



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Carnival, Culture and Nature

Travenius Travel Services

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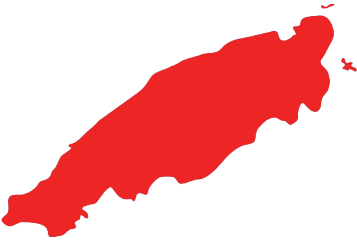
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TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

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WELCOME

In Trinidad & Tobago, there is an adventure for every day of the week! Go hiking through rainforests on a trail of hidden waterfalls and explore deep caves, cycle through the verdant countryside, go turtle watching or kayak past wildlife-filled forests and mangroves. In the evening, party like a local bar-hopping all night long on Port-of-Spain's Ariapita Avenue.





Climate & Weather

“Tropical” best describes the climate of the twin islands. Due to northeast trade winds and the islands’ location in relation to the equator, the temperature remains pleasant throughout the year. The annual average low is 26 °C (79 °F) with an average annual high of 33 °C (92 °F). Trinidad and Tobago only experience two seasons: A wet season and a dry season. The dry season runs from December until May and the wet season is usually between June and October / November. However, that does not mean that there is no rain during the dry season - you may even experience heavy rainfall. Still, the rain is usually less frequent and does not last long. During the dry months, the average rainfall is between 40-100 mm per month. In the wet months, it increases to an average of 250 mm per month. The month of September generally experiences a “dry window” referred to as “Petit Carem” with more sunshine and hot temperatures. It is the perfect opportunity to visit if you want to take advantage the low season’s reduced prices and less tourism but still have really hot weather. That being said, locals report that the “traditional” dry and wet seasons have become more scrambled in recent years. It is hard to say if this is evidence of climate change or simply individual subjective observations. One important fact: Due to the islands’ southern location, they lie outside of the Hurricane Belt and therefore, are almost never hit by hurricanes - making Trinidad & Tobago a sought-after refuge for yachters during hurricane season.

Geography & Geology

Trinidad and Tobago is the Caribbean’s most southern country. The shortest distance between the southwestern tip of Trinidad and the coast of Venezuela is less than 7 miles (11 km). Tobago (the smaller island) lies north west of Trinidad. It is surrounded by the Caribbean Sea to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. Trinidad has 3 mountain ranges with its highest point reaching 940 meters (3,084 ft) above sea level. On the

outskirt of these ranges, rolling hills characterize the island. Due to its volcanic nature, Tobago is considerably more rugged. Today, there are no active volcanoes on Tobago. There are several geological “wonders” you won’t want to miss on your trip! In the southwestern part of Trinidad, Pitch Lake is considered the biggest natural asphalt resource in the world. While it is primarily harvested, processed and exported for building material, there is also a visitor’s center. There, you’ll have the opportunity to walk on the “lake” accompanied by a certified guide - which is a great experience. Also in the south (near the city of San Fernando), there is a mud volcano where you can witness some of Trinidad’s unique geological activities.

History & Culture

The twin islands of Trinidad and Tobago have a rich history. In 1498, Christopher Columbus discovered the island of Trinidad and named it “La Trinity.” However, prior to Columbus’s arrival, the Carib and Arawak Indians inhabited the island. After Columbus’ discovery, nearly a century passed before Trinidad became a colony of Spain. During this century, Trinidad changed colonial hands many times. During the period between 1889–1898, while under the British rule, Trinidad merged governments with Tobago. Finally, in 1962 the islands gained independence from the British Crown to become the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Today, Trinidad and Tobago’s multicultural history truly lives up to the islands’ motto “Every creed and race finds an equal place.” The beauty of these islands lies not only in the tropical beaches, sea, and surf but also in the energy of its people and their lust for life.

Carnival is a season of its own culminating in the celebrations on the days before Ash Wednesday. Whether you participate in “J’Ouvert” - also known as the “Dirty Mas” (since participants cover each other in paint and mud on the morning of Carnival Monday) or in the big parade on Tuesday’s “Pretty Mas” - It is truly an exceptional experience and a great way to interact with friendly Caribbean

TOP REASONS TO GO

people. Outside of Carnival season, Trinidad & Tobago is a rather calm and easy-going place with friendly people. Tobago runs at a slower pace compared to Trinidad. Foreigners are part of the picture and usually very welcomed. As a part of everyday friendliness, is common even for strangers to acknowledge each other in the street with a simple “good day.” We recommend the same to visitors. If you are a little more flexible with respect to schedule and time, you will have a more stress-free vacation. It is not considered impolite to show up 30 minutes behind schedule. Although just as in other places, that depends on the occasion and the individual.

- Celebrate Caribbean's biggest carnival
- Rejuvenate at Nylon Pool
- Walk on Pitch Lake
- Dive the world's largest brain coral
- Relax on Tobago's pristine white beaches
- Party at Port-of-Spain's Ariapita Avenue
- Experience Trinidad's birds at Asa Wright

Society in Trinidad & Tobago is quite conservative, and religion is an important part of social life. If you are invited to a private home, it is common that a family member says grace at the dinner table and you will be included just like everybody else. Public affection between couples can be frowned upon even though you may see rather expressive and sexual dancing at parties. The erotic dancing or “winning” is not only expressed during Carnival but mostly practiced between couples or friends. As a foreigner, we generally recommend being a little less expressive, especially if you are new to a place. If you are asked to “wine” you can, of course, join in and have fun but be aware that this is usually not considered “sexual” and the person that “wines up on you” may just move on after a few minutes. Don't take it too seriously, that is just the fun of Carnival.

Health

Trinidad and Tobago do not require any special vaccines or health documents aside from your regular vaccination card, which is rarely asked for. Exceptions apply if you arrive from South or Central American countries as well as Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In these cases, you may be required to present proof of a yellow fever vaccination. Since there is no malaria in Trinidad and Tobago, extra precautions are not necessary. The most annoying insects are mosquitoes, especially at dusk and the evening hours. Some

of them carry dengue fever, which is an infection that can last up to a few weeks with flu-like symptoms. It can be dangerous especially for young children and elderly people. Since there is no vaccine against dengue fever, the safest way to avoid it is to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes. Especially in the evening and after dark, it is wise to wear long sleeve shirts and cover up your legs and feet. On the beaches, there are sandflies, which leave really irritating little itchy bites. You may not even feel them biting you and once you notice it is too late. They become active at dusk. Apply the same precautions you would with mosquitos. While there are quite a few snake species present on Trinidad and Tobago, few of them are poisonous and there is rarely a severe accident. In the unlikely event that you get bitten, put a tight bandage on the affected area and seek immediate medical assistance. Wasp stings can be painful and frustrating. One bigger species is called “jackspaniard”. They look somewhat like a hornet. The sting hurts a lot but is usually harmless unless you are allergic.

Stay away from manchineel trees when you spend time on beaches (also elsewhere, but on beaches you are most likely to come across them). They have an acidy juice that leaves blisters on your skin, as well as very poisonous fruits that look like a mix between a small green apple and a lime. These trees have small green leaves, which makes them quite easy to spot especially since the



ACCOMMODATION

Trinidad and Tobago offer a wide range of options from budget to luxury and exclusive accommodation. Due to Trinidad's status as a business hub in the Caribbean, there are quite a few international hotel chains present on the island. Tobago focuses much more on smaller hotels, boutique hotels, and guesthouses without falling short on quality and luxury.





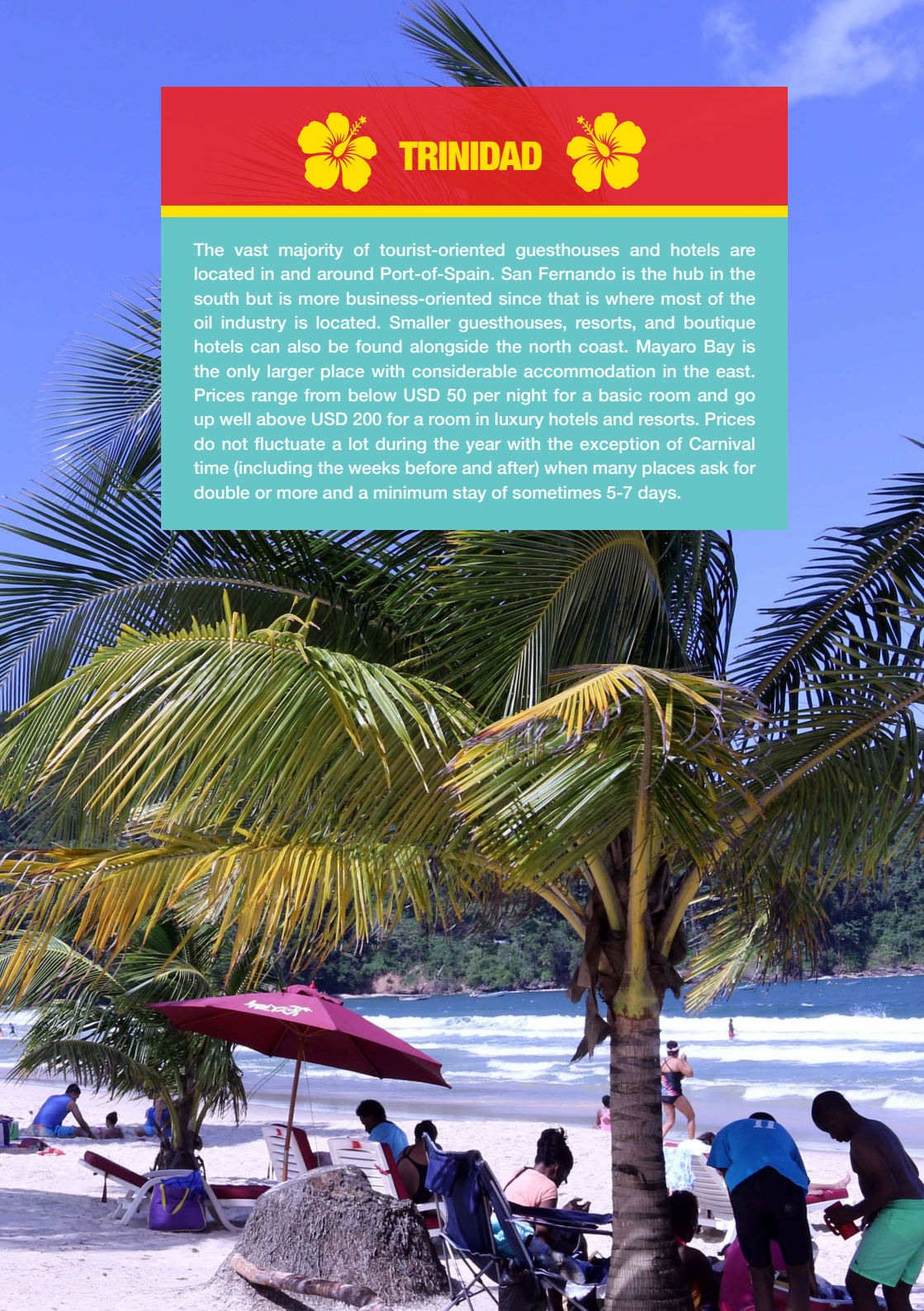




TRINIDAD



The vast majority of tourist-oriented guesthouses and hotels are located in and around Port-of-Spain. San Fernando is the hub in the south but is more business-oriented since that is where most of the oil industry is located. Smaller guesthouses, resorts, and boutique hotels can also be found alongside the north coast. Mayaro Bay is the only larger place with considerable accommodation in the east. Prices range from below USD 50 per night for a basic room and go up well above USD 200 for a room in luxury hotels and resorts. Prices do not fluctuate a lot during the year with the exception of Carnival time (including the weeks before and after) when many places ask for double or more and a minimum stay of sometimes 5-7 days.



Hotels & Resorts

CREWS INN HOTEL & YACHTING CENTER

The Crews Inn is located in the very Western part of Trinidad in Chaguaramas. You'll be within a national park right next to a small natural harbor that serves as a marina. With the ocean at your doorstep and a fitness trail and golf course just minutes away, it is an ideal location to stay with friends or family. It is a great place to relax or as a base for activities. Hotel staff is very helpful and will gladly arrange tours or offer guidance for things to do and see in the area.


+1 (868) 607 4000 • \$\$\$ • *Point Gourde, Chaguaramas • Family Friendly • Beach Access • Pool • Ocean View • Near Beach*
www.crewsinn.com

CARA SUITES

Whether for a weekend away or as a base for excursions in the south of the island, Cara Suites offers all the amenities of a quality hotel including a restaurant, mini-bar, full breakfast buffet, and high-speed internet service. Some of the superior rooms also feature ocean views of the Gulf of Paria.


+1 (868) 659 2272 • \$\$\$ • *Southern Main Road, Claxton Bay • Family Friendly • Pool • Ocean View • Sunset View*
www.carasuites.com

RADISSON HOTEL TRINIDAD

 The Radisson Trinidad offers the international standard of a luxury hotel. The hotel has great views of the city, the ocean and the countryside, there are two restaurants on site with optional in-room service as well as an outdoor pool surrounded by a garden landscape. Due to the proximity to the city of Port-of-Spain and the highway the Radisson is a convenient place to stay for activities in the city as well as a base to explore some of Trinidad's sites and activities outside of Port-of-Spain. Rates start at USD 150.

+1 (868) 625 3366 • \$\$\$ • *Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain • Family Friendly • Pool • Ocean View • Near City Center • Sunset View*
www.radisson.com

COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT PORT OF SPAIN

 The Courtyard gets you right into the bustling center of Port-of-Spain. With a shopping center right next door you can enjoy restaurants as well as movie theaters and you are still just a few feet away from the coastline. The hotel is a prime spot for Carnival visitors, but also a great base for excursions in and outside the city throughout the year. Just like with other hotels in the area, prices significantly increase during Carnival.


+1 (868) 627 5555 • \$\$\$ • *Invaders Bay, Audrey Jeffers Highway, Port-of-Spain • Family Friendly • Pool • Near City Center*
www.courtyardportofspain.com

HILTON HOTEL

 With great views over Queen's Park Savannah and downtown Port-of-Spain, the Hilton gets you close to the hustle and bustle yet is still a little on the outskirts. With only a short drive to the downtown area, the Hilton is a great location for conferences but also works well as a solid base for excursions. Here you can take advantage of familiar standards from an international hotel. However, while the hotel meets international standards it has become a little dated over the past few years. Some renovations have recently been completed especially in the lobby.

+1 (868) 624 3211 • \$\$\$ • *Lady Young Rd, Port-of-Spain • Family Friendly • Pool • Near City Center*
www.hiltontrinidadhotel.com

HYATT REGENCY TRINIDAD

 The Hyatt is arguably the top hotel in the country featuring a world-class conference center, an outstanding spa area, as well as several dining options and bars. You will have that tropical vacation feeling and also be close to the vibrant city of Port-of-Spain. Especially for Carnival, the Hyatt is a prime spot, but it comes at a price. You will find yourself in the center of the party zone while enjoying comfortable and, after all the partying - much needed relaxation. Outside of Carnival season, it is a great spot for a nice getaway with a mixture of relaxing vacation paired with city visits and exploring the country.

+1 (868) 623 2222 • \$\$\$\$ • *1 Wrightson Rd, Port-of-Spain • Pool • Ocean View • Near City Center*
www.trinidad.hyatt.com

Boutique Hotels / Bed & Breakfasts

FORTY WINKS INN



Located in the heart of Port-of-Spain, Forty Winks Inn Hotel is just two blocks away from Queen's Park Savannah. Hence, it is the perfect location to explore the city or use as a base to enjoy the Port-of-Spain's world-class Carnival. The inn is quite small and has only 5 unique and lovely decorated rooms, a nice rooftop terrace and offers a great breakfast. That way you can still enjoy an intimate home-like feeling while staying in the busy city centre. Prices start at USD 89 for a single room (1 person), USD 115 for a double room (2 people), which is quite moderate for the area. Don't be surprised if prices are a lot higher during Carnival. Also, during this time the minimum-stay is usually around one week. This is a common practice in Port-of-Spain during the Carnival and due to the massive demand hotels can afford to be picky.

+1 (868) 622 0484 • \$\$ • 24 Warner Street, Newtown, Port-of-Spain • Family Friendly • Locally owned • Near City Center
www.fortywinkstt.com

VALLEY OASIS INN

Valley Oasis Inn is located in the town of St. Joseph. In a gated community, you'll find it nestled in a very quiet and peaceful area in the neighborhood of Maracas Gardens. They offer local food and a full breakfast as well as very attentive service. You'll get that true "home away from home" feeling. If you are planning to venture

out a little, we recommend renting a car, as the location is quite remote and public transportation in the area is limited. It is ideal for a family vacation or a romantic get-away. Prices range between USD 70-110.

+1 (868) 696 2454 • \$\$ • 19 Lennox Phillips Drive, Maracas Gardens, St Joseph • Family Friendly • Locally Owned • Pool
www.thevalleyoasis.com

AIRPORT INN

The Airport Inn is a small family-run bed & breakfast that works as an ideal location to stay if you want to be close to the airport, e.g. for an early morning flight. You will experience a personal and well-kept place in a traditional Trinidadian home. You can enjoy sitting on the porch with a good book and have the option to order a light breakfast in the morning. Rates start at USD 90 for a single or double room.

+1 (868) 669 8207 • \$\$ • 60 Factory Road, Golden Grove, Piarco • Family Friendly • Locally Owned
www.airportinntrinidad.com

CULTURE CROSSROADS INN



Culture Crossroads Inn is a small, family-run, boutique inn that offers rooms in the center of Port-of-Spain with quite a high standard. Located near St. James just a few blocks away from the cultural and business heart of the city, you'll be in very close proximity to some the city's best restaurant and bars. The inn is an excellent option to use as a base for exploring Port-of-Spain and ideal during Carnival. Rates for a single room start at USD 100 during low season or USD 200 during peak season. The price for a double room increases by around USD 25 respectively.



BUDGET TIP

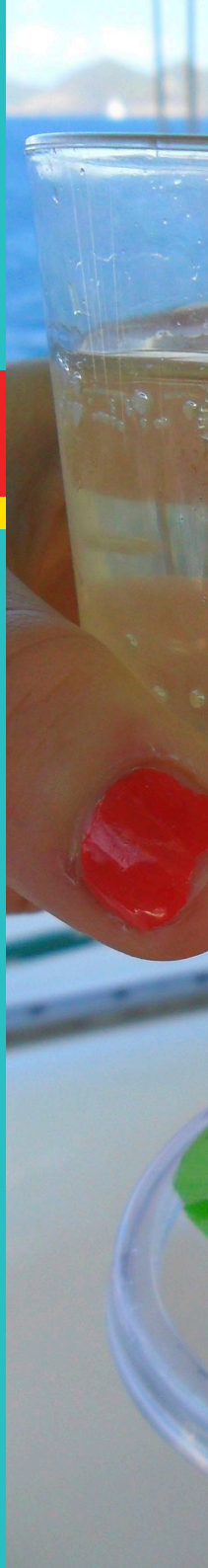


There is usually a room tax of 10% that is not included in posted rates (at least for hotels and guesthouses) and sometimes an additional service charge. Thus, fares that are advertised (e.g. online) do not always account for the final price. In order to be on the safe side, make sure to ask at the time of booking. Tip: Some smaller hotels may give you a discount outside of peak season if you book directly with them, as this way, they do not have to pay a commission to international booking portals. The best way to find out is to call them and ask.



EAT & DRINK

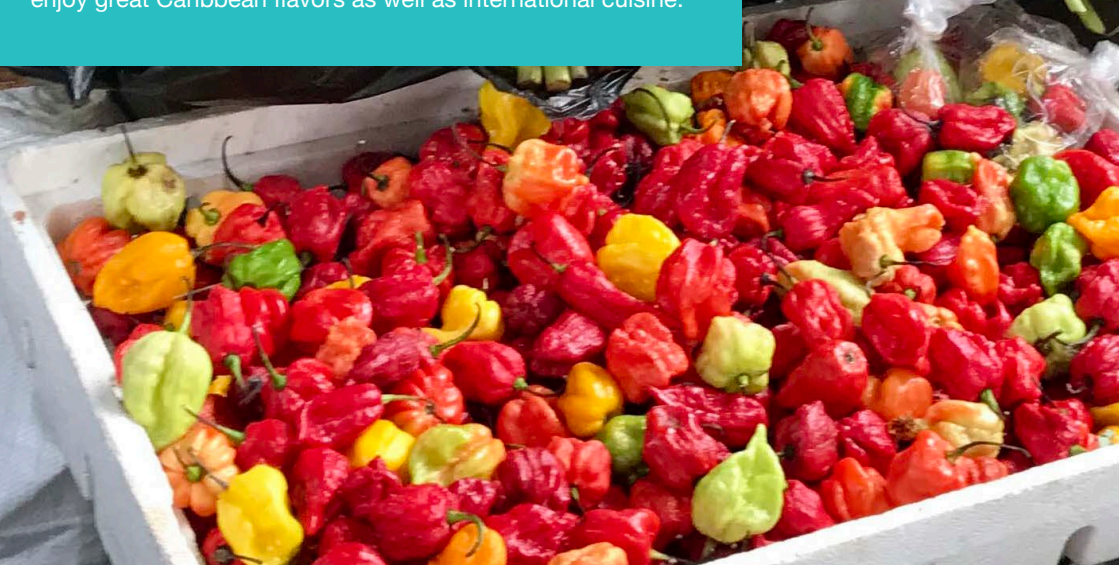
Trinidad & Tobago's cuisine has been influenced by many different cultures. You will find Créole and Caribbean dishes and due to the large population of (East) Indian decent - even lots of spicy indian flavors. For example, curry is found in many dishes in Trinidad. One of the most popular ways to enjoy it is with "roti" a thin bread similar to a pancake but flakier. On both islands, you will find lots of "roti shops", which are a great and inexpensive meal.







Trinidad being more exposed to international business travelers has quite a number of luxury restaurants and fine dining options where the price level is comparable to Europe's or America's high-end restaurants. Restaurants in Tobago tend to be a little more casual in a more relaxed atmosphere while you can still enjoy great Caribbean flavors as well as international cuisine.



Local Cuisine

SHIANN'S ROTI SHOP



Craving curry? Head over to Shiann's and experience the taste of Trinidad's national dish. Located just a few blocks from the Queen's Park Savannah, the central location means you're never too far from a traditional roti eating experience. Don't be embarrassed to lick your fingers after you are finished – with such delicious seasonings every last drop counts.

+1 (868) 304 5004 • Corner Woodford Street & Tragerete Road, Woodbrook, Port-of-Spain • \$

WINGS ROTI SHOP

No visit to Trinidad is complete without having tasted roti - one of the national signature dishes. This thin and flaky baked good is usually loaded with vegetables and/or meat, potatoes, and of course deliciously perfect curry seasoning... You eat it with your hands and (especially if you are not an experienced roti eater) it can get a little messy, but that's part of the fun. Wings Roti Shop in Tunapuna, just off the highway and outside the University of the West Indies campus, offers the real local experience away from the tourist areas. Head over, grab a roti and indulge in the flavors of the islands!

+1 (868) 645 6607 • 16 Mohammed Trail, Tunapuna • \$

BAKE & SHARK



One of the most popular street food specialties among locals in “bake and shark” – and there is a good reason. Imagine a warm deep-fried dough (the bake) topped with fried fish (not necessarily shark) as well as vegetables, pineapple, tomatoes and – of course – some hot sauce. Sounds yummy? Well, it is... The best spot to try bake and shark is Maracas Bay where you can find a few restaurants just across the street from the beach. Most famous is “Richard's” where, especially around lunch time, the beach crowd lines up almost every day. However, if you want to avoid a long wait, there are a few other options next door to Richard's with similar quality and prices.



North Coast Road, Maracas Bay Village • \$\$ • Family Friendly

<http://richardssharkbake.placeweb.site>

VENI MANGE

Want to find “True Trinidad” with its authentic local cuisine and inviting atmosphere smack-dab in one of the busiest areas in the city? Look no further than Veni Mange! They offer



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Location: Eat & Drink - Trinidad Local Drinks: Red Sorrel Drink Stamp

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Location: Local Culture: Two Ladies at Carnival

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Bonnie Lewtas

Fascinated by coastal ecology and a passion for travel, Bonnie discovered her passion for small islands with a focus on sustainable tourism. In recent years she has been exploring the ins and outs of the BVI, Barbados, Grenada, and Dominica and helps us highlight sustainable options and recommendation in our Travenius guidebooks. Bonnie now lives in Amsterdam and has her eye set on heading to the Dutch Caribbean's ABC islands for our upcoming book - we can't wait!

Matthias Eden

Born and raised in Germany traveling has always been a passion of Matthias. Introduced to the Caribbean by his wife Makeesha he has been visiting Caribbean destinations for many years always on the hunt for new hidden gems and exciting things to do. Matthias knows Trinidad and Tobago inside out as well as Saint Lucia and Barbados through numerous visits. With Travenius and in our products he is looking to highlight local businesses in our featured destinations and support local communities.

Makeesha Eden

Born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago Makeesha holds many of the Caribbean destinations close to her heart. Supported by her network of family and friends she ensures that we can put the latest and greatest into our guidebooks and keep them updated. Through our products she hopes to give our readers and visitors an essence of the true warmth and energy of the Caribbean people while showcasing each island's uniqueness.