Tour Code
TT1

ADVENTURESABROAD

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Where South America Meets the Caribbean Sea

6 days

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Day 1 Arrive Port of Spain

Welcome to Trinidad -- South American in geology, African and Indian in culture, Caribbean in name only. Port of Spain announces itself with colour and noise: gingerbread Victorian houses alongside modern towers, the great green expanse of Queen's Park Savannah at the city's heart, and the "Magnificent Seven" colonial mansions ranged along its northern edge, each built in a different architectural style by rival 19th century merchants competing to outdo one another in civic grandeur.

This evening we settle in and meet our fellow travellers.

Overnight in Port of Spain (safely outside the downtown core).

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Port of Spain City Tour - Maracas Bay - Caroni Wetlands

We begin with a morning exploration of Port of Spain — the Red House parliament, Woodford Square, the Botanical Gardens, and the commanding views from Lady Young Lookout across the city to the Gulf of Paria and the Venezuelan coast beyond. The Magnificent Seven, seen properly from the Savannah, make plain just how seriously Trinidad's colonial elite took the business of self-presentation: seven mansions, seven architectural languages, one very competitive street.

The road north over the Northern Range brings us to Maracas Bay — a long arc of pale sand backed by densely forested hills, and the finest of Trinidad's north coast beaches. This is our lunch stop: fresh bake and shark, the local staple, eaten at wooden stalls just back from the surf. The drive itself is half the pleasure, winding through mountain rainforest with glimpses of the Caribbean coast below.

The afternoon belongs to the Caroni Bird Sanctuary, a 104 sq km mangrove swamp on Trinidad's northwest coast. We board flat-bottomed boats and drift through the waterways as evening approaches — waiting for the moment when hundreds of scarlet ibis return to their roosting trees in an explosion of brilliant red against the green mangrove. It is, by any measure, one of the great wildlife spectacles in the Caribbean. The timing today is exactly right.

Overnight in Port of Spain

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Asa Wright Nature Centre

The Arima Valley in Trinidad's Northern Range is one of the finest birdwatching destinations in the tropics, and the Asa Wright Nature Centre — a former coffee and cocoa plantation converted in 1967 into a conservation and study area — is its centrepiece. Trinidad has recorded over 470 bird species, more than the whole of Canada, and Asa Wright distils that extraordinary abundance into a single day.

Our guided walk along the Discovery Trail takes us into the forest interior, where the canopy closes overhead and the calls of trogons, motmots and woodcreepers announce themselves before the birds come into view. The real magic, however, is the famous verandah — a broad, shaded platform overlooking the estate's gardens where hummingbirds, honeycreepers, tanagers and blue-crowned motmots work the feeders just below. It is a setting that has drawn naturalists from around the world for more than half a century, and the reasons are immediately apparent.

For those travelling onward to the Guianas, this is a fine calibration of the eye — an introduction to the neotropical world that will deepen considerably as the journey continues.

Overnight in Port of Spain

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Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 4 Pitch Lake - Flight to Tobago

We head south this morning through Central Trinidad — a landscape of rice fields, coconut estates and Hindu prayer flags, a world far removed from the colonial Anglican Caribbean — to La Brea and one of the stranger experiences this journey offers. Pitch Lake is the world's largest natural asphalt deposit: roughly 40 hectares of warm, slightly yielding surface underlain by a vast reservoir of natural bitumen that has supplied road-paving material globally for well over a century. Walking carefully across it, watching sulphur pools bubble at your feet with geological forces made visible and walkable, is an experience with few parallels. Sir Walter Raleigh is said to have used the pitch to caulk his ships here in 1595. The lake has been slowly replenishing itself ever since.

This afternoon we fly to Tobago — smaller, quieter, and fiercely proud of its distinct identity within the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Where Trinidad is urban, cosmopolitan and continental in feel, Tobago is unhurried and insular in the best sense: forested hills, sheltered coves, and a pace of life that seems to operate on different time entirely. We settle in this evening on the island's southern coast, with tomorrow's explorations ahead..

Overnight in Tobago

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Tobago Island Tour

Fort King George, high above Scarborough, offers our introduction to Tobago's layered colonial history — a well-preserved 18th century British fortification whose small museum traces the island's long-contested past. The fort changed hands repeatedly between the British and French before Britain gained permanent control in 1814; from its ramparts, the views across the coastline in both directions are commanding in every sense. Scarborough itself, just below, is a compact and lively capital whose market and steep streets reward a morning's exploration.

We circle the island northward through the spectacular coastal scenery of the windward coast, arriving at Charlotteville — a tranquil fishing village tucked into Man O' War Bay on Tobago's northern tip, its colourful pirogues pulled up on the beach, the forested hills dropping straight to the water. The road south along the northeast coast brings us to Speyside and lunch at Jemma's Tree House Restaurant, perched in the branches of a large saman tree above the Caribbean — by any reasonable standard, one of the more memorable places to eat lunch in the southern Caribbean.

The return route passes through the Tobago Forest Reserve, the oldest protected rainforest in the western hemisphere, its canopy closing overhead as the coast drops away below.

Overnight in Tobago

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Departure from Tobago

Departure from Tobago or connect with our tour of the Guianas (tour TT2).

As the Trinidadians say: "go well!"

Included Meal(s): Breakfast