

STEERS
GUIDE TO THE CARIBBEAN
2010/2011



THE REGION

Anguilla
Antigua and Barbuda
Aruba
The Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
British Virgin Islands
Cayman Islands
Cuba
Curacao
Dominica
Dominican Republic
French Guiana
Grenada
Guadeloupe (incl. Isles des Saintes and Marie Galante)
Guyana
Haiti
Jamaica
Martinique
Montserrat
Netherlands, The Kingdom of (Bonaire, Saba, Sint Eustatius)
Puerto Rico
St. Christopher (St. Kitts) - Nevis
St. Lucia
Sint Maarten
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:** 13,600 (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:** 85,632 (2009 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:** 103,065 (Jul 2009 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 joint Court of Appeal of Aruba, Curacao, Sint Maarten, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. The final court of appeal is in The Hague.





THE BAHAMAS

- Political System:** Constitutional parliamentary democracy, independent sovereign state in the British Commonwealth since 1973.
- Population:** 330,000 (2009 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: 284,589 (2009 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: 333,200 (2010 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 Caribbean Court of Justice.





BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

- Political System:** Parliamentary democracy
- Population:** 27,000 (2005)
- 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 (Jul 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:** 11,239,363 (2009 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 Raul Castro.





CURACAO

- Political System:** Parliamentary democracy
- Population:** 141,766 (2009)
- Currency:** Netherlands Antillean guilder (ANG) (Until January 2012 when it will be replaced by the Caribbean Guilder)
- 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; became a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on 10 October 2010; Dutch Government is responsible for defence and foreign affairs. Appeals are to the joint Court of Appeal of Aruba, Curacao, Sint Maarten, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. Some laws of the European Union are excluded but Dutch law applies and all Netherlands Antilles laws and island laws continue with specified exceptions. The final court of appeal is in The Hague.





DOMINICA

- Political System:** Parliamentary democracy; independent republic within the British Commonwealth since 1978.
- Population:** 72,660 (Jul 2009 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.

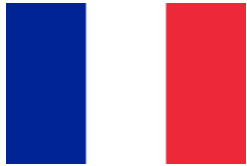




DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- Political System:** Representative democracy
- Population:** 10,090,000 (2009 est.)
- Currency:** Dominican peso (DOP)
- Language:** Spanish
- Legal System:** Civil law jurisdiction, based on French and Spanish civil codes; there is no system of precedent;
- 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:** 229,000 (Jan 2009)
- 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, the final court of appeal is the Cour de cassation in France.





GRENADA

- Political System:** Constitutional monarchy with Westminster-style parliament, sovereign independent state within the British Commonwealth since 1974.
- Population:** 110,000 (Jul 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:** 405,500 (Jan 2008 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, the final court of appeal is the Cour de cassation in France.





GUYANA

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

Population: 752,940 (Jul 2010 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 was 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:** 10,188,000 (2009 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:** 2,847,232 (Jul 2010 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:** 397,730 (Jan 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 court of appeal is based locally, the final court of appeal is the Cour de cassation in France.





MONTSERRAT

- Political System:** Parliamentary democracy
- Population:** 4,655 (Jul 2006 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.

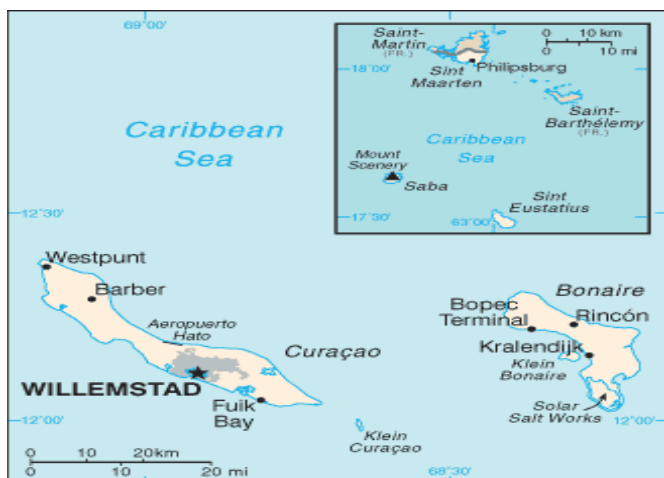




KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS SPECIAL MUNICIPALITIES

(Bonaire, Saba & St. Eustatius)

- Political System:** Parliamentary democracy.
- Population:** 19,106 (2006 est.)
- Currency:** Netherlands Antillean guilder (ANG) (to be replaced by US dollar on 1 January 2011)
- 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:** The special municipalities of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba are part of the Netherlands but do not form part of a province. They resemble ordinary Dutch municipalities and are subject to most Dutch laws. Full autonomy in internal affairs was granted in 1954; Dutch Government responsible for defence and foreign affairs. Appeals are to the joint Court of Appeal of Aruba, Curacao, Sint Maarten, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. Some laws of the European Union are excluded but Dutch law applies and all Netherland Antilles laws and island laws continue with specified exceptions. The final court of appeal is in The Hague.





PUERTO RICO

- Political System:** Commonwealth associated with the United States
- Population:** 3,967,179 (2009 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.





SAINT CHRISTOPHER (SAINT KITTS) - NEVIS

- Political System:** Constitutional monarchy with Westminster-style parliament, sovereign independent federated state since 1983.
- Population:** 51,300 (Jul 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:** 173,765 (2009)
- 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.





SINT MAARTEN

- Political System:** Parliamentary democracy
- Population:** 40,917 (2009 est.)
- Currency:** Netherlands Antillean guilder (ANG) (Until January 2012 when it will be replaced by the Caribbean Guilder)
- 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:** One of the four constituent countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; encompasses the southern half of the island of Saint Martin, the northern half constitutes the French overseas collectivity of Saint-Martin; full autonomy within the Kingdom of the Netherlands received on 10 October 2010; Dutch Government is responsible for defence and foreign affairs. Appeals are to the joint Court of Appeal of Aruba, Curacao, Sint Maarten, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. Some laws of the European Union are excluded but Dutch law applies and all Netherlands Antilles laws and island laws continue with specified exceptions. The final court of appeal is in The Hague.





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:** 481,267 (Jul 2009 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:** 1,299,953 (Jul 2009 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 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.





TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

- Political System:** A parliamentary democracy administered by the UK.
- Population:** 36,605 (2009 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. Currently under direct rule from the UK.





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:** 26,814,843 (Jul 2009 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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