

## **Dominica**

Dominica has been named as one of the world's happiest places to live. Boasting a high number of centenarians (people who have lived to be older than 100 years), it offers an easy lifestyle within a safe, peaceful and pristine environment with a culturally vibrant and friendly community.

The "Nature Island of the Caribbean" is a green tropical paradise and one of the most beautiful islands in the Caribbean. It is practically untouched nature with countless rivers and waterfalls, and emerald green mountains dropping dramatically into the turquoise sea. Dominica hosts the world's second-largest hot spring, Boiling Lake and features lush, mountainous rainforests, which are home to many rare plant, animal, and bird species. Dominica's clear and calm oceans offer excellent opportunities for diving and snorkelling and have spectacular dive sites including shipwrecks and even underwater hot springs.

In 1998, Dominica's Morne Trois Pitons National Park was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Since 1997 Dominica has actively participated in the work of Green Globe to develop a model for ecotourism within Dominica.

A mountainous, forested island with a year-round tropical climate, national parks, rare indigenous birds and the second-largest boiling lake in the world, Dominica is potentially a great tourist attraction.

## **Financial Services Industry**

The Commonwealth of Dominica is becoming in recent years a major international financial center. The largest sectors are "banking, payment companies, and general corporate activities". Regulation and supervision of the financial services industry is the responsibility of the Financial Service Unit of the Commonwealth of Dominica (FSU) under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance. There are a number of service providers. These include global financial institutions including Scotiabank, Royal Bank of Canada, Cathedral Investment Bank, First Caribbean International Bank, and The Interoceanic Bank of the Caribbean;

## **Culture**

Dominica is home to a wide range of people. Although it was historically occupied by several native tribes, the Arawaks (Tainos) and Carib (Kalinago) tribes occupied it at the time European settlers reached the island. "Massacre" is a name of a river dedicated to the murders of the Native villagers by French and British settlers, because the river ran red with blood for days. Both the French and British tried to claim the island and imported slaves from Africa for labour. The remaining Caribs now live on a 3,700-acre (15 km<sup>2</sup>) territory on the east coast of the island. They elect their own chief. This mix of cultures has produced the current culture.

Music and dance are important facets of Dominica's culture. The annual independence celebrations display a variety of traditional song and dance. Since 1997, there have also been weeks of Creole festivals, such as "Creole in the Park" and the "World Creole Music Festival".

## **Education**

School in Dominica is mandatory up to secondary school. After pre-school, pupils attend primary school for six or seven years, and are admitted into secondary school on the basis of a Common Entrance Exam. After five years the students take the General Certificate of Education (GCE), widely replaced by the current Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC or CXC) administered by the Caribbean Examination Council (a 15-member confederation of the Caribbean community (CARICOM)). The more advanced version of this examination (CAPE) can be taken upon completion of two years of community college. The island has its own state college, formerly named Clifton Dupigny Community College. Some Dominicans attend universities in Cuba on scholarships offered by its government. Others go to the University of the West Indies or to universities in the United Kingdom, the United States, or other countries. Ross University,<sup>[50]</sup> a medical school, is located at Portsmouth. Ross has been operating in Dominica since the 1980s. Archbold Tropical Research and Education Center (ATREC),<sup>[51]</sup> a biological field station owned by Clemson University,<sup>[52]</sup> is located at Springfield Estate between Canefield and Pond Cassé. In 2006, All Saints University School of Medicine<sup>[53]</sup> opened in temporary facilities in Loubière, with a permanent campus being constructed in Grand Bay. Currently All Saints is located in Roseau, Dominica. A marine biology institute in Mahaut, ITME (Institute for Tropical Marine Ecology), closed in 2009.