

In addition, the Monday and Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday, although not official holidays, are annual Carnival days. It is virtually impossible to conduct any business during these two days of revelry.

Business Hours

Commercial: 0:800-16:30 Mon-Fri, 0:800-12:00 Sat (most malls stay open later and all day Sat).
 Banks: 0:800-14:00 Mon-Thurs, 0:800-12:00 and 15:00-17:00 Fri (with some local variations).
 Government: 0:800-12:00 and 13:00-16:30 Mon-Fri.

History

1498: Christopher Columbus discovered Trinidad
 1595: Sir Walter Raleigh arrived in Trinidad and caulked his ships with asphalt from Pitch Lake
 1797: Britain captured Trinidad from Spain
 1802: Trinidad became the first British crown colony
 1814: Tobago joined the Windward Islands as a British colony
 1834: Abolition of slavery
 1845: Arrival of first East Indian indentured labourers
 1889: Tobago and Trinidad join administratively
 1899: Trinidad and Tobago became a joint Crown colony
 1956: Self-government granted by the British
 1962: Trinidad and Tobago became independent
 1973: Trinidad and Tobago joined CARICOM
 1976: Trinidad and Tobago became a republic (September 24)

Government

Trinidad and Tobago has adopted a Westminster-style of parliament, inherited from the British. The new constitution of the twin island state, which became effective August 1, 1976, provides for the appointment of a president as head of state, and for the establishment of a Parliament consisting of a Senate and a House of Representatives.

The 36-member House of Representatives is elected every five years in general elections. The Senate consists of 31 members. Of these, 16 are appointed by the President upon the advice of the Prime Minister, six on the advice of the leader of the opposition and nine at the discretion of the President.

The President is elected for a five-year term by the Electoral College which is made up of both Houses of Parliament. The executive power rests with the Prime Minister and cabinet members.

The legal and judicial system, based on English Common Law and practice, is independent of the executive and legislative functions of the government. The chief justice is appointed by the