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# I. THE COUNTRY

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## Area and Geography

Trinidad and Tobago are two islands of the Caribbean united in nationhood though separated by 35 km of sea. They are the most southerly of the eastern Caribbean chain of islands, extending from Florida, U.S., in the north to Venezuela, South America, in the south. The islands are bound by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Caribbean Sea, to the north, and are easily accessible to international air and sea traffic. Trinidad has an area of 4 278 km<sup>2</sup> and Tobago an area of 300 km<sup>2</sup>.

Three mountain ranges traverse the island of Trinidad from east to west; the northern range reaches a maximum elevation of 949 m. Typically, however, the terrain is gently undulating with low hills and tropical forests. Tobago rises to a height of 554 m at the centre of the island.

Approximately one-third of Trinidad is under cultivation while nearly half the island is covered with tropical forest. Tobago is an island of natural beauty, of coral reef formations and sandy coastal beaches. The indigenous resources of the islands include crude oil and natural gas; there is also an asphalt lake in the southern part of Trinidad.

## Climate

Trinidad and Tobago enjoy a tropical climate with relatively high daily average temperatures that vary between 21-35°C (70-95°F). The climate is moderated by sea breezes and northeast trade winds. Lying south of the hurricane belt, the islands are relatively free of violent storms.

The period from July to December is the wettest of the year, although it is usually interrupted by a temporary dry spell in October. Generally, the first six months of the year are dry with a few irregular showers in April and May.

## Local Time

Trinidad and Tobago operate on atlantic standard time (add one hour to eastern standard time). They do not use daylight saving time.