

St. Kitts Community

St. Kitts and her sister island, Nevis, compose the Federation of St. Christopher and Nevis. St. Kitts has become the commonly used name for St. Christopher, and the people of St. Kitts are called Kittitians.

English is the primary language, although Kittitians often speak a dialect called Patois.

The Federation of St. Christopher and Nevis is a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The British monarch is recognized as the head of state. The country became autonomous in 1967 and is led by a prime minister. The capital of St. Kitts is Basseterre.

The economy of St. Kitts traditionally was focused on sugar cane production. In recent years, tourism, export-oriented manufacturing, and offshore banking have become the primary businesses.

St. Kitts offers many Western-style amenities, including resort hotels, excellent restaurants, taxi services, grocery and other stores, and houses of worship for a variety of religious beliefs.

Countryside

Volcano eruptions created the islands of St. Kitts and Nevis, with St. Kitts having two vents and Nevis having one. Trade winds provide cooling breezes and rain showers for moisture. This creates an island that has everything from rainforests to coral reefs and wild coastlines.

The early settlers of St. Kitts were the Caribs. They called the island "Liamuiga" or "fertile isle". The mountain ranges of St. Kitts reach up to nearly 3,936 feet. The interior of St. Kitts contains rainforests alive with hummingbirds, other wild birds, butterflies, and wild green Vervet monkeys.

The early French settlers brought in the Vervet monkeys as pets, and the monkeys were set free when the British took control of the island in 1783. The Vervet monkeys, originally from Africa, have proliferated in St. Kitts and can often be seen in the trees.

Basseterre, the capital of St. Kitts

Basseterre was established by French explorers in 1625. Many of the older buildings in Basseterre date back to the 18th century when the British first captured the island. Although Basseterre is a French name, its atmosphere is unmistakably English.

The town center of Basseterre is the harbor and an area called "Circus". The design of Circus is based on London's Piccadilly Circus, and it has a green clock at its center.

Time

The time observed is Atlantic Standard Time, which is 4 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time. Daylight Savings Time is not observed.

Currency and Banking

The official currency in St. Kitts is the Eastern Caribbean Dollar (EC). The conversion rate is approximately \$2.70 E.C. for \$1.00 U.S.

Bank branches are easily found in Basseterre, the capital of St. Kitts. Each bank provides 24-hour ATM services, and cash distributed by ATM is in EC dollars.

The University on-campus ATM is affiliated with Royal Bank of Canada.

Electricity

The electricity in St. Kitts is 220 volts/50 cycles. American electricity is 110 volts/60 cycles. While many apartments use 110 volts, students may need converters for use with American appliances in off-campus apartments.

Students should contact the University Housing Department prior to arriving in St. Kitts to verify the voltage of their apartment.

Electricity on campus is 110 volts/60 cycles.

Supermarkets

St. Kitts has supermarkets that are similar to smaller markets in the U.S. or Canada. There is a farmer's market open most Saturdays in Basseterre. There is also a fish market that has fresh catch daily in Basseterre.

Telephones

When students arrive for Orientation prior to first semester, the Welcoming Committee will explain telephone options. Cable and Wireless provides the only phone cards that work in St. Kitts.

Students might want to consider using a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) service provided by most U.S. telecommunications carriers and companies such as Vonage.

In addition, there are computer-to-computer Internet telephone services such as Skype. Skype users may place calls at no cost to other Skype users.

Local Travel

In St. Kitts, unlike the U.S., everyone drives on the left; rental cars often have steering wheels on the right-hand side of the car.

Road conditions in St. Kitts are significantly different than those in the U.S. or Canada. While roads are well paved, they may be narrow and poorly marked.

Drivers often stop on the road to visit with other drivers, blocking at least one lane of traffic. When a driver honks a car horn, it is common form of greeting, not a warning unless driving on roads with “blind curves”.

Public transportation consists of minibuses and taxis. Because of the road conditions, the use of a motorcycle or scooter is not recommended.

Additional Resources

St. Kitts Tourism

[Wikipedia - St. Kitts and Nevis](#)

[Skype](#)

[Vonage](#)