



ORIENTATION HANDBOOK
FOR U.S. FULBRIGHTERS
VISITING TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The following information is intended to help Fulbrighters get acquainted with Trinidad and Tobago. All information was adapted from the U.S. Embassy in Port of Spain's Pre-Arrival Handbook for officials of the U.S. Department of State; reports from previous Fulbright grantees, as well as relevant websites of the U.S. Department of State and the Ministry of National Security, Immigration Division of Trinidad and Tobago (immigration.tt.gov)

CONTENTS

THE COUNTRY

- Geography
- History and Government
- The People of Trinidad and Tobago
- Port of Spain

THE U.S. EMBASSY AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

- Key Fulbright Administration Personnel
- Before Departing the U.S.
- Visas
- Visa Waiver
- Visa Related Costs
- Work Permit
- Arrival in the Country
- Cross Cultural Adjustment
- Crime
- Housing
- Utilities and Equipment
- Local Transportation
- Car Rental
- Daily Living
- Travelling to Tobago
- Mail
- Pouch Contents
- Telephone
- Radio and TV
- Newspapers and Magazines
- Medical Facilities
- Public Health
- Preventive Measures
- Holidays and Festivals
- Families with Children – Pre-schools; Secondary Schools; Child Care;
 Activities for Children
- Food
- Specialty Foods
- Cuisine of T&T
- Clothing – What to Buy
- Recreation and Social Life
- Religious Activities

Sports
Entertainment
Currency & Exchange
Banks
Travel
General Health and Emergency Medical Information
Things to do in Trinidad and Tobago

THE COUNTRY

Geography

Trinidad and Tobago are the southern-most islands of the West Indian island chain separating the Caribbean Sea from the Atlantic Ocean. Trinidad has an area of 4,830 square kilometers (1,864 square miles), about the size of Delaware. Trinidad measures 50 miles long and from 35 to 45 miles wide.

Tobago, 21 miles northeast of Trinidad, has an area of 116 square miles. It has generally rugged terrain with elevations up to 1,800 feet; the only extensive lowland is a coral platform at the southwest end. Tobago's vegetation is similar to, but somewhat less varied than Trinidad's.

Both Trinidad and Tobago lie deep in the tropics but are cooled by the marine environment and the prevailing northeast trade winds. Because of its constant exposure to trade winds, Tobago is cooler than Trinidad. Rainfall is moderate to heavy with an annual average of 82.7 inches but is subject to considerable regional and year-to-year variations. Days are warm, although evening temperatures may be cooler. The mean year-round temperature for the country at 8 a.m. is about 77°F; at 2 p.m. it is about 86°F. Humidity is somewhat higher than the West Indian average because of its proximity to the South American continent and averages about 86% at 8 a.m. and about 65% at 2 p.m.

A dry season, more clearly defined than in most West Indian islands, lasts from January through mid-May; a short interruption of the rainy season also usually occurs in September. In most of the country no month is entirely dry, but during the rainy season the monthly precipitation is three to four times greater than in the dry season.

As elsewhere in the tropics, termites, cockroaches, ants, moths, mosquitoes, flies, and rodents exist, but are pretty well controlled. Weekly wiping of appliances and furniture kept in non-air conditioned rooms is essential to prevent mildew. Electrical appliances, such as fans, are very useful. Most beaches have sand flies in damp weather. Small lizards abound, but are useful since they catch small insects.

History and Government

Christopher Columbus discovered and claimed Trinidad from Spain in 1498, during his third trip to the New World. In fact, Columbus named the island, La Trinite, or Trinidad, for the three small peaks (located on the southern coast of the island) he sighted on his arrival. Trinidad was used for many years as a starting point for Spanish expeditions into Guyana in search of gold. The first Spanish settlement, and the capital, was established in 1592 at St. Joseph. Both Sir Walter Raleigh and the Dutch made brief bids for possession of the island.

In 1796, during the Napoleonic wars, the Spanish declared war against Great Britain. Earlier that year, open fighting had broken out between French privateers and British warships in the Gulf of Paria. In February of 1797, the Spanish conceded Trinidad to the English after being invaded by them and surrendering almost immediately. Tobago, after changing hands among the Dutch, French, British, and even Americans several times, was finally captured by the British in 1803. By the mid-1700's, Tobago had become a thriving agricultural island; by the 1770's, slaves outnumbered whites by 20 to 1.

On August 31, 1962, the United Kingdom granted independence to Trinidad and Tobago as member of the British Commonwealth with a Governor General as the Queen's personal representative. On September 24, 1976, Trinidad and Tobago adopted a new constitution which established the country as a republic within the British Commonwealth. The Queen was replaced as head of state by a President elected by Parliament, and the position of Governor General was abolished.

The major governmental institutions, based on the British model, remained the same as those established by the 1962 constitution. They are:

- A Cabinet (currently 17 Ministers appointed and led by a Prime Minister);
- A bi-cameral Parliament consisting of a 36-member House of Representatives and a 31-member Senate. Members of the House of Representatives are elected in parliamentary elections held at least every 5 years. Members of the Senate are appointed by the President: 16 on the advice of the governing party, six on the advice of the opposition party, and nine at the President's discretion.
- A judicial system which has a Court of Appeals as its highest level in the country. Final appeals may be taken to the Judicial Committee of the UK Privy Council.

The People of Trinidad and Tobago

The indigenous inhabitants of the islands - the warlike Caribs, who flourished in Tobago, and the more peaceful Arawaks, who outnumbered the Caribs in Trinidad - were ultimately subdued and enslaved by the Spanish. By the end of the 18th century, they were almost extinct.

Africans were brought to Trinidad as slaves in 1702 to boost cocoa production. When the Spanish crown opened the island to immigration in the last quarter of the century, French planters and their slaves came by the thousands from other Caribbean islands and France, bringing their knowledge of sugarcane cultivation.

When law abolished slavery throughout the British West Indies in 1834, plantation owners turned to contract-indentured laborers from China. The Chinese worked well but proved entrepreneurial and generally turned to private enterprise at the end of their indentures. Next the owners turned to India, and some 150,000 arrived in Trinidad between 1854 and 1917. The indenture system, always controversial for economic as well as humanitarian reasons, was abolished in 1917. By 1921 East Indians accounted for almost one-third of Trinidad's population; today they comprise the majority.

Roughly 70% of today's population is Christian, with Roman Catholicism (36%) and Anglicanism (13%) being the largest denominations. Hindus comprise 23% of the population and Muslims 6%.

Trinidad and Tobago's population (1990 estimate) is about 1,234,388, of which only 40,745 live in Tobago. Some 58,427 live in Port of Spain proper, about 34,154 in San Fernando, and 24,645 in Arima. The largest town in Tobago, Scarborough, has about 3,000 inhabitants. About 2,200 American citizens live in Trinidad and Tobago.

Endowed like neighboring Venezuela with rich deposits of oil and natural gas, Trinidad and Tobago became one of the most prosperous countries in the Western Hemisphere during the oil boom of the 1970s, ranking third in per-capita income behind the United States and Canada by 1981. With the collapse in oil prices in the early 1980s, Trinidad and Tobago entered into a difficult period of economic recession. In mid-1988, worsening economic conditions forced the government to begin a stringent adjustment

program guided by the International Monetary Fund. This included devaluing the currency, adopting strict austerity budgets, rescheduling foreign debt, and in 1990 imposing a 15-percent value-added tax (VAT) on most goods and services.

The country now appears to have successfully recovered from its economic decline, posting real GDP growth in recent years. Trinidad and Tobago's international debt rating and per capita income are now among the highest in the hemisphere, and the country is viewed as an economic and political leader in the Caribbean.

Despite efforts to diversify its economy, Trinidad and Tobago remains heavily dependent to the energy sector, which accounts for one-fourth of total GDP. Production of crude oil has been steadily declining over the past decade, but the discovery of large reserves of natural gas, primarily in offshore fields, has fueled the development of petrochemical and metals industries. There are over twenty large industrial plants in Trinidad which depend on natural gas as a feedstock or on inexpensive natural gas generated electricity. Trinidad and Tobago is one of the world's largest exporters of ammonia and methanol.

Port of Spain

Port of Spain is located between the sheltered Gulf of Paria and the mountains of the Northern Range that rise sharply from the sea to an altitude of 3,000 feet. The metropolitan population is about 180,000. Suburbs stretch out in several directions, housing thousands more. The business center at Independence Square is immediately inland from the dock and waterfront. On nearby Woodford Square stands the Red House, which houses the Parliament.

Further inland is the Savannah park, often called the "world's largest roundabout," because the traffic moves around it in only one direction. The Embassy is located on the west side of the park. This huge, grassy park is the site of numerous cricket and soccer games, food vendors, and spectators on park benches. A 2-1/2 mile long paved walk around the Savannah is crowded with joggers, baby strollers, and pedestrians. Most Carnival activities take place on the Savannah.

Many of the cultural and physical attractions of Port of Spain are located around the Savannah. This includes Queen's Hall, (normally used for concerts and other performances and the recently established National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA) which is touted as a modern-day state-of-the-art cultural center.

Port of Spain has more burglarproofing, walls and fences than a comparable American city. Barbed wire, broken glass barriers, and guard dogs sometimes alarm newcomers. However, these are precautions against property crime; Trinidad has one of the highest per capita murder rates in the world.

**THE U.S. EMBASSY AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE FULBRIGHT
PROGRAM IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

The Fulbright Program Administration in Trinidad and Tobago falls under the purview of the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy.

Key Fulbright Administration Personnel

Mr. Alexander McLaren, Acting Public Affairs Officer and Section Head

Ms. Jacqueline Gregoire, Cultural Affairs Specialist

The Embassy's address is P.O. Box 752, 15 Queen's Park West, Port of Spain (tel.: (868) 622-6371). The Public Affairs Section, including the Information Resource Center (IRC) is located one block from the Chancery at 7-9 Marli Street.

Mr. Alexander McLaren Acting Public Affairs Officer U.S. Embassy Briar Place, 2 nd Floor Sweet Briar Road St. Clair, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO West Indies	Tel: (868) 822-5559 (office) (868) 310-3180 (cell) Fax: (868) 822-5574 E-mail: mclarenaj@state.gov
Ms. Jacqui Gregoire Public Affairs Section, US Embassy – Trinidad Briar Place, P.O. Box 752 Port of Spain, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO West Indies	Tel: (868) 822-5561 (office) (868) 739-5680 (cell) (868) 628-0128 (home) Fax: (868) 822-5574 Email: gregoirej@state.gov

Before Departing the U.S.

Study the country, to ease adjustment by increasing your confidence. The unknown is more intimidating than the known. Try to meet people with connections to Trinidad. Maybe you know someone with Trinidadian friends or relatives. Trini friendliness is legendary. Or, try to meet Americans who have lived in Trinidad such as previous Fulbright grantees to Trinidad (as recent as possible) to discuss day-to-day life in Trinidad and Tobago.

Contact info for previous grantees is available from IIE, CIES or from the Embassy's Fulbright personnel. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to call on either Alexander McLaren or Jacqui Gregoire for further information.

Arriving Fulbright grantees are requested to provide the following information to Jacqui Gregoire at least two weeks prior to arrival:

- Name and Date of Birth
- Passport No.
- Date and Place of Issue
- Expiration Date
- Arrival Information (date, airline, flight no., time of arrival)
- Grant Period(from day/mo/yr to day/mo/yr)

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL ARRIVING GRANTEES MUST HAVE A RETURN AIRLINE TICKET. PERSONS ARRIVING WITH A ONE-WAY AIRLINE TICKET WILL NOT REPEAT NOT BE PERMITTED TO ENTER THE COUNTRY.

The above information must also be provided for accompanying dependents.

Visas

Obtaining a Visa may be cheaper (approximately US\$15) in the U.S. but can sometimes prove to be a more difficult process for grantees choosing this route. Grantees' complaints have been known to range from having difficulty in contacting Embassy personnel to being issued visas which expire before the official end date of their grant. However, grantees still wishing to obtain a visa before leaving the U.S. may contact any of the following Trinidad and Tobago Missions:

Washington, D.C.: - The Embassy of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in Washington, D.C., situated at 1708 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20036; Telephone: (202) 467-6490; Fax: (202) 785-3130; E-mail: info@ttembwash.com; URL: <http://www.ttembassy.org>

New York, NY: - The Trinidad & Tobago Consulate, 475 5th Ave Fl 4, New York, NY 10017; Phone: (212) 682-7272 or

Miami, FL: The Office of the Consulate General of Trinidad and Tobago situated at 1000 Brickell Avenue, Suite 800, Miami, Florida 33131-3047; tel: 305-374-2199 Fax: 305-374-3199

Visa Waiver

Visitors of certain countries including the United States are allowed to enter the country without a visa for visits of 30 days or less. Fulbright grantees must possess a valid U.S. passport and a return airline ticket that is valid for the duration of their stay in the country. Grantees entering the country without a visa will be charged a visa waiver fee of approximately TT\$400 or US\$65. Besides the visa waiver, the immigration officer will affix an "entry permit" stamp to your passport with an expiration date. If the date given does not cover the entire period of your grant, it will be necessary to apply to the local immigration office for an extension of the grant period. CAS Jacqui Gregoire will provide assistance in this regard.

If a grantee intends to travel outside of the country more than twice during the grant period, it is advisable that they obtain a “multiple-entry” visa for a one-time fee of TT\$400. rather than having to pay a TT\$400 fee each time they re-enter the country. CAS Jacqui Gregoire can also provide assistance in this regard.

Visa Related Costs

Visa	TT\$100 (US\$15) (if obtained in U.S.)
Visa Waiver	TT\$400 (US\$65)
Multiple-Entry Visa	TT\$400 (US\$65)
Visa Extension	TT\$100 (US\$17)
Work Permit Stamp	TT\$100 (US\$17)

On arrival, IIE grantees, if questioned by an immigration officer, should state that the purpose of their visit is to conduct research. In order to avoid any possible confusion requiring unnecessary documentation a grantee should not, repeat **NOT** mention that he/she is a “student”. It is also a good idea for IIE grantees to carry with them copies of all correspondence from their University of the West Indies affiliate who will be serving as their mentor/affiliate.

Work Permit

Fulbright CIES Lecturers and Researchers affiliated to the University of the West Indies should contact their U.W.I. affiliate to arrange for a work permit prior to their arrival in the country. Grantees are advised to have the original valid work permit in their possession when they arrive in the country, to present to the immigration officer at the airport. Documents required for the work permit application are: a police certificate of good character, two reference reports and 4 passport-size photos.

Arrival in Country

As soon as possible after arriving in the country, grantees should contact Jacqui Gregoire to arrange a security briefing and to register with the Embassy. Any further questions or concerns may also be addressed at this time.

Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Moving overseas always necessitates a certain period of adjustment. You will be leaving a familiar environment to enter an unfamiliar one.

Don't be surprised if you feel "culture shock" right after your move. Give yourself a few months to get settled. The following suggestions can help ease this difficult transition period.

Expect positive and negative attitudes in yourself on your way to adjustment. According to a study by Dr. Bernardo Hirschman, people go through four general phases of cultural adjustment:

The first phase is positive - you are excited about the new country and want to learn about it. You imitate the new culture and try to be part of it.

The second phase is a more negative reaction - the honeymoon is over and you recognize the problems and the frustrations of your new situation. You might revert to a "we" and "they" attitude.

In the third phase, you gradually make adjustments and gain confidence in the new environment.

Finally, in the fourth phase, you reach a point of acceptance of the variation of cultures. You are not a true member of the new culture, but you are not "just" an American either. You become an "international person" who can function in more than one culture with comfort and understanding.

If you are moving with a spouse and/or children, support each other. This is a time for the family to draw closer together as they go through an exciting, frightening, challenging new experience. Make sure you talk about what you are going through and provide teamwork and mutual support.

Get acquainted quickly with the new environment. Try to meet people and to find the good things in your neighborhood (a park, kids on bikes, a path to the sea, etc.). Find things you like about your new home and emphasize them.

Get out into the new community. Go out for ice cream. Try new foods. See a movie. Meet local people and invite them to visit.

Crime Information

Visitors should exercise normal caution and good judgment when visiting Trinidad and Tobago. Take the same precautions you would at home: avoid questionable areas, particularly after dark; don't carry large amounts of money or wear a lot of tempting jewellery; be careful about accepting rides from (or giving rides to) strangers. Women should avoid sunbathing solo on lonely beaches; and everyone should be wary of ingratiating young men who insist on being your guide. The U.S. Embassy advises visitors to exercise caution when traveling from Trinidad's Piarco Airport, especially after dark, because of incidents involving armed robbers trailing arriving passengers from the airport and then accosting them outside the gates of their residences. Holiday periods, especially Christmas and Carnival, often see an increase in crime. In some cases, robberies of Americans have turned violent after the victim resisted handing over valuables. The U.S. Embassy also urges caution in the use of the small buses or vans in Trinidad, known as "Maxi Taxis" (full-size inner-city buses are usually safe). These have been linked to petty crime and serious traffic accidents. Taxis available at the major hotels or through pre-arranged pick-ups are generally safe and reliable. Taxis authorized to pick up passengers will have the letter 'H' as the first letter on their license plates. Motor vehicle occupants should keep all windows closed and car doors locked. Valuables including travel documents should not be left unattended in parked cars, especially in parking lots as several thefts have been reported. Police are not always cooperative, and often hampered by a lack of resources.

For travel to specific places at night, grantees should contact the Embassy to obtain a listing of reliable private hire taxis.

Housing

There is a wide variety of housing in Trinidad but comfortable housing is expensive, and two critical elements must be considered, water availability and security. Expect to pay

at least US\$650.00 for a modest, furnished two-bedroom/one bath dwelling with auxiliary water storage (including working water pumps) in a secured complex. Finding an apartment with a washer and dryer is also recommended since laundromats are in short supply. Water service is not always reliable so one should only rent a dwelling with auxiliary storage tanks (with working pumps).

Temporary Housing

A few inexpensive guesthouses can be found around the capital city and in the St. Augustine area near to the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus. Incoming grantees are encouraged to contact Cultural Affairs Specialist Jacqui Gregoire for further advice.

Utilities and Equipment

Water is potable. Electricity is generally reliable, but there are occasional surges and short outages. Surge protectors are recommended for sensitive electronic items such as computers. Battery-backup model alarm clocks are convenient, since momentary power outages erase the time settings on electronic clocks. Since electric current is the same as in the U.S. (110v, 60-cycle AC) transformers are unnecessary. Most modern housing is wired for 220v for stoves and air-conditioners. Most other appliances are wired for 110v.

Telephone service is reliable, but long distance rates (Trinidad to US) may be expensive. Most areas of Trinidad have Cable TV and televisions are available for rental.

Many houses are equipped for gas ranges. Both electric and gas water heaters are commonly used.

Local Transportation

Taxi stands are located in several areas of Port of Spain, including at hotels and the airport. Taxis can also be summoned by telephone. Ask about the fare beforehand, as taxis are not metered. Taxis belonging to the 2 telephone dispatch firms are clearly identifiable by the self-advertising on their bodies. Other registered taxis carry no marking other than a license plate beginning with the letter 'H' for 'hire'. There are also an abundance of drivers who take up taxiing on the side. Their cars carry 'P' plates (meant to identify private, not commercial, vehicles) and are referred to colloquially as 'PH' taxis.

Route taxis or maxi-taxis (mini-buses) are restricted to special routes. They display a sign in the windshield, but the color-coding designates their area. Rides are shared with others, who are picked up and let off along the route. Maxi-taxis are often full, but fares are reasonable. Many local residents rely on these for transportation. Local transportation is primarily by means of private automobiles, taxis and maxi-taxis. Buses cover limited routes, which concentrate on connecting Port of Spain with nearby towns and villages and are impractical for normal use.

Car Rental

Car rental rates are higher than those in the U.S. Rental agencies usually require a large cash deposit. A typical compact car, averages US\$45 a day when available. Longer-term rates are somewhat lower.

The typical Trinidadian driving style may frighten newly arrived Americans. Some drivers are aggressive and have little reluctance about straddling the center of the road in the face of oncoming traffic. Driving with high beams on at night is the rule rather than the exception. Taxis stop suddenly to pick up or discharge passengers and make no effort to pull to the side of the road. After the initial shock, one normally learns to drive defensively at all times and find that driving on the left is not as hard as first thought.

The roads and streets (with the exception of a few major highways) are narrow, full of potholes, and poorly maintained. This results in rapid wear and tear on cars. The narrow roads are often congested with bumper-to-bumper traffic because private automobiles are the main source of transportation. Due to these conditions, smaller cars are recommended. Four-wheel-drive sport utility vehicles are also very popular especially for those who enjoy exploring the dirt roads and secluded beaches of the island.

A local driver's license is required after 90 days of entering Trinidad and Tobago. A valid U.S. or foreign license will facilitate issuance of a local license. The license is good for three years.

Daily Living

Finding items and services for daily living is often time-consuming, but virtually all items and services are available. Any items produced locally are reasonable in price but imported or processed items can be three to four times as expensive as they are in the U.S. Trinidad has some excellent produce, baked goods, and fish but not always a wide variety. There are many roadside stands that offer high quality fruits and vegetables (although limited in variety).

Traveling to Tobago

There are several 20-minute flights daily between Trinidad (Piarco Airport) and Tobago (Crown Point Airport). The fare is generally US\$50 to \$75 per round trip. Airport taxi fares on both islands are standard and are displayed at each terminal. Establish the fare before hiring a taxi.

A ferry also operates between Trinidad and Tobago. The roundtrip fare is about US\$20. The trip takes 2 1/2 to 3 hours from Port of Spain to Tobago, but only 2 hours return because of the favorable current. Car rentals in Tobago cost about US\$50 a day.

Mail

American Fulbright grantees have been officially given the privilege of using the diplomatic pouch for a one-time shipment of educational materials to Trinidad and Tobago. Use of the diplomatic pouch is a privilege which, if abused, can be withdrawn by the U.S. Department of State. This facility does not extend to grantees wishing to send materials home to the U.S. on completion of their grants.

Contents

Packages must contain **only** books, journals, magazines, notes or other similar educational materials required for grantees' teaching or research program overseas. Computers and electronic equipment **may not** be sent by pouch. Packages **may not** contain personal effects of any kind. The Department of State may open packages suspected of containing prohibited items. If prohibited items are discovered, the box will be returned to the sender. Grantees should not enclose items that are irreplaceable. The Department of State assumes no responsibility for lost or damaged packages.

All Fulbright boxes are considered “official mail” and for that reason are subject to security scanning for contents and irradiation to guard against biological (i.e. anthrax) contamination. Scanning has apparently not damaged CDs, books and bound documents. Photographs and single sheets of paper may be damaged, becoming yellowed and brittle. Slides or any thin plastic materials such as transparencies are destroyed.

Pouches may not contain items that are illegal to import into Trinidad and Tobago or export from the United States, or items that are classified as hazardous.

The following items are prohibited for pouch dispatch.

- (1) Aerosols;
- (2) Alcoholic beverages;
- (3) Ammunition;
- (4) Animals, endangered species products;
- (5) Any items for resale;
- (6) Bulk supplies
- (7) Controlled or illegal substances to be used without a prescription;
- (8) Corrosives;
- (9) Currency (cash);
- (10) Explosives;
- (11) Firearms;
- (12) Flammable type films;
- (13) Glass containers;
- (14) Incendiary materials such as road flares, cigarette lighters, self starting charcoal, etc.;
- (15) Liquids other than medically related;
- (16) Magnetic materials such as powerful magnets that can damage computer software and other electrical equipment;
- (17) Narcotics;
- (18) Personal professional books and materials intended to be used for a private business;
- (19) Plants;
- (20) Poisons; and
- (21) Radioactive substances.

Number, Weight and Size Limitations for Boxes

The diplomatic pouch takes about 4 weeks on average, but it is reliable. We currently receive pouches 1 to 2 times per week. Packages sent to Port of Spain by pouch may not exceed 17 x18 x32 inches. The maximum weight is 50 pounds per box. U.S. domestic postal rates apply to pouch mail. Parcels sent to the post via pouch should not be insured, because the Department will not accept them.

Wrapping

Materials must be packed securely in strong cardboard boxes, sealed with heavy-duty packing tape (strapping tape is best), and clearly labeled. New boxes with no advertising or confusing labels are best. Boxes are handled roughly in shipment. Boxes should be packed carefully since torn or broken packages cannot be repacked at any point during shipment.

Addressing the package:

Upper left-hand corner: Return Address: Name
 Street Address
 City, State, Zip

Trinidad and Tobago Mailing Address: Public Affairs Section
 Department of State
 3410 Port of Spain Place
 Washington, D.C. 20521-3410

Note: The 20521 zip code must be used. Use of any other zip code is prohibited

In lower left-hand corner of the box write:

UNCLASSIFIED VIA AIR POUCH
Your Name
FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

NOTE: Please choose a return address where the recipient will know how to contact you and what to do if a box is returned.

Grantees sending only one package should write "1 of 1" in the lower right-hand corner. Grantees sending more than one package should number each package in a series and circle the markings, e.g. "1 of 4", "2 of 4", etc.

Time required for shipment:

Grantees should anticipate that once packages are received at U.S. Department of State mail center, shipping will take 3 to 4 weeks to arrive in the country of assignment. The frequency of pouch shipment is outside the control of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the receiving U.S. Embassy.

Telephone

A modern telephone system has been installed throughout the island. The Caribbean is part of the same system as the U.S., using the 868 area code. Direct dialing to or from the U.S. requires simply dialing 1, the area code, and number. Other countries are reached using access codes, as in the U.S.

Costs are well above discount rates available in the U.S., ranging from US\$.30 per minute and higher. There is no weekend discount but there are discounts on calls made between 11 PM and 6 AM. Credit card calls to the U.S. are accepted and save on longer calls, but for very short calls, use of credit cards costs slightly more due to operator assistance. It can also be time-consuming to get through to the operator, read off the credit card number, and wait for the call to be placed. Connections can vary but are usually good. There are many new callback companies; the cheapest ones have local branch offices.

Radio and TV

Trinidad has several local radio stations, offering both international popular and local music. Classical music is rare.

Cable TV with 30 or more U.S. entertainment and news channels is available for a monthly rate.

There are three local TV stations. Programs are mainly imported series, most of them from the U.S. Some locally produced shows as well as news programs are shown.

VCR's are popular, and Trinidad and Tobago has many tape clubs but quality can be poor with some tapes pirated. Tapes rent for approximately US\$2 each per week.

Newspapers and Magazines

Three morning newspapers and several weeklies are published locally. The papers subscribe to the Caribbean News Agency (CANAL), AP, etc. All give coverage to overseas news highlights, but in-depth international reporting is inadequate.

The current Latin American editions of Time and Newsweek are available, at comparable to U.S. prices, at newsstands and bookstores. Many of the popular American magazines, such as Good Housekeeping, Vogue, Glamour, and House Beautiful are also available, but are often at least a month old and cost triple U.S. prices.

Bookstores in Port of Spain concentrate mainly on Caribbean offerings. Prices for books, even secondhand, are higher than in the U.S. The Port of Spain city library has a selection of British and American classics and popular novels.

Medical Facilities

Trinidad and Tobago has a relatively large number of competent general practitioners and specialists who have trained in the U.K., U.S., and Canada. Some doctors practice in private clinics, but most maintain private offices located throughout the country.

Government hospitals have well-trained staff but conditions often do not meet U.S. standards. There are private clinics offering reasonable quality care. Embassy personnel use the St. Clair Medical Center, a private clinic within close proximity to the Embassy. However, in a major medical emergency, the Port of Spain General Hospital has been designated the facility for use - doctors are available around the clock and essential life support equipment is readily accessible. Medical care in Trinidad and Tobago is adequate for routine procedures, however, one may prefer to go the U.S. for care requiring special or high technology treatment.

Most Americans and other members of the foreign community use local dentists who have been trained in the U.K., U.S. or Canada. Orthodontic care is also available.

Eye specialists are available. Eyeglass frames are imported and expensive, but lenses, which are ground locally, are cheaper than in the U.S. Overall, the cost of medical, hospital, and dental care is lower than in the U.S.

Public Health

Community sanitation in residential areas is good. Garbage is collected three times a week in most residential neighborhoods and garden clippings are collected weekly.

Water is generally potable, however the pipes are old and the water may be discolored. A water filter or bottled water is recommended for drinking.

Port of Spain and its suburbs are connected to a central sewage disposal system; outlying areas rely on septic tanks.

Street vendors and small restaurants are mixed in sanitation quality. Qualified food handlers display a "food handler's badge." Fruits and vegetables are generally safe after being washed.

Preventive Measures

Epidemics are rare in Trinidad and Tobago. However, gastroenteritis in children continues to be a problem, particularly in the rural areas. The South American wave of cholera cases has not struck Trinidad and Tobago, but precautions such as vigilant handwashing and suspicion of food and drink from street vendors are advisable.

Newcomers may suffer from heat rash due to the high temperature and humidity. Mosquitoes and sand flies can cause some discomfort. Although remedies can be bought locally, bring repellents, medication for bites, and medicated powders and soaps. Termites, ants, roaches and various tropical insects can be annoying.

Infections are hard to control in tropical climates, so personnel should take extra care to maintain high health standards. Inspect frozen meats and fish at supermarkets before purchase.

People prone to allergies often find them aggravated here. Flowering trees cause the most trouble. Asthma is also aggravated by the humid, particle-laden air. Car exhaust in congested areas is also irritating.

The following inoculations are recommended: all childhood immunizations and any necessary boosters for adults, typhoid, Hepatitis A & B, and yellow fever. None of these vaccinations are required for visitors coming from the U.S. to enter Trinidad and Tobago, but they are recommended for those who plan to travel to South America. Immunizations can be obtained locally.

Prescription drugs, medicines and remedies available locally are mostly British products. A full range of items is available from well-stocked pharmacies, but brands may be unfamiliar. Prices are also generally higher than in the U.S., but may be lower. Bring a supply of any medical items you use regularly, including contact lens supplies, prescription drugs, over-the-counter remedies, first aid supplies, cosmetics, etc.

Holidays and Festivals

The following public holidays are observed in Trinidad and Tobago: New Year's Day, Carnival (two days), Spiritual Baptist Liberation Shouter Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Indian Arrival Day, Labor Day (TT), Corpus Christi, Emancipation Day, Independence Day (TT), Republic Day (TT), Divali (Hindu), Eid-al-Fitr (Muslim), Christmas and Boxing Day.

Additionally, the US Embassy observes the following US holidays: Martin Luther King, JR's Birthday, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day (US), Labor Day (US), Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, and Thanksgiving Day.

Carnival is not a public holiday (although most offices and businesses are closed anyway) and is celebrated on the Monday and Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent.

This festival features huge parades with marchers dancing in spectacular costumes, steel bands (a local invention) and calypso competitions. Participation is open to all, and it seems that the whole nation revels for two days and nights in peaceful and joyous abandon.

Carnival was introduced by the French settlers and their slaves to Trinidad and Tobago. It was celebrated initially among upper class Creoles as an urban festival and by their slaves as a mixture of ancestral dramas and Christian customs. In time, it became a way for the slaves to break out of their normal routine, sometimes to express ridicule or indirect attack on their social superiors and on the government. Many calypso songs still reflect this aspect.

Hindu holidays provide additional breaks during the year. Divali, the Festival of Lights, features tiny oil lamps used to decorate homes and yards. During Phagwa, a springtime festival, celebrants wearing white are sprayed with brilliant vegetable dyes.

During Hosay, commemorated by some Muslims, huge decorated models of mosques are carried down the street to the accompaniment of spirited drumming and are thrown into the sea.

Typical American observances such as egg hunts for Easter, picnics on the Fourth of July and children's costume parties for Halloween are organized either by the Embassy staff or the American Women's Club, or both in cooperation.

Christmas is celebrated much as it is in the U.S., complete with Santa Claus, traditional songs, and fake snow! A local addition is Parang, a Spanish Christmas music style brought by Venezuelan settlers over 200 years ago. There is also traditional local Christmas food and drink which must be tried.

Families with Children

Preschools generally accept children from age 2 1/2. At age 4 or 4 1/2 children leave the preschool to enter the first year of primary school. Some children remain in preschool until age 5 and enter the second year of primary school directly.

The hours of preschools are generally 8:30 to 11:30 or 8:30 to 1:30. Almost all are five days per week, although some schools will accept children 3 days per week.

Preschools in Trinidad are more "academic" than traditional nursery schools in the U.S.. They emphasize structured activities, letters and numbers, and "paper on the table" learning in general. There is little physical development; most have no or very poor playground equipment.

Many neighborhoods advertise preschool. However, in visiting these schools, U.S. parents have found that most have huge numbers of students stuffed into a small physical space and little variety of activity. Most also require uniforms. Many schools call themselves "Montessori" schools but do not use Montessori materials very much. In visiting and choosing preschools, American parents have looked for, among other things:

- Small total number of students

- Varied activities
- Opportunities for physical play
- A friendly rather than strict atmosphere
- A clean, well-ventilated facility.

It is suggested that you visit these schools when you arrive in order to make the best decision for your child. Parents have shown widely different preferences in selecting among these schools.

The University of the West Indies Pre-school (2 1/2 - 5 yrs.) and the Primary School (5-11 yrs.) which are situated close to the university are highly recommended. The Pre-School can be contacted at tel. (868) 662-2665; and the primary school's telephone contact is (868) 662-4832.

Secondary Schools

A favored option for Fulbright grantees is to gain admission to one of the local private secondary schools close to the St. Augustine Campus. St. Augustine Girls' High School and Hillview College for boys are good options. Schooling is free and grantees are advised to contact the principals of these schools well in advance of their arrival in the country.

Child Care

There are numerous day care centers, which accept infants from 6 months, but these are not generally recommended. Most care of young children is provided at home by live-in or live-out domestic staff.

Live-in workers are usually young unmarried women, who may be less reliable and experienced. However, some families have been quite satisfied with their live-in help.

Salaries vary and are negotiable, but a general guideline is about US\$12 per day (8 hours) for day help. Live-in help is less expensive because room and board is provided. Paid holidays, Christmas bonuses, and proper notice or severance pay are expected. The local system requires small, regular payments to the national insurance plan on behalf of employees.

The best way to find reliable help is by recommendation. There are also employment services for domestic workers who can assist you in exchange for a placement fee. Domestic help should undergo medical examination annually at the employer's expense.

Activities for Children

Unfortunately, families have complained that there are few children's activities in Port of Spain. The society is adult-oriented, focused on evening activities and parties. There are no amusement parks, few playgrounds, and few restaurants that accommodate young children. In most families, children go to school, do their homework, and generally stay home with caretakers (grandmother, nanny, or older sister).

American families used to regular amusements for kids regularly have to be a bit creative. The following are a few suggestions to start you thinking before you arrive.

Hobbies are good, however, hobby materials may be very expensive or unavailable. Bring the materials your children will need for their favorite hobbies.

Engaging in extra-curricula activities is a good way to make friends. Classes are available for various age groups and include swimming, tennis, dance, martial arts, ceramics, and assorted crafts.

The beach is not as much of an option as one might think. The most popular beach is half an hour away, and the surf can be very rough. In addition, the equatorial sun is a constant hazard. Families with kids often prefer local swimming pools.

Homework will probably keep your kids busier here than it would at home. School libraries are thin. Children do much research via the Internet.

Cultural events that kids enjoy are common. Foremost among them is Children's Carnival, which takes place just before the adult Carnival and features bright and creative costumes of all kinds.

The Emperor Valley Zoo and some shaded parks provide opportunities for family outings. The new multiplex-theatre 'Movietowne Mall' advertises numerous kid-friendly features.

Food

Small supermarkets are located throughout the city as well as smaller family-run groceries, vegetable-fruit stores (called greengrocers here), and roadside stands sell vegetables, fruits and fish. Store shelves hold many familiar brands.

Food prices, except for government-controlled items, are comparable or higher than in the U.S. since most food is imported. Prices reflect high freight costs and import duties. Government-controlled items are sold at below market prices and are supported by government subsidies. These include rice, sugar, flour, and some imported foods such as butter and cheese.

Dairy products/Eggs: Fresh milk is available at supermarkets but is expensive. Whole, 2% and skim varieties are offered, but not always available. Flash-sterilized milk is also available, packaged in boxed cartons; this milk does not need refrigeration until opening. The taste differs from that of fresh milk. It is available in whole, 1.5% and skim, as well as an Omega 3 variety. Also available is imported powdered milk. There is only one kind of cheese at normal prices; imported cheeses are very expensive. Eggs are fresh and good. Margarine and (imported) butter are available. Condensed and evaporated milk are widely used. Buttermilk and fresh cream are not available. Canned cream is used as a substitute. Cheese varieties are few and very expensive.

Bread: is made locally. Whole wheat and white breads are available. A few higher-priced bakeries specialize in tasty, fresh-baked bread. Also available are French and raisin bread, dinner rolls, bagels, and fresh hot dog and hamburger buns.

Cereals: Oatmeal is available. Bulgur wheat is stocked at specialty shops. Locally-made breakfast cereals are inexpensive but of low quality. Many familiar American breakfast cereals are available, but at higher prices and the selection varies. Cream of Wheat is available. Baby cereals are available. There are few local brands of granola, which is expensive.

Rice and pasta: Basic pasta products (spaghetti, lasagna, macaroni) are generally available. Frozen tortellini and other interesting pasta are commonly available, but as with cereal the precise selection varies. White rice is common and available in bulk; brown rice is only found in expensive specialty shops.

Fruits: Local varieties include avocados, bananas, coconuts, grapefruits, guavas, limes, mangoes, oranges, papayas, passion fruits, pineapples, soursops (guanabana), tangerines, and watermelons, along with others few Americans have heard of. Some are available year round, others only seasonally. Imported apples, grapes, kiwis, and pears are usually available. Less common are imported: apricots, cantaloupes, cherries, honeydews, peaches, plums, nectarines, strawberries and other berries, and others.

Vegetables: Local stock includes beets, cabbage, carrots, celery (very thin), coriander, cucumbers, Chinese bean sprouts, Chinese cabbage, chives, christophene (chayote or choko), dasheen or taro leaves, eggplant, ginger root, green beans, green peppers, lettuce (one kind), okras, local white or yellow sweet potatoes (not orange), 'pumpkins' (orange fleshed squashes), parsley, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, and winter squash. Pinto beans, kidney beans, lentils and pigeon peas are available dried. Assorted root vegetables called "provisions" are substituted for Irish potatoes in local cuisine. Prices for vegetables vary during the year. Broccoli, broccaflower (green cauliflower), cauliflower, carrots, celery, eggplant, iceberg lettuce, mushrooms (Portobello & button), onions (white, yellow, red), potatoes (several varieties), and romaine lettuce are imported and more expensive than in the U.S. Broccoli, corn, carrots, mushrooms, peas, prepared potatoes some lentils are often available in frozen form (still expensive). Canned vegetables are limited and include corn, mixed vegetables, pigeon peas, chickpeas, baked beans and kidney beans. NOT usually available: summer squash, sweet peas, sweet potatoes, sweet corn, fresh basil, jalapeno peppers, English spinach, unusual varieties of any vegetable.

Seafood: Fresh fish and shrimp can be purchased at the downtown central market, roadside stands, or from fishermen returning with their catch. Frozen fish, available at markets, includes red snapper, gray snapper, cod, shark, kingfish, trout, flying fish, and shrimp. Sardines are available in cans.

Meat and Poultry: Local pork and chicken are good, although the chickens are less meaty. Duck and goat are also popular locally. Local beef, from grass-fed animals, has a "gamy" taste. Beef and lamb are imported from New Zealand. Beef cuts differ from those in the U.S. both in texture and taste and are often tougher and drier. New Zealand and U.S.-brand frozen meats are available, but more expensive than locally produced products. Sausages and corned beef are readily available. Local ham is salty and strong-tasting. Imported luncheon meats and sausages are available also. Bacon is quite good.

Sweets and snacks: U.S.-made candy and chocolates are available. Jamaican chocolate bars and English candy are available. Locally made snacks such as corn chips are available but expensive. Locally processed peanuts are sold as well as U.S. and UK imports. Walnuts and almonds are available most of the year but they are more expensive than in the U.S.

Beverages: The usual soft drinks are available; diet sodas are mostly limited to colas & lemon-lime. Decaffeinated colas show up occasionally. Local coffee is strong in flavor. U.S. coffee (ground or instant) is available in the supermarkets. Decaffeinated coffee (or tea) is hard to find – bring your own.

Many locally produced items taste sweeter than their U.S. counterparts. These include catsup, soft drinks, jams, mayonnaise, juices, margarine, milk, and Vienna sausages, which are sold under familiar U.S. brand names, but are processed in the Caribbean.

Specialty Foods

Chinese specialty food stores carry a variety of noodles, sauces, and sweets as well as canned items such as mushrooms, bamboo shoots, water chestnuts, pickled cabbage,

litchi nuts, and frozen foods such as wonton and eggroll skins, and Chinese pork sausages. Port of Spain has several Chinese restaurants and takeout counters.

Kosher foods are not found in markets. Specialty stores sometimes have them. Halal meats are available. A limited variety of low sodium foods is available at high prices.

Cuisine of Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidadian cuisine reflects the nation's cultural diversity. The main varieties of food here are Creole, East Indian, and Chinese, with some British colonial influence.

"Creole" cooking includes dishes based on rice mixed with chicken, pork, or fish and various local vegetables. Various starchy root vegetables, called "provisions," are used like potatoes. Callaloo, a popular soup, is made from taro leaves, okra, pumpkin, coconut milk, and sometimes crab. Other favorites are cowheel soup, crab backs, souse (pickled pigs feet), and pastelles (ground beef wrapped in crepe-like pancakes and banana leaves).

The favorite East Indian dish, enjoyed by all ethnic groups, is roti: curried meat or vegetable wrapped in a flat bread made of flour and can sometimes include ground split peas. Spicy chutneys and various fried foods are also popular.

Chinese food is mainly Cantonese, but is prepared to suit Trinidadian taste and is somewhat different from what one finds in U.S. Chinese restaurants.

Trinidadians especially enjoy seafood including shark, kingfish, red snapper, Spanish mackerel, flying fish, shrimp, carite, dolphin (mahi mahi) and cascadura (a fresh water fish).

Popular fast foods include: Pizza Hut, KFC, Subway and Burger King, Popeye's and Church's. These are all quite good. Hot dogs are sold but are of disappointing quality. There is also a T.G.I. Fridays and Ruby Tuesdays in Port of Spain.

Clothing - What to Bring

Lightweight summer clothing is worn year-round by both men and women in Port of Spain. Due to Trinidad and Tobago's tropical climate, clothing made from natural fibers (cotton, linen, etc.) or a blend of natural and synthetic fibers is more comfortable than all-synthetic materials. Local clothing is expensive, and clothing wears out quickly under the frequent laundering made essential by the high heat and humidity.

During the rainy season, showers can be expected every day. Umbrellas are therefore essential. Raincoats and galoshes are not worn here due to the hot climate.

Recreation and Social Life

Trinidad and Tobago is a very social culture with activities planned throughout the year. Big events are Christmas and Carnival (around mid-February). During the Christmas and Carnival season nonstop fetes (large parties) are held. Most parties are informal. Trinidadians enjoy to gather socially (lime). Other types of home entertainment include cocktail parties, dinners, bridge parties. Unlike some of the other Caribbean islands, Trinidadian culture is cosmopolitan and varied. Trinidadians are friendly and hospitable.

Most American service clubs have branches in Trinidad and Tobago.

Religious Activities

Freedom of worship exists in Trinidad and Tobago. Most religions have places of worship. The Roman Catholic, Anglican (Episcopalian), Presbyterian, Methodist, Hindu, and Muslim faiths predominate. It should be noted that some of the denominations represented here may not closely resemble their US counterparts, especially in their Sunday School programs. There are no synagogues, but a small Jewish community (mainly foreign residents) organizes activities and observances.

Sports

Trinidad and Tobago's primary national sports are cricket and soccer. Swimming, tennis, golf, boating, and fishing are also popular in Trinidad and Tobago and are available in and around Port of Spain. Horseback riding is also available. Port of Spain has several parks, including a tropical botanical garden and a small zoo.

Beaches in Trinidad are not resorts, but they are convenient to Port of Spain and are well used all year. The most popular beach is located at Maracas Bay on the north coast, about 35 minutes from Port of Spain. There are beach houses for rent on the east coast (about 1 1/2 hours' drive from Port of Spain) and on the small islands off the northwest (reachable through a short water taxi ride). Swimming can be dangerous at any beach in Trinidad because of frequent heavy surf, riptides, and undertows. None of the beaches on Trinidad offers suitable hotel accommodations. Several sports facilities provide swimming pools in Port of Spain at lower than U.S. membership rates.

Resort-type facilities, including hotels on or near the beach and a golf course, are found in Tobago. Many people find long weekends on "Robinson Crusoe's island" a welcome change from Port of Spain's routine.

Opportunities for scuba diving are fair in Trinidad and excellent in Tobago. The waters around Trinidad are generally murky and devoid of coral reefs, and they are frequently beset with dangerous currents. These conditions, coupled with the lack of diving instruction and rental equipment, necessitates that divers should be experienced and outfitted before attempting dives in Trinidad. By contrast, diving on Tobago is well organized. Instruction is available, equipment can be rented, and the reefs, clear water, and tropical fish provide for excellent diving opportunities.

Deep-sea fishing is quite good, but there are few charter boats available. Most fishing excursions are arranged by knowing a Trinidadian boat owner.

Good hiking opportunities are enhanced by an active Field Naturalists Club, which sponsors monthly hikes to out-of-the-way spots. Informal group hiking is a common event. Opportunities are also good for birdwatchers and butterfly collectors. The internationally known Asa Wright Nature Center near Arima provides overnight facilities for amateur and professional naturalists.

Sports equipment and attire compare to those used in the U.S. and can be purchased locally, but prices are higher here.

Port of Spain has an active Hash House Harriers Club that organizes trail runs every other week in different parts of the country. Unlike Hash groups in many other countries, the group is not dominated by ex-pats. There is a good mix of locals and foreigners. The hash is a good way for newcomers to meet people and see the country.

Entertainment

Restaurants cover continental, Indian, Italian, Chinese, and local Creole cuisine.

The city's nightclubs and hotels offer entertainment featuring steel bands, calypso, and other local music and dance bands. For the younger crowd, several clubs play current U.S., local and Jamaican dance music.

Several movie theaters, including a drive-in, show current and older films. Other theaters offer cultural events, plays or shows. Interested personnel can participate in other smaller theater and dance groups. A wide range of movies on video is available from video clubs at a low cost.

The entertainment highlight is the annual Carnival. Many feel that Trinidad's pre-Lenten Carnival is second only to Rio's in grandeur and twice as enjoyable since it is participatory, unmarred by violent incidents, and freely open to all. Many Americans each year join one of the colorful masquerade groups.

Currency & Exchange

The local currency is referred to as the Trinidad and Tobago dollar, TT dollar, or just "TT." Effective April 13, 1993, the Government of Trinidad & Tobago announced the floating of the TT dollar. In early 2010 the exchange rate average was TT\$6.25 to US\$1.00. Coins in use are the 1¢, 5¢, 10¢, and 25¢ pieces. Paper bills are printed in \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, and \$100 denominations. U.S. currency can be exchanged at banks. Since the float, there are no restrictions on currency exchanges.

U.S. currency can be exchanged at banks.

Banks

These are plentiful in the towns and cities, less so in the countryside. Many have ATMs which accept international cards. In Trinidad, there are banking and foreign exchange facilities at the airport. In Tobago, there is only small bank at Crown Point Airport; all other facilities are located in Scarborough, the capital. Money credit cards are widely accepted in the main towns and tourist areas; but at small establishments and in rural areas, they are not very useful. It's a good idea to carry small amounts of TT\$ cash. US\$ cash is generally acceptable; but don't expect to get the same exchange rates on the street as you would at the bank.

Travel

Daily flights from New York or Miami to Port of Spain are available. Port of Spain is served by American Airlines. In addition, numerous non-American flagship carriers provide regular service to Port of Spain from the U.S., Canada, Venezuela, and the U.K. as well as inter-island service. Reservations may be difficult to obtain during certain seasons, especially Christmas and Carnival. Incoming personnel should make reservations early.

General Health and Emergency Medical Information

The following are Embassy recommended Medical advisors:

Dr Ryan Abraham 622 7340; Dr. Randolph Phillips 628-8600
 4 Serpentine Rd. 682 5965(cell) 49 Ana Street
 St Clair Woodbrook
 Local Emergency Telephone Numbers
 Ambulance: 990
 Fire: 990
 Police: 999
 *Emergency Health Service: 624-43432/653-4343

Emergency Medical Centers:

St Clair Medical Center
 18 Elizabeth St
 St Clair
 Tel. 628-1452

Westshore Medical Center
 239 Western Main Rd., Cocorite
 622-9878/9670

Port of Spain General Hospital:
 623-2951; 623-2327(Direct Line)
 *Provides Ambulance and First Aid Service free of charge

In a new environment do not expect that all your familiar patterns and habits have the same validity. The moral of the story is "When in doubt, find out!" The following list of basic do's and don'ts is a guideline to help you get started on the road to finding out.

1. **Sun is fun.** If taken in small doses. It may look and feel harmless enough, but do not let it fool you. Start out with 15-30 minutes of sun at a time and work your way up. Start with block-out sunscreen if you are sensitive, and work down in numbers.
2. **Drink plenty of liquids.** Your body is losing moisture all of the time. The water coming from the treatment plant is potable. The distribution system however is not intact. There is no way of knowing if the water is contaminated. If in doubt, drink bottled drinks.
3. **Pressure.** Pressure at sea level is much greater than in other areas you may have been used to. The high heat and humidity also take their toll. Do not be overly concerned if you feel 'tired and heavy' for a while until your body adjusts.
4. **Mosquitoes and Sand Flies.** They have a way of finding new blood. Insect repellent is good to keep on hand. Mosquito coils are very effective and make sleeping much easier. There is no malaria in this country; however, we have had epidemics of dengue fever. This is a viral infection transmitted by the day-biting, white and brown banded, Aedes mosquito. Dengue is characterized by high fever, intense headache, weakness,

malaise and sometimes a general rash occurring 3-4 days after onset of fever. See a physician for diagnosis.

5. Poisonous Snakes. Although rarely encountered, there are three varieties of poisonous snakes in T&T:

The Coral snake, the Fer De Lance, and the Bushmaster. If bitten by a snake, go to a hospital immediately, preferably the Port of Spain General hospital where anti-snake venom is kept. Do not attempt to incise the bite and suck out the venom.

6. Traffic Safety. Driving is on the left, streets are narrow, sidewalks are few and traffic is unpredictable.

Walking along the street is one problem, but crossing the street is worse. Be sure to look both ways until you get used to the reversed direction of the traffic. Be extra careful.

7. Plants. Families with young children should be aware that many of our lovely ornamental plants could be dangerous, even fatal, if eaten. Plants such as Poinsettia, Oleander, Philodendron and Dieffenbachia are poisonous and can cause severe illness. If you suspect your child has eaten any of these, call a doctor immediately.

Things to do in Trinidad and Tobago

There are a variety of ongoing activities in the Port of Spain area; these are often only advertised in the local newspapers or by word of mouth. Arrange with Jacqui Gregoire to receive the Embassy's biweekly Steel Drum newsletter via e-mail for a listing of activities.

Athletic/Exercise

Sacketeers - Sundays, around 7am - Sacketeers Hiking Club organizes bi-weekly hikes to spots of interest around the island. Hikes vary in level of difficulty. There is a nominal fee. Contact Sabita Narine (Cons), 822-5966 at the U.S. Embassy, for more info.

Hikeseekers - Sundays, around 7am - Hikeseekers Hiking Club also organizes bi-weekly hikes to spots of interest around the island. Hikes vary in level of difficulty. Typical cost per person: Adults-\$TT20. Children under 10 free.
<http://www.hikeseekers.com> Tel. No. 748-3296/632-9746/758-0368

Hikers World - Mostly Sunday hikes, departing at 7am. \$TT20.00, cost does not include transport. For current schedule and information please contact Emile 638-5737, Marion 623-5821/749 2956 or email at downtown@tstt.net.tt or hikersworld@tstt.net.tt

Hikers Inc. - Sunday hikes depart at 7am. Cost: \$TT20.00. For additional information contact Richard Lewis at 788-8478/637-3150 or Michael Jattan 681-8079/633-3384 or Roger Reverand 678-4668. Website: <http://spaces.msn.com/hikersinc> or email hikersinc@hotmail.com

Art Galleries - Art Creators Gallery, 7 St. Ann's Road, St. Ann's 624-4369, Horizons Art Gallery, 39 Mucurapo Road, St. James, 628-9769
info@horizonsartgallery.com

Kayak Rentals - Chaguaramas Beach and Park

Entertainment

Poolside Fiesta: Mondays. 7-10:30pm. Upper Poolside, Hilton Trinidad, Lady Young Road, POS. Dinner and live show with everything from vintage Calypso and Steel band to Limbo and a mini-carnival jump-up. Buffet dinner features local specialties. Recommended for short-term visitors. Reservations: 624-3211 x6020.

Movies: First run movies are shown in several old-fashioned movie theatres and MovieTowne, a 10-theatre Cineplex and shopping center. Check the local newspapers for films and show times. Website: www.movietowne.com

(Updated: October, 2011)