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5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TRINIDAD CARNIVAL

As the largest cultural festival in the Caribbean, here are the top reasons why this annual event is considered a “must-do” bucket-list item

Port of Spain, Trinidad – November 4, 2015 – In [Trinidad & Tobago](#), there are two seasons – Carnival and planning for Carnival. Every year, thousands of revelers make their way to the dual-island nation to experience the largest, most explosive, colorful and culturally mixed Carnival celebration in the Caribbean. With daily direct flights from Houston, New York and South Florida, getting to Trinidad is easy. Here are 5 things you need to know before you go:

- 1. Book early** – Thousands of merrymakers from across the globe head to Trinidad for Carnival, so it’s best to book flights and accommodations four to six months in advance as hotels fill up quickly. With the majority of events taking place in Port of Spain and many of the city’s streets restricted with one way access, visitors are encouraged to book a hotel that is in or near the island’s capital. From internationally recognized brands like Hyatt, Radisson, Courtyard by Marriott and Hilton, to family-owned boutique hotels and guest houses, lodging is available for any budget. For more information on accommodations, visit www.gotrinidadandtobago.com.



2. **It's a non-stop party** – More than just a two-day street parade before Ash Wednesday, Trinidad's Carnival season officially starts on December 26 with a full schedule of all-inclusive fetes, soca performances and preliminary steel pan competitions. Two of the most popular **Pre-Carnival** events are *Machel Monday* and Hyatt Regency Trinidad's *LIME Fete*. *Machel Monday*, held on the Monday before Carnival, is a high energy musical showcase that features Machel Montano, one of the destination's leading soca artists. Montano has recently collaborated with major international stars such as Ariana Grande, Major Laser and Shaggy. Hyatt's *LIME Fete* takes place the Wednesday before Carnival and it is one of the most highly anticipated events of the season with its "white with a touch of lime" attire, unlimited culinary delights and popular spirits. For more information, visit www.hyatttrinidad.cmsbal02.i-sites.com/lime/ or www.machelmontano.com.



3. **To play mas or not to play mas** – The highlight of this annual pre-Lenten festival is '**playing mas**', the two-day street parade that features thousands of costumed revellers 'jumping up' en masse in the city's streets. Mas is short for masquerade and band members dress in glittery, colorful costumes adorned with beads and feathers that depict a mythological or tropical theme. *Carnival Monday* is a dress rehearsal and a qualification for Carnival Tuesday's judging to determine "band of the year." On Carnival Tuesday, also known as **pretty mas**, masqueraders take to the streets in full costume, gyrating their hips to the latest soca songs and strutting in front of the judges. However, persons can opt out of **playing mas** and experience other key events on the yearly Carnival agenda, including:
- **Kiddies Carnival** - a costumed street parade for children ages two to sixteen on Carnival Saturday
 - **Panorama** – a musical showcase for the steelpan, the only acoustic instrument developed in the 20th Century. The competition features the island's best bands in the small, medium and large categories vying for top honors
 - **Kings & Queens** - a competition where the leader of the masquerade bands—the King and Queen-- are crowned. The intricately designed costumes can span up to 80 feet in height and weigh up to 100 pounds with wheels and pyrotechnics.
 - **J'ouvert** - considered the official start of the Carnival street-parade celebrations, J'ouvert takes place on Carnival Monday. Revellers, dressed in old clothes, hit the streets before dawn and cover themselves in oil, paint, chocolate or mud and dance through the streets until the sun comes up!



For more information visit, www.goTrinidadandTobago.com and www.ncbatt.com to view the event calendar, learn more about how to join a band and more.

- Tobago offers a quieter alternative** - For the revelers who are not into the full energy and excitement of the parades and fetes, Tobago is the place to be during Pre-Carnival and Carnival. Tobago offers a smaller, more traditional version that typically takes place in Scarborough. Traffic is usually closed off to this area, so it's best to arrange for a driver who knows the area well to navigate. All key Carnival events take place in Scarborough and also make for an excellent opportunity to connect with the locals and learn about their culture. For more information, visit www.gotrinidadandtobago.com or www.visittobago.gov.tt.



- Plan to 'Cool Down' afterwards** – Carnival veterans make their way to the beach the Wednesday after Carnival, heading to either Maracas Bay or the sister-island of Tobago. Traffic is bumper to bumper if you head to Maracas, so it is recommended to hop on a short, 25-minute Caribbean Airlines flight to Tobago to experience all that the sister-island has to offer. In addition to idyllic beaches and scenic coastlines Tobago also offers activities like hiking, diving, paddle boarding, snorkeling and fishing. For more information, visit www.gotrinidadandtobago.com or www.visittobago.gov.tt.



About Trinidad & Tobago

Home to the largest Carnival celebration in the Caribbean, Trinidad & Tobago is the southernmost Caribbean nation located seven miles east off the Venezuelan coast. Ranked the happiest nation in the Caribbean by the United Nations' [World Happiness Report](#), in 2013 and 2015, the destination's distinct and harmonious blend of cultures, eclectic cuisine and eco-adventure activities continue to attract travelers of all ages to its shores. Birthplace of the limbo and the world famous steelpan, the only acoustic instrument invented in the 20th century, as well as a diverse mix of monthly [festivals and events](#), it's little wonder that Trinidad is known as the 'cultural capital of the Caribbean.' Sister island Tobago offers a quintessential Caribbean vibe with secluded beaches, quaint villages, private villas and award-winning environmental treasures. Tobago is home to the largest brain coral in the Western Hemisphere and the oldest protected reserve in the Western hemisphere, The Main Ridge Rainforest. Come explore Trinidad & Tobago - the true Caribbean. For more information on Trinidad & Tobago, visit www.goTrinidadandTobago.com or www.visittobago.gov.tt.

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