

STEERS
GUIDE TO THE CARIBBEAN
2009/2010

THE REGION

Anguilla
Antigua and Barbuda
Aruba
The Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
British Virgin Islands
Cayman Islands
Cuba
Dominica
Dominican Republic
French Guiana
Grenada
Guadeloupe
(incl. Isles des Saintes and Marie Galante)
Guyana
Haiti
Jamaica
Martinique
Montserrat
The Netherlands Antilles
Puerto Rico
St. Christopher - Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago
Turks and Caicos Islands
U.S. Virgin Islands
Venezuela





ANGUILLA

Political System: Parliamentary democracy administered by the UK.

Population: 13,500 (July 2006 est.)

Currency: East Caribbean dollar (EC\$/XCD)

Language: English (official)

Legal System: Based on English common law.

Other Information: Anguilla is an overseas territory of the UK. The head of state is Queen Elizabeth II represented by an appointed governor. The Executive Council is appointed by the governor from among the elected members of the House of Assembly.





ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

- Political System:** Constitutional monarchy with UK-style parliament, independent sovereign state within the British Commonwealth since 1981.
- Population:** 69,000 (July 2006 est.)
- Currency:** East Caribbean dollar (EC\$/XCD)
- Language:** English (official), local dialects
- Legal System:** Based on English common law
- Other Information:** CARICOM Member. Antigua is a member of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. The final appellate jurisdiction is currently the UK Privy Council, however this is projected to become the Caribbean Court of Justice when enabling legislation is in place.





ARUBA

- Political System:** Parliamentary democracy
- Population:** 101,541 (2008 est.)
- Currency:** Aruban guilder/florin (AWG)
- Language:** Dutch (official), Papiamentu (a Spanish, Portuguese, English dialect), English (widely spoken), Spanish Dutch
- Legal System:** Based on Dutch civil law system, with some English common law influence.
- Other Information:** A part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; full autonomy in internal affairs obtained in 1986 upon separation from the Netherlands Antilles; Dutch Government is responsible for defence and foreign affairs. Appeals are to the Netherlands Antilles Court of Appeal sitting in Aruba, with appellate jurisdiction in the High Court in The Hague, Netherlands





THE BAHAMAS

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|---------------------------|---|
| Political System: | Constitutional parliamentary democracy, independent sovereign state in the British Commonwealth since 1973. |
| Population: | 307,541 (July 2008 est.) |
| Currency: | Bahamian dollar (BSD) |
| Language: | English (official), Creole (among Haitian immigrants) |
| Legal System: | Based on English common law |
| Other Information: | Though The Bahamas is a member of CARICOM they have elected to retain the Privy Council as their final court of appeal. |





BARBADOS

Political System: Parliamentary democracy; independent sovereign state within the British Commonwealth since 1966.

Population: 281,968 (July 2008 est.)

Currency: Barbadian dollar (BBD)

Language: English

Legal System: English common law; no judicial review of legislative acts

Other Information: CARICOM member. Barbados is one of the first countries to have adopted the Caribbean Court of Justice as its final court of appeal.





BELIZE

Political System: Parliamentary democracy, independent sovereign state in the British Commonwealth since 1981.

Population: 320,000 (July 2008 est.)

Currency: Belizean dollar (BZD)

Language: English (official), Spanish, Mayan, Garifuna (Carib), Creole

Legal System: English law

Other Information: CARICOM member. The final court of appeal is the Privy Council, but this is projected to be replaced by the Caribbean Court of Justice when enabling legislation is in place.





BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Political System: Parliamentary democracy

Population: 22,643 (July 2005 est.)

Currency: US dollar (USD)

Language: English (official)

Legal System: English law

Other Information: The British Virgin Islands are an overseas territory of the UK. The head of State is Queen Elizabeth II who is represented by a governor who in turn appoints the Executive Council from the members of the Legislative Council.





CAYMAN ISLANDS

Political System: British crown colony

Population: 69,000 (July 2008 est.)

Currency: Caymanian dollar (KYD)

Language: English

Legal System: British common law and local statutes

Other Information: The Cayman Islands are an overseas territory of the UK. The head of State is Queen Elizabeth II, represented by a governor. The leader of government business is appointed by the governor upon the basis that the individual commands a majority in the democratically elected legislative assembly.





CUBA

Political System: Communist state.

Population: 11,394,043 (July 2007 est.)

Currency: Cuban peso (CUP) and Convertible peso (CUC)

Language: Spanish

Legal System: Based on Spanish and American law, with large elements of Communist legal theory; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction.

Other Information: Members of the legislature are undemocratically elected by a special candidacy commission for a 5 year term of office. The head of State is Fidel Castro.





DOMINICA

Political System: Parliamentary democracy; independent republic within the British Commonwealth since 1978.

Population: 72,514 (July 2008 est.)

Currency: East Caribbean dollar (EC\$/XCD)

Language: English (official), French patois

Legal System: Based on English common law

Other Information: CARICOM member. Dominica is a member of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. Currently the British Privy Council remains as its final appellate jurisdiction; this is projected to become the Caribbean Court of Justice when enabling legislation is in place.





DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Political System: Representative democracy

Population: 9,904,000 (July 2008 est.)

Currency: Dominican peso (DOP)

Language: Spanish

Legal System: Based on French civil codes; undergoing modification in 2004 towards an accusatory system

Other Information: The President is both the head of state and of the government. The final court of appeal is the Supreme Court in the Dominican Republic.





FRENCH GUIANA

Political System: French Guiana is administered from France.

Population: 209,000 (1 January 2007 est.)

Currency: Euro (EUR)

Language: French

Legal System: French legal system

Other Information: Overseas department of France. The head of State is the President of France and he is represented by a Prefect. The court of appeal is located in Martinique.





GRENADA

- Political System:** Constitutional monarchy with Westminster-style parliament, sovereign independent state within the British Commonwealth since 1974.
- Population:** 110,000 (12 July 2005 est.)
- Currency:** East Caribbean dollar (XCD)
- Language:** English (official), French patois
- Legal System:** Based on English common law
- Other Information:** CARICOM member. Grenada has a parliamentary democracy and is a member of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. The final court of appeal is the UK Privy Council this is projected to become the Caribbean Court of Justice when enabling legislation is in place.





GUADELOUPE

Political System: Guadeloupe is administered by France.

Population: 408,000 (1 January 2007 est.)

Currency: Euro (EUR)

Language: French (official) 99%, Creole patois

Legal System: French legal system

Other Information: Overseas department of France. The head of State is the President of France and he is represented by a Prefect. The court of appeal is located in Martinique.





GUYANA

Political System: Parliamentary democracy; an independent republic within the British Commonwealth since 1966.

Population: 858,863 (March 2008 est.)

Currency: Guyanese dollar (GYD)

Language: English, Amerindian dialects, Creole, Hindi, Urdu

Legal System: Based on English common law with certain admixtures of Roman-Dutch law; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Other Information: CARICOM member. Guyana is one of the first countries to have adopted the Caribbean Court of Justice as its final court of appeal.





HAITI

Political System: Parliamentary democracy, sovereign independent state since 1804.

Population: 8,706,497 (2007 est.)

Currency: gourde (HTG)

Language: French (official), Creole (official)

Legal System: Based on Roman civil law system; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Other Information: Haiti is a member of CARICOM. Adoption of the Caribbean Court of Justice as its final court of appeal is projected. However, this may be delayed as Haiti has a civil law system and most of the participants in the Caribbean Court of Justice operate common law legal systems.





JAMAICA

- Political System:** Constitutional parliamentary democracy, sovereign independent state in the British Commonwealth since 1962.
- Population:** 2,804,332 (July 2008 est.)
- Currency:** Jamaican dollar (JMD)
- Language:** English, patois English
- Legal System:** Based on English common law; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction.
- Other Information:** CARICOM member. The final court of appeal is the UK Privy Council although this is projected to become the Caribbean Court of Justice when enabling legislation is in place.





MARTINIQUE

Political System: Martinique is administered by France.

Population: 401,000 (1 January 2007 est.)

Currency: Euro (EUR)

Language: French, Creole patois

Legal System: French legal system

Other Information: Martinique is an overseas department of France. The head of State is the President of France and he is represented by a Prefect. The final court of appeal is based locally.





MONTSERRAT

Political System: Parliamentary democracy

Population: 4,488 (July 2005 est.)

Currency: East Caribbean dollar (EC\$/XCD)

Language: English

Legal System: English common law and statutory law

Other Information: CARICOM member. Montserrat is an overseas territory of the UK. The head of State is Queen Elizabeth II who appoints a governor as her representative. The Executive Council consists of the governor, the chief minister, three other ministers, the attorney general, and the finance secretary. Montserrat is a member of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court but has elected to retain the UK Privy Council as its final court of appeal.





THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

(Includes Saba, St. Eustatius, Sint Maarten, Bonaire & Curaçao)

- Political System:** Parliamentary democracy.
- Population:** 183,000 (July 2005 est.)
- Currency:** Netherlands Antillean guilder (ANG)
- Language:** Papiamentu 65.4% (a Spanish-Portuguese-Dutch-English dialect), English 15.9% (widely spoken), Dutch 7.3% (official), Spanish 6.1%, Creole 1.6%, other 1.9%, unspecified 1.8%
- Legal System:** Based on Dutch civil law system with some English common law influence
- Other Information:** An autonomous federation within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, scheduled for break-up in December 2010, subject to political factors. Full autonomy in internal affairs was granted in 1954; Dutch Government responsible for defense and foreign affairs. The appellate jurisdiction consists of a roving panel of judges which is based in Curaçao (currently under pressure to transfer to Aruba). The final court of appeal is in The Hague.





PUERTO RICO

- Political System:** Commonwealth associated with the United States
- Population:** 3,994,259 (July 2007 est.)
- Currency:** US dollar (USD)
- Language:** Spanish, English
- Legal System:** Based on Spanish civil code and within the US Federal system of justice
- Other Information:** Puerto Rico's final court of appeal is the Supreme Court of the United States of America. Local jurisdiction is the U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.





ST. CHRISTOPHER-NEVIS

Political System: Constitutional monarchy with Westminster-style parliament, sovereign independent federated state since 1983.

Population: 42,696 (July 2005 est.)

Currency: East Caribbean dollar (XCD)

Language: English

Legal System: Based on English common law

Other Information: St. Christopher – Nevis is member of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court and a member of CARICOM. Currently the final court of appeal is the UK Privy Council. However, this is projected to become the Caribbean Court of Justice when enabling legislation is in place. There is a movement for break-up of the federation.





SAINT LUCIA

- Political System:** Westminster-style parliamentary democracy, sovereign independent state in the British Commonwealth since 1979
- Population:** 160,765 (July 2005 est.)
- Currency:** East Caribbean dollar (EC\$/XCD)
- Language:** English (official), French patois
- Legal System:** Based on English common law
- Other Information:** CARICOM member and a member of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. Currently the final court of appeal is the UK Privy Council. However, this is projected to become the Caribbean Court of Justice when enabling legislation is in place.





SAINT VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

- Political System:** Parliamentary democracy; independent sovereign state within the British Commonwealth since 1979.
- Population:** 120,000 (2008 est.)
- Currency:** East Caribbean dollar (EC\$/XCD)
- Language:** English, French patois
- Legal System:** Based on English common law
- Other Information:** CARICOM member. St. Vincent is a member of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. The UK Privy Council is currently the final court of appeal, but this is projected to become the Caribbean Court of Justice when enabling legislation is in place.





SURINAME

Political System: Constitutional democracy, sovereign independent state since 1975.

Population: 470,784 (July 2005 est.)

Currency: Suriname dollar (SRD)

Language: Dutch (official), English (widely spoken), Sranang Tongo (Surinamese, sometimes called Taki-Taki, is native language of Creoles and much of the younger population and is lingua franca among others), Hindustani (a dialect of Hindi), Javanese

Legal System: Based on Dutch legal system incorporating French penal theory.

Other Information: CARICOM member. Currently there is a domestic court of appeal but this is projected to become the Caribbean Court of Justice. Although adoption may be delayed as Suriname has a civil law system whereas most of the participants in the Caribbean Court of Justice operate common law legal systems.





TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Political System: Parliamentary democracy

Population: 1,305,000 (July 2005 est.)

Currency: Trinidad and Tobago dollar (TTD)

Language: English (official), Hindi, French, Spanish, Chinese

Legal System: Based on English common law; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Other Information: CARICOM member. Trinidad & Tobago's highest court of appeal is the UK Privy Council. However, this is projected to become the Caribbean Court of Justice when enabling legislation is in place. The headquarters of the Caribbean Court of Justice are Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.





TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

- Political System:** A parliamentary democracy administered by the UK.
- Population:** 30,600 (2008 est.)
- Currency:** US dollar (USD)
- Language:** English (official)
- Legal System:** Based on laws of England and Wales, with some adoptions from Jamaica and The Bahamas
- Other Information:** Turks & Caicos is an overseas territory of the UK. Queen Elizabeth II is the head of state and is represented by a governor. The Executive Council consists of three ex officio members and five appointed by the governor from among the members of the Legislative Council. Following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party is appointed chief minister by the governor.





US VIRGIN ISLANDS

Political System: The US Virgin Islands are an overseas territory of the United States.

Population: 108,448 (July 2007 est.)

Currency: US dollar (USD)

Language: English 74.7%, Spanish or Spanish Creole 16.8%, French or French Creole 6.6%, other 1.9%

Legal System: Based on US laws

Other Information: The US Virgin Islands are an organized, unincorporated territory of the US with policy relations between the Virgin Islands and the US under the jurisdiction of the Office of Insular Affairs, US Department of the Interior. The local jurisdiction is under the US District Court of the United States Virgin Islands.





VENEZUELA

Political System: Federal republic

Population: 28,199,822 (Feb 2008 est.)

Currency: Bolivar (VEB)

Language: Spanish (official), numerous indigenous dialects

Legal System: Open, adversarial court system

Other Information: The Supreme Tribunal of Justice is the final court of appeal for Venezuela.





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