

Hub of the Southern Caribbean

Trinidad and Tobago has ambitious plans to become the region's leading conferencing and business tourism destination

Trinidad and Tobago offers both business and leisure visitors a diversified tourism product, two very distinct experiences in one destination

Established in August 2009 with a mandate to position Port of Spain as the Meetings and Conference Capital of the Southern Caribbean, the Trinidad and Tobago Convention Bureau offers a wide variety of free services to groups and meeting planners interested in experiencing Trinidad & Tobago. The Trinidad & Tobago Convention Bureau offers comprehensive information on the island's venues, hotels, pricing, sites and attractions. The Bureau acts as an intermediary between hotels and meetings coordinators or local chapters of international organisations, local business chambers and incoming groups and issues destination bid documents for presentation to overseas meeting planners. The Bureau also operates as a liaison and coordinator for hoteliers, tour guides, even consultants and tour operators ensuring a comfortable and enjoyable working environment.

In addition, as the entity created specifically to promote the destination to regional and international planners of events, meetings and conferences, the Trinidad and Tobago Convention Bureau aims to foster continued growth in this market while boosting business tourism revenue by increasing the length of stay and the diversity of pre- and post-conference activities.

Over the last few years Trinidad and Tobago has developed a track record for successfully hosting major and very prestigious conferences, including the Caribbean

Hotel Tourism Investment Conference (CHTIC) (2008), the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association Conference (2008), and in 2009, the Summit of the Americas and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. More recently, in 2010, Trinidad and Tobago hosted several conferences and special events, including the FIFA Under 17 Women's World Cup Tournament.

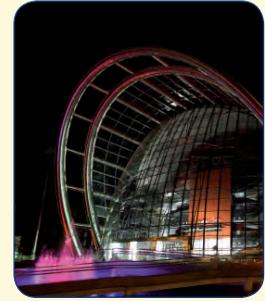
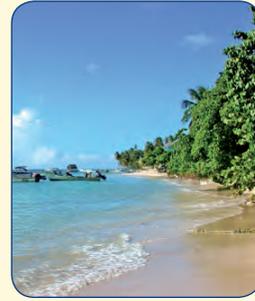
Building upon the platform of Trinidad and Tobago's energy sector-generated commercial traffic, the destination is now perfectly poised to develop and increase the country's share of the important and high-yielding, discretionary business travel market. Served by 20 international airlines with direct service to more destinations and connection hubs than any other destination in the Southern Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago affords easy access to key business markets throughout the region, especially those in North America and Europe with about 140,000 seats per month.

Trinidad's Piarco International Airport, one of the largest and most modern airports in the Caribbean, was recognised by World Travel Awards as the Best Airport in the Caribbean in 2007 and boasts a number of services for the discerning business traveller, including free WI-FI internet access, 24 hour taxi service, an executive jet centre, 13 car rental companies and a range of restaurants and duty free shopping on arrival and departure.

The Piarco International Airport also underwent major upgrades in 2009, and in 2011 users can look forward to superior levels of comfort with the opening of a food court showcasing Trinidad and Tobago's indigenous cuisine and a lounge for in-transit passengers. Infrastructural work for the construction of an Aviation Business Park, inclusive of a hotel, convention centre and an expanded range of retail shopping, is also scheduled to begin in the coming months. Business travellers will also find Piarco International Airport a convenient location, just five minutes away from a major shopping centre and 35 minutes away from the capital city of Port of Spain.

At the centre of Trinidad and Tobago's push to become the Southern Caribbean's leading business tourism destination, Port of Spain boasts the newest and largest





conference facilities in the English speaking Caribbean. The city's eight major event venues include Hyatt Regency Trinidad, with 43,000 square feet of meeting space complete with breakout rooms and state of the art technology, the modernised Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre, and the new National Academy for the Performing Arts.

There has also been robust growth of first class room stock in the city over the last few years, with the luxurious Carlton Savannah being the newest addition to the city's 700 new and top class hotel rooms. In the area of business hotels, Trinidad and Tobago has seen the addition of international branded products such as the Hyatt Regency in Port of Spain. The Hilton Trinidad & Conference Centre has recently completely refurbished its 418 rooms, along with the addition of a brand new 24-hour Business Centre and Executive Lounge. The new National Academy for the Performing Arts is a viable alternative for meetings, conferences, and events. On the outskirts of the city, there is the new Holiday Inn Express and a 140-room Star Hotel scheduled to come on-stream in the coming months. In addition, the Caribbean-branded Cara Suites Hotel successfully completed a 50-room expansion – a 100 per cent increase of its room stock.

One of Trinidad and Tobago's greatest assets is its people and, in recognition of this, the Tourism Development Company has launched an aggressive training initiative – the STAR programme – which is centred around the four core values of Service, Training, Attitude and Respect. The STAR programme is geared at fostering a culture of service excellence through specialised training opportunities for service providers at all levels of the tourism sector. Designed to position Trinidad and Tobago as the country that provides the warmest welcome and highest level of international quality service in the Caribbean, the STAR programme, during its initial three year implementation phase, will lay the necessary infrastructure to support consistent tourism service delivery that meets or exceeds international benchmarks for quality and sustainability.

Simultaneously, the Tourism Development Company has partnered with the Bureau of Standards to embark on the Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Industry Certification programme (TTIC), a national certification programme designed to ensure that tourism operators and service providers in Trinidad and Tobago's tourism sector conform to prescribed standards of quality in their operations.

Both islands also have a reputation for sumptuous, mouth-watering culinary fare, a legacy of Trinidad and Tobago's cultural and ethnic diversity. The flavours of India, Africa, China, Syria and Europe have combined to create

a taste that is unique. Meal options range from intimate eateries to fine dining, with a wide selection to suit every taste and pocket. Ariapita Avenue on the outskirts of Port of Spain may be regarded as the city's biggest restaurant district. A highlight for the visitor is a trip to Maracas Bay, a 30-minute drive from the city, where one can savour the local delicacy of fried shark fillets topped with spicy chutneys and sweet sauces. Street food is also very popular, particularly in St James, Port of Spain's centre for nightlife.

Visitors to Port of Spain can easily immerse in the destination's history and culture. The city has a diverse and rich cultural tradition and this is evidenced by museums, art galleries, historic sites, recreational spaces, and theatres, all within walking distance of major hotels and conference facilities. In addition, the shopping offered is wide-ranging with competitive prices, and one can find exciting nightlife including various clubs, bars, comedy shows and live theatre, thereby providing a vast variety of post-business entertainment and attractions for business visitors. By virtue of its ethnic mosaic, the destination is home to the largest pre-Lenten Carnival in the Caribbean, along with a range of colourful festivals throughout the year, including the Hindu festival of Divali, the largest celebration of its kind outside India, and Hosay, a four-day parade of drummers and tadjahs (colourful miniature temples). Emancipation Day celebrations occur over a two-week period and reflect the African influence on Trinidad and Tobago. The Tobago Heritage Festival chronicles the adventures, achievements, and memories of the numerous contributors to Tobago's cultural development during the pre- and post- Emancipation Period.

Trinidad and Tobago also offers visitors a diversified tourism product, biodiversity unrivalled in the Caribbean and two very distinct experiences in one destination, thus offering a unique combination to meeting planners. While Trinidad will welcome the actual meetings, the beautiful and serene sister isle of Tobago can provide the pre- and post-convention tours. Tobago has many beautiful beaches and is internationally recognised for its rich and colourful reefs, the oldest protected rainforest in the Western Hemisphere, and numerous forts and historical sites reminiscent of the island's history.

To learn more about Trinidad and Tobago, or planning a meeting, convention or exhibition in one of the Caribbean's most exciting destinations, contact the Trinidad and Tobago Convention Bureau at: conventionbureau@tdc.co.tt and experience outstanding service, or visit our website at: www.gotrinidadandtobago.com/trinidad/meetings ■

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