

Tobago

Overview:

Tobago is the much smaller of two main islands in the archipelago of Trinidad and Tobago which consists of 23 islands in the southeastern Caribbean region. It has about 6% of the total area and 4% of the population of the Republic. In 1962, Trinidad and Tobago elected for independence from Britain, and in 1976, severed links with the monarchy to become a republic within the Commonwealth. In Tobago, agriculture became increasingly less important in the 20th century, as the island is now almost wholly dependent upon tourism.

Territory:

Land area 300 sq. km., 41 km long and 12 km wide. Small islands lying off Tobago include Little Tobago (Bird of Paradise Island), St. Giles Island, Goat Island and Sisters' Rock.

Location:

Tobago lies northeast of Trinidad and Venezuela, southwest of Grenada and southeast of Barbados.

Latitude and Longitude:

11 9' N, 60 40' W

Time Zone:

GMT -4

Total Land Area:

300

EEZ:

Climate:

The climate is tropical, and the island lies just south of the Atlantic hurricane belt. Average rainfall varies between 3800 mm on the Main Ridge to less than 1250 mm in the south-west of the island. There are two seasons: a wet season between June and December, and a dry season between January and May.

Natural Resources:

Tobago is the most southerly of the Caribbean islands with coral communities. The island has some of the best diving sites in the Caribbean, and the waters around the island are home to many species of tropical fish, rays, sharks, and turtles. The Tobago Forest Reserve is a forested area with great biodiversity including many species of birds, mammals, frog and (nonpoisonous) snakes. Little Tobago, a small neighbouring island, supports some of the best dry forest remaining in Tobago. Little Tobago and St. Giles Island are important seabird nesting colonies.

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:

Per Capita GDP:

% of GDP per Sector:		
Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

% of Population Employed by Sector		
Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

External Aid/Remittances:

Economic aid - recipient: US\$121.4 million (1995). Debt - external: US\$2.2 billion (1997 est.).

Growth:

Trinidad and Tobago has earned a reputation as an excellent investment site for international businesses. Industrial production growth rate: 7.5% (1995). GDP - real growth rate: 5% (1999 est.). Inflation rate (consumer prices): 3.5% (1999 est.). Successful economic reforms were implemented in 1995, and foreign investment and trade are flourishing. Persistently high unemployment remains one of the chief challenges of the government. The petrochemical sector has spurred growth in other related sectors, reinforcing the government's commitment to economic diversification. Tourism is growing, especially in the pleasure boat sector. The lowest per capita GNP of US\$ 3,160 was recorded in 1989. Since then there has been steady improvement - in 1994 the GNP was US\$ 3,740. The currency value has remained fairly stable since the floating of the dollar in 1993 (from TT\$ 5.40 to TT\$ 6.30=US\$ 1). There has been a reversal of the unemployment trends because of increases in the non-oil sectors of tourism and other service industries.

Labour Force:

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)

Industry:

Long-established industries are those processing raw materials of the farm, forest and sea; foremost are sugar, molasses, and rum, followed by fish, lumber, fats and oils, and stock feed. Manufacturing products include matches, angostura bitters, soap, and confectionery and clay products. Newer industries include petroleum refining, petrochemicals, concrete products, canned citrus, bottled drinks, glass, drugs, chemicals, clothing, building

Official Currency:
Trinidad Tobago dollar (TTD)



Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions: 4
Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:
Number of Insurance Companies:

Banks on Tobago are normally open from 8am to 2pm Monday to Thursday and 8am to 1pm then 3pm to 5pm on Fridays. They are closed on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

Financial Services:

Communications/E-Commerce:

Public Ownership:

Land Use:

The Tobago Forest Reserve (or the Main Ridge Reserve) claims to be the oldest protected forests in the Western world. It was designated as a protected Crown reserve on April 17, 1776. It has remained a protected area ever since.

Agriculture/Forestry:

Most of the forest products are used in construction and pulp much of which is exported to the US. Agriculture has been recently estimated to contribute less than 2% of the Tobago GDP, although many families have at least a part-time interest in agricultural or fishing enterprises. Tobago has a total land area of 30,044 hectares, one third of which is considered suitable for cultivation. Most of the agricultural holdings (71%) are small averaging less than two (2) hectares. Within the last two decades, there has been a significant decline in the level of output from and interest in agriculture in Tobago. The last estimate indicate that the agriculture sector in Tobago contributes about \$8.8 million of output or 1.02% to Tobago's GDP (PRDI, 1998). The reasons cited for the decline in agriculture relates to the under utilization of state lands, praedial larceny, high labour costs and competition from the tourism sector which has become a major contributor to GDP. At present, agriculture production comprises mainly of vegetables, root crops and livestock such as goat and pork.

Marine Activity:

Fishing:

The fishing enterprise is largely artisanal. A large proportion of the fish caught is processed and marketed locally, regionally and internationally by fish processing plants on the island.

Marine Life:

Tobago is endowed with a wide variety of marine life and this has for decades provided economic support for the coastal villages.

Critical Issues:

Marine pollution and coastal degradation have become serious development issues in the Caribbean. Several common marine pollution problems petroleum pollution and marine debris Also, land-based sources of marine pollution have been identified as a major problem, including organic and nutrient pollution, particularly from sewage, is most widespread and is possibly the most serious marine pollution problem in the Caribbean.

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:

Scarborough (pop. 17,000).

Political System:

The unicameral Tobago House of Assembly is the local government body responsible for the island of Tobago within the twin-island nation of Trinidad and Tobago. The THA was established in 1980 to rectify some of the disparities in the relationship between the two islands. In addition to the normal local government functions the THA handles many of the responsibilities of the central government, but lacks the ability to collect taxes or impose local laws or zoning regulations. The THA consists of 12 elected assemblymen and four appointed councilors. Three councilors are appointed on the advice on the Chief Secretary and one on the advice of the Minority Leader. The Chief Secretary is the leader of the majority party in the assembly.

Political Parties:

The first THA elections were held on November 24, 1980. The Democratic Action Congress led by A.N.R. Robinson won eight seats and the People's National Movement won four seats (a reversal of the 1977 County Council elections in which the PNM won seven seats and the DAC 4). The DAC went on to win the 1984 elections by a margin of 11-1 over the PNM. The National Alliance for Reconstruction (into which the DAC merged in 1986) continued to dominate the THA winning the 1988 elections, and the 1992 elections elections by an 11-1 margin over the PNM. It won the 1996 elections by a margin of 10-2, with the PNM and an independent candidate winning one seat each. In the 2004 elections the PNM gained control of the THA, winning eight seats to the NAR's four. The PNM consolidated their hold on the THA in the January 2005 elections. The PNM currently holds 11 seats in the THA while the DAC (which reformed after splintering from the NAR in 2004) holds a single seat.

Important Legislation:

Principal Taxes:

The principal direct tax levied in Trinidad & Tobago is Corporation Tax. Effective January 2006, the tax rate was 25%.

Associated Power:

Citizenship:

The inhabitants are citizens of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Paradiplomacy:

HUMAN RESOURCES

Population 54,084 (2000)

Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
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Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Tobago grew by 11.28 percent, making it one of the fastest growing areas of the country. Population below poverty line: 21% (1992 est.).

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
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Migration:

Crude Birth Rate:

Life Expectancy:

The life expectancy for Tobago is part of that of Trinidad and Tobago which is 69.2 (2004)

Crude Death Rate:

Ethnicity:

A history of slavery and indentureship has left the country with a mixture of African, Indian, mixed-race, European, Middle Eastern and Chinese people. The population of Tobago is overwhelmingly Afro-Tobagonian, although with a growing proportion of Indo-Trinidadians and Europeans (predominantly Germans and Scandinavians).

Class Division:

While symbolic ethnic conflict seems to permeate daily life, it must be emphasized that Trinidad has never exploded in ethnic violence, as has its neighbor Guyana which has a similar demographic profile. Given ethnic diversity and ethnic politics, the salience of class is often overlooked or even actively denied. In fact, ethnicity and class work in tandem. Blacks and Indians have lagged behind other racial groups in earning power. Caste for Indians broke down with migration, but informal claims to high caste ancestry are still made at times.

Languages:

The Official language is English with Spanish having a special status. Hindustani is recognised as a regional language.

Religion:

The largest two are the Roman Catholics (26%) and Hindus (22%); the Anglicans (8%), Muslims (6%), Seventh-day Adventists (4%), Presbyterians, Jehovah's Witnesses and Methodists are among the smaller faiths. Two African syncretic faiths, the Shouter or Spiritual Baptists and the Orisha faith (formerly called Shangos, a less than complimentary term) are among the fastest growing religious groups, as are a host of evangelical and fundamentalist churches usually lumped as "Pentecostal" by most Trinidadians (although this designation is often inaccurate).

Literacy:

The total literacy rate for Tobago is included in the overall rate for Trinidad and Tobago which stood at 98.5% in 2004.

Education System:

In 2006, free tertiary education was made available to all Trinidadian citizens studying locally or regionally. In coming years, the government plans to focus on building early childhood care centers and improving the quality of primary and secondary schools which are already free of charge. Part of this improvement will be the implementation of magnet schools with specializations in areas such as Visual and Performing arts, Languages and Physical Education. In 2006, many training programmes were introduced to provide technical vocational education. Public grants and loans are also available to assist students in covering their maintenance costs. There is a total of 31 school on Tobago. There are public and private schools. Several school are run by religious groups.

Total Pre-schools:()	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	
Second Level:	
Third Level:	
Total Secondary Schools:	
Total Professional Schools	
Universities:	1

Number of Schools per Island:										
	Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
	Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University



Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			

There has been a steady and significant improvement in the level of educational attainment in the population. In 1970, approximately 8% of the population had no education and by 1990, this had been reduced to about 3%. The University of Trinidad and Tobago offers an outreach program to the Island of Tobago.

Medical Services:

Free medical services are offered to the public at the five general hospitals throughout the country. Private hospital care can be quite expensive locally.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

From about 1672, during a period of stability under temporary British rule, plantation culture began. Sugar, cotton and indigo factories sprang up and Africans were imported to work as slaves. The economy flourished and by 1777 Tobago was exporting great quantities of rum, cotton, indigo and sugar. However, the French invaded again, in 1781, and destroyed the plantations. They forced the British governor to surrender and the island's buoyant economy fell into decline. In 1814, when the island was again under British control, another phase of successful sugar production began. However, a severe hurricane in 1847, combined with the collapse of plantation underwriters, marked the end of the sugar trade. Without the highly profitable sugar production, Britain had no further use for Tobago and in 1889 the island was made a ward of Trinidad. Without sugar, the islanders had to grow other crops, planting acres of limes, coconuts and cocoa and exporting their produce to Trinidad. 1850 -Exports: 47,730cwt sugar; 114,684gals rum, 3,255cwt molasses. Cultivation of cotton advocated. 1851 -Population 14,378. In this year, 292 liberated Africans sent from St.Helena by the British Government to settle in Tobago. 1858 - Tobago adopted the Encumbered Estates Act of 1854. Commissioners were appointed in London for the sale of lands by creditor or owner. Estates passed to those with capital to work them or who were prepared to sell in small lots. 1861 - Population: 15,410. Exports: sugar -59,052cwt; rum - 109,047gals; molasses - 1,207cwt. 1877 - Under a new Constitution Act, Tobago was administered as a Crown Colony and the elective principle abolished. Last meeting of Privy Council held in December. 1883 - Tobago had no public debt. Agriculture Society held its first show - the opening day was declared a Public Holiday. At this time two thirds of the island was covered by forest. A Royal Commission (Crossman Commission) arrived from London. They were sent to the West Indies to enquire into conditions in Tobago and the other islands. 1888 - By an Order in Council dated October 20th, 1888, Tobago was made subordinate to Trinidad as from January 1st, 1889 to be administered by a Resident Commissioner who was ex officio a member of the Trinidad Legislative Council and appointed by the Governor of Trinidad. 1890 - Population of Tobago 18,353. Revenue: £8,695. Expenditure: £9,253. Imports: £23,403. Exports: £19,371. Crops produced: sugar - 22,382cwt; rum - 3,432 gals; molasses - 7,360cwt; coconuts - 543,312; cacao - 31 bags. 1898 - The island, broke and in debt, becomes a Ward of Trinidad. "Tobago's humiliation was complete." (Eric Williams: "History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago",p.150) 1925 - New Trinidad and Tobago constitution establishes seven constituencies, one of which is Tobago. [<http://www.oceanpoint.com/tobchronicles.htm>]

Referenda:

Recent Significant Events:

Although Tobago lies to the south of the hurricane belt, it was nevertheless struck by Hurricane Flora on September 30, 1963. The effects of the hurricane were so severe that they changed the face of Tobago's economy. The hurricane laid waste to the plantations of banana, coconut, and cacao, which largely sustained the economy. It wreaked considerable damage to the largely pristine tropical rainforest that makes up a large proportion of the interior of the northern half of the island. Subsequently, many of the plantations were abandoned, and the economy changed direction away from cash crop agriculture toward tourism.

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

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Please address queries to:
 Institute of Island Studies
 University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI)
 550 University Ave
 Charlottetown, PE, Canada, C1A 4P3

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