, Nightclubs, street food and fine dining Restaurants) to indulge in internationally renowned Trinbagonian food. Featured cuisines include Amerindian, African, European, Indian, Chinese, Creole, Lebanese and iconic fusion dishes.



Sites & Attractions

If you visited for Carnival, chances are you were too busy to explore some of our famous sites and attractions such as the Tobago's three level *Argyle Falls*, the *Caroni Swamp and Bird Sanctuary* where the stunning Scarlet Ibis nests, *Fort George* with its panoramic view of the capital city of Port-of-Spain, the colonial architecture of the *Magnificent Seven*, the *National Museum & Art Gallery* and the ever replenishing *La Brea Pitch Lake* (the largest deposit of asphalt in the world).

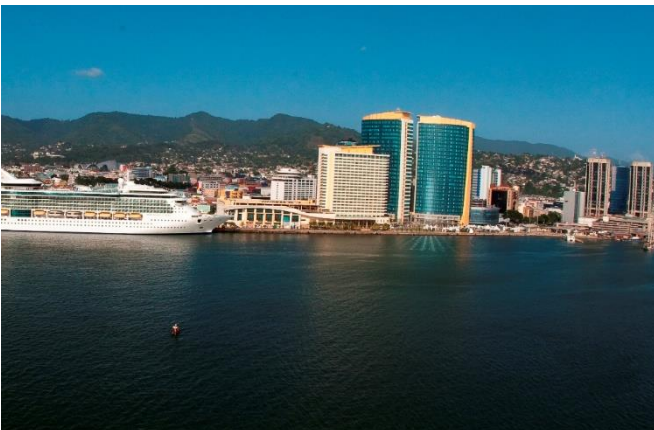
Cruise & Yachting

The cruise period which opens in the 3rd quarter and closes by the 2nd quarter the following year, has been experiencing encouraging growth. Disembarking passengers enjoy local shopping while those arriving during the Carnival season are able to access free daytime concerts and cultural presentations just walking distance away from the port, ideally located in the heart of the city's capital.

Business Tourism & Tourism Investment



With T&T located just south of the hurricane belt, and having one of the premier low-cost yacht repair centres in the Caribbean; yachting is increasing in popularity. With world class marinas and ancillary services all located in the Chaguramas peninsula where over 1,000 yachts may be moored. Yachties are initially permitted to stay six (6) months and have the option of an extension.



T&T is considered to be the energy and manufacturing capital of the Caribbean; with over 84,000 business travellers visiting annually. Proximity to South America is noteworthy for businesses and business owners who operate within Latin America and the Caribbean. Moreover, the ease of doing business, competitive utility rates, world class facilities, the largest conference centre in the Southern English speaking Caribbean, individual tax exemptions for conventions meetings and seminars, tax exemptions for up to seven (7) years in respect of gains or profits in the area of tourism are just some of the incentives for businesses interested in investing in T&T.



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Conclusion

With annual tourist arrivals to T&T exhibiting an upward growth trend, Carnival continues to display its multiplicative effect. Information derived from opinion mining suggests that no other island washed by the Caribbean Sea offers such a dynamic experience and the sustained Carnival visitor return rate further solidifies that the experience is not atypical. Meeting, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE), Sports and Eco Tourism are promising niches for which non-residents increasingly show interest and is being assiduously developed. To complete your T&T experience indulge in Carnival but return for business and leisure.



**The Planning, Research and Evaluation
Department**