

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Ages 8-9



The flag of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is the flag that was chosen to represent the country after it gained independence on **August 31, 1962**. The *red symbolizes fire*- the warmth and energy of the sun, the vitality of the land and the courage and friendliness of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The *black represents the earth*- the dedication of the people, and the wealth of the land. The *white represents water*- the seas by which these lands are bound; that cradle of our heritage, the purity of our aspirations and the equality of all men and women under the sun.

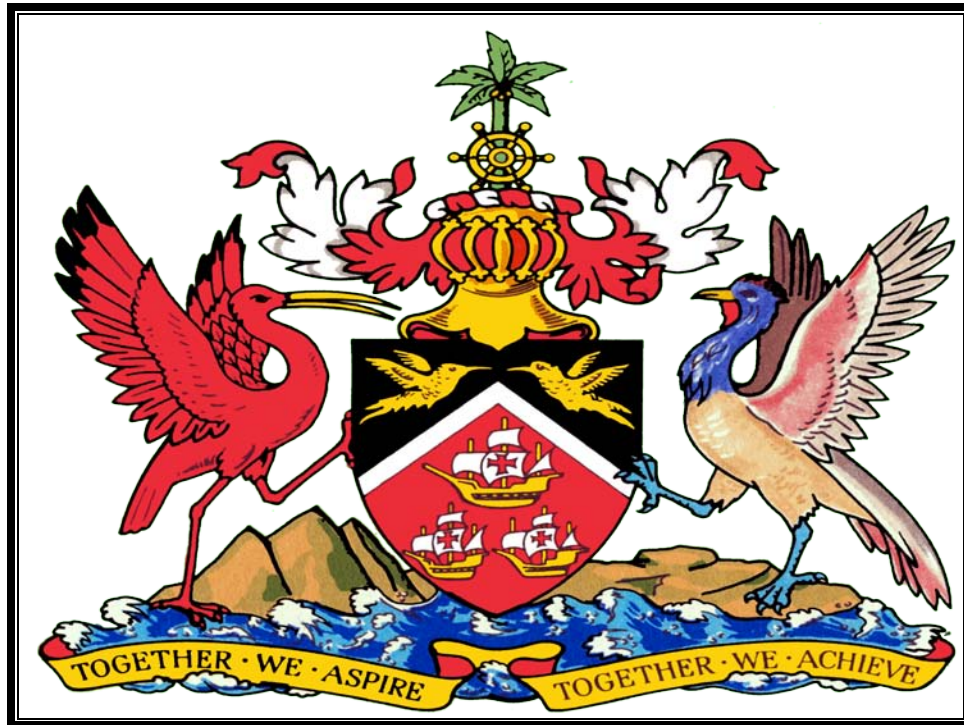
GEOGRAPHY



The islands of Trinidad and Tobago are bordered by the **Caribbean Sea**, the northeastern parts of the South American country of **Venezuela**, and the **North Atlantic Sea**.

Trinidad is the larger of the two islands. The capital city of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is located in Trinidad and is called **Port of Spain**.

COAT OF ARMS



The coat of arms was designed by a committee that was formed in 1962, the year of Independence.

The shield at the center has the same colours as the flag and also has the same meaning. The three gold ships on the shield represent the three ships that Christopher Columbus used to sail to the “New World”. The names of the ships are the Santa Maria, La Niña and La Pinta. The two golden birds on the shield are hummingbirds. They were included in the coat of arms because Trinidad has 16 different species of hummingbirds. “Land of the Hummingbird” is said to be the Native American meaning of Trinidad.

The two bigger birds on either side of the shield are the national birds of Trinidad and Tobago. The bird on the left is the *Scarlet Ibis*, which is a flamingo. It makes its home in the Caroni Bird Sanctuary set aside by the government. The one on the right is the *Cocrico*, which is a rufous – tailed pheasant found in Tobago.

The three hills below the Scarlet Ibis are the Trinity Hills in southern Trinidad. The island below the Cocrico represents Tobago.

The palm tree at the top was Tobago’s coat of arms before it was joined with Trinidad. The wreath on top of the shield represents the crown of the United Kingdom, the nation that Trinidad and Tobago gained their independence from.

“*Together we aspire, together we achieve*”- this is the motto of the country and is found at the bottom of the coat of arms.

DECADES OF INDEPENDENCE- past and present

The following table outlines key events that helped shape The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

YEAR(S)	EVENT
1889	Trinidad and Tobago were made a single colony by the British
1925	Partial self -government was put into place
1958-1962	The country was part of the West Indies Federation. This was formed by the British and consisted of 10 Caribbean countries.
August 31, 1962	Trinidad and Tobago became an independent nation.
1956-1981	Eric Williams, known as the “Father of the Nation” governed until his death. He became Trinidad and Tobago’s first Prime Minister. He formed the People’s National Movement (PNM) party in 1956, when they won the National elections.
August 1, 1976	The nation becomes a Republic and remains under the Commonwealth
1986	The PNM lost power to the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR) party. This party was led by A.N.R. Robinson who became Prime Minister.
1991	PNM came back into power due to economic problems caused by the NAR. Patrick Manning was Prime Minister.
1995-2000	Basdeo Panday became the first Prime Minister of Asian Indian descent, to lead the United National Congress (UNC)
May 2010	Kamla Persad-Bissessar became the first woman Prime Minister in Trinidad and Tobago. She is the current leader of the UNC party.

During this nearly three decade rule, Eric Williams led Trinidad and Tobago into the West Indies Federation and then on to Independence.

The type of government in Trinidad and Tobago is known as a parliamentary democracy and it is governed under the 1976 constitution.

The Chief of state, who is the president of the republic, is George Maxwell Richards. He has been president since March 17, 2003. The president is chosen by the members of parliament, and both the members of parliament and the president serve for 5 year terms.

ECONOMY

The petroleum (oil and gas) industry is the biggest contributor to the economy of the republic. The Republic is the leading producer of oil and gas in the Caribbean. It is also a key distributor of cement to most Caribbean nations.

Tourism and agriculture also play a role in the economy of Trinidad and Tobago, but tourism plays a bigger role than agriculture does. Only 1% of the country's labour force is employed in agriculture.

Agricultural products produced in Trinidad and Tobago are:

- ❖ cocoa
- ❖ rice,
- ❖ citrus ,
- ❖ coffee,
- ❖ Sugarcane.

Although the tourism industry plays a larger role than agriculture, tourism in Trinidad and Tobago does not influence the national economy as much as it does in many other Caribbean nations.

The World Bank ranked the Republic as number 69 among the high-income countries in the world.

ACHIEVEMENTS/CULTURE

FOOD- The food of Trinidad and Tobago is influenced by the cooking styles of people of many different countries and cultures. Some of these are Creole, East Indian, Chinese, Syrian, Lebanese and Italian.

The table below highlights some of the dishes that are eaten in Trinidad and Tobago.

Type	Food
Breakfast	Coconut Bread Cassava with Butter Black Pudding Salted fish
East Indian	Roti
Creole Brown-Down	Spicy stewed meat or fish served with sweet starchy vegetables

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT- Trinidad and Tobago is the birthplace of Calypso music as well as the steel pan music. Through influential Calypso stars such as the *Mighty Sparrow* (the Grandfather of Calypso), this music has been brought to the rest of the world.

The table below highlights some of Trinidad and Tobago's important people.

Person	Achievement
V.S Naipaul	Writer and Nobel prize laureate. He was born in Port of Spain in 1933
C.L.R James	Influential author, historian, journalist, socialist and theorist. He had a public library in Hackney, London UK, named after him. He also has his face on a 10-pound note that is only used in Brixton. England.

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