
PUERTO PLATA



Dominican Republic
Has it all

Welcome to Puerto Plata

Come and explore Puerto Plata and the sizzling beach towns of Cabarete, Cofresi and Sosúa, where rich culture and history mingle with delicious gastronomy, warm Dominican people, lively music and magical ecotourism activities. The enchanting Puerto Plata province along Dominican Republic's North Coast features nearly 50 miles (80 km) of coastline as well as a variety of resorts, hotels and condominiums to suit every need and budget. It's no wonder the area beckons free spirits who seek eco- adventure and stylish pampering, and want to participate in the joyous Dominican way of life.

Christopher Columbus first arrived in this area on his first voyage to the Americas and the Island of Hispaniola in 1492. Upon his arrival, he named the region Puerto Plata (Silver Port in Spanish) due to the sparkling reflection of the sun from the pristine ocean waters along the coastline and mountains. Also known as the Amber Coast for its rich and rare amber, Puerto Plata is situated on the outskirts of Mount Isabel de Torres where the warm waters and perfect trade winds make this area the renowned wind sports and kite boarding capital of the world. It is also the home to Ocean World Marine Park, the Fort San Felipe, Brugal Rum Factory and more delightful attractions. And, if pampering and relaxation is what you desire, the region's hotels and resorts deliver.

The sparkling ivory-colored sand and crystal-clear blue ocean water catch the attention of visitors, but the winds, watersports and active pace of the province keep them coming back for more. The North Coast features beaches that provide enough wind to keep windsport enthusiasts enthralled and others that offer peaceful tranquility for those looking to take it easy.

The following guide to Puerto Plata includes descriptions of the amazing attractions, accommodations and eco-adventures that await you.

Cover photo: Pro Kiteboarder Luciano González



Facts

Puerto Plata is located on Dominican Republic's North Coast where the Atlantic Ocean meets this magnificent natural region's pristine beaches that lead to lush green valleys and palm covered mountains. Dominican Republic occupies the eastern two-thirds of the large island of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Republic of Haiti, and is the second largest country in the Caribbean, comprising an area of 29,948 square miles (48,198 km).

The country has a population of more than 9.5 million and enjoys sunny tropical weather year-round with average temperatures from 78° to 88° F (25° to 31 C°). The cooler season is November through April, while it is warmest from May through October.

TIME: The local time zone is Eastern Caribbean Time (GMT -0400). Dominican Republic does not observe daylight savings time.

CAPITAL CITY: Dominican Republic's historic and sophisticated capital city, Santo Domingo, is the oldest city of the New World and was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1990.

LANGUAGE: Spanish is the official language, however, you'll be surprised by the fact that the majority of employees in hotels and tourist destinations speak relatively good English, French, German and Italian.

CURRENCY: The Dominican peso (RD\$) is the official currency.

GETTING HERE: Dominican Republic currently has eight international airports. The main ones serving the Puerto Plata area are Gregorio Luperón International Airport in Puerto Plata and El Cibao International Airport, located in Santiago, one hour south of Puerto Plata. Maritime Ports that regularly receive cruise ships include: Santo Domingo Port (Don Diego and Sans Souci terminals), Casa de Campo Port in La Romana and Samaná Bay facilities.

DOCUMENTATION: For most visitors, a passport along with a US\$ 10 Tourist Card (available at the airport) is required to enter the country. For a list of countries that can enter Dominican Republic without a visa, please visit: www.GoDominicanRepublic.com.

ELECTRICITY: Operates at 110 Volts/60 Hertz, the same as North America.

TAXES: Dominican hotels and restaurants collect 26 percent of their published prices (16 percent sales tax + 10 percent service charge).

MEDICAL PRECAUTIONS: Travelers visiting the country are advised to drink only bottled water. Also, because of the strength of the Caribbean sun, it is recommended that vacationers drink water throughout the day to avoid dehydration.

DRINKING AGE: The legal drinking age in the country is 18 years old.

HOTELS: For information about Dominican Republic hotels, visit the Association of Hotels and Tourism: www.Asonahores.com





Attractions



OCEAN WORLD ADVENTURE PARK – Ocean World takes visitors up close and personal with the ocean’s majestic inhabitants, like dolphins, sea lions, stingrays, tropical birds, sharks and more. The entertainment complex offers visitors a once in a lifetime experience. Adjacent to the marina is Ocean World Casino. The four-story building immerses visitors into a different atmosphere, from five-star dining, to live music, to gaming, to spectacular ocean views, to cocktail lounges, to the tropical and exotic Bravissimo Show. For more information, visit www.oceanworld.net or call (809) 291-1111.

27 FALLS OF DAMAJAGUA – For only the most adventurous, hike and scale a series of spectacular waterfalls with the forest canopy above you and crystal clear water below. Feel your senses come alive as you experience nature’s perfect waterpark, the 27 Waterfalls of Damajagua. Courageous visitors can jump, slide and swim down natural water chutes or jump in peaceful pools. Experience is not necessary, although only swimmers are encouraged to participate. Visit: www.27charcos.com.

AMBER MUSEUM – Housed in an incredible epitome of Victorian architecture known as Villa Bentz, the Amber Museum boasts a unique collection of valuable Dominican amber dating back millions of years. The Amber Museum offers guided tours in several languages. Museum displays detail how amber was formed and even how the insects in the stone inspired the film Jurassic Park. For more information, visit www.ambermuseum.com or call (809) 586-2848.

VICTORIAN ARCHITECTURE – Downtown Puerto Plata is known for its gorgeous late 19th and early 20th century preserved Victorian homes and public buildings garnered with gingerbread motifs, wooden lace filigree and pastel colors. Visitors can admire turn-of-the-century charm while they take a stroll in the heart of the city, which is decorated with some of the most beautiful Victorian architecture.

SAN FELIPE FORT – In 1541, Spaniards began constructing the Fort of San Felipe in order to protect Puerto Plata from pirates and other intruders. The fort was completed in 1577, making it the oldest standing structure in Puerto Plata and the only remnant of the colonial time architecture.

MOUNT ISABEL DE TORRES & CABLE CAR RIDE – Visitors can experience breathtaking scenery of Puerto Plata from Mount Isabel de Torres. A thrilling 10-minute cable car ride takes passengers up 2,656 feet (810 meters) through misty clouds to the mountain top with spectacular views along the way. The short ride up rewards visitors with lush exotic flowers that flourish atop in its botanical gardens with many walking paths. At the peak, riders can get a close up look at a statue of Christ the Redeemer, a smaller replica of the Rio de Janeiro landmark.



PLAYA DORADA GOLF CLUB – Legendary golf-course architect Robert Trent Jones Sr. designed the Playa Dorada Golf Club, which opened in 1976. Jones’ beautiful creation is located in the popular Playa Dorada Resort Complex in Puerto Plata and is situated among a dozen hotels in the eco-friendly region. The relatively flat Playa Dorada Golf Club is known for its outstanding conditioning and exceptional greens. www.playadoradagolf.com.

LOS MANGOS GOLF COURSE – Redesigned by P.B. Dye in 2010, Los Mangos (The Mangoes) features 18 diverse holes, including 9 with sea views. Set among leafy fruit trees, such as mangoes, Spanish limes, and coconut groves, Los Mangos is located in the Costambar residential development 10 minutes from the city of Puerto Plata. Players can even enjoy eating mangoes while they play the two straight rounds. And regardless of your skill level, golfers will achieve their golfing goals with the state-of-the-art equipment and professional lessons. www.losmangosgolf.com.

PLAYA GRANDE GOLF COURSE – Playa Grande Golf Course, which opened in 1997, is the last golf course Robert Trent Jones Sr., designed. Fittingly it’s also considered among his best. Ten of the somewhat-hilly layout’s holes play along the Atlantic Ocean’s cliffs, often why it is referred to as the “Pebble Beach of the Caribbean.” The course is cut into the cliffs overlooking the ocean, underground springs supply abundant fresh water, the lush land has numerous old trees and royal palms, and the neighboring land consists of forests and small farms. www.playagrande.com.

NIGHTLIFE – Puerto Plata’s nightlife ranges from lively salsa clubs to local bars full of locals and visitors dancing to sultry merengue music. In addition, the majority of the resorts will have evening shows with dancing, singing, costumed performers, Merengue lessons, karaoke, beauty pageants and more.

SHOPPING – When you travel there will always be time to shop around for some amber, larimar, cigars, or good Dominican rum. For these purposes, there’s no other place better than Playa Dorada Plaza: a two-story shopping center with boutiques, a perfumery, jewelry and liquor stores, gift shops, art galleries, cigars, photographs, books and magazines. Playa Dorada Plaza also features restaurants, pizzerias, Internet and call centers, a playground for children, banks, three movie theatres, discotheque and cafes. Beach towns like Sosúa and Cabarete of the North Coast are well known for quaint little shops selling Dominican souvenirs, from beachwear to arts and crafts.

MARINAS – Approximately 25,000 boats cruise along the North Coast, the main route between Florida and Venezuela. Therefore, Puerto Plata features several marinas to suit every need. Ocean World Marina is the first full-service marina you will find between the heavily traveled Florida/Bahamas area and the Puerto Rico/Eastern Caribbean region. Marina Luperón has 200 slips for yachts from 30 to 80 feet (9 to 24 meters) LOA and an additional seven for those over 100 feet (30 meters) LOA. Puerto Blanco Marina, located west of Puerto Plata in Luperón, is a fully enclosed marina with the ability to moor 200 yachts with drafts up to 8 feet (2.4 meters).

LAGUNA GRI-GRI – A sanctuary for colorful birds, Laguna Gri-Gri is a beautiful and peaceful lagoon set under leafy mangroves near the village of Rio San Juan. Located 62 miles (100 km) east of Puerto Plata, you can take a boat to Laguna Gri-Gri and explore the ancient mangroves, see the cave of the swallows (Cueva de Las Golondrinas), swim the shallow cove and enjoy the peaceful tranquility of the secluded beach.

BRUGAL RUM FACTORY TOUR – Dominican Republic is famous for its rum and Puerto Plata is the location for the Brugal Rum Factory. This rum is created completely from Dominican hands, sugar cane and distilled and aged inside the country – ensuring a truly Dominican flavor. No wonder it is a favorite of many Dominicans. Tours are offered Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and again from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.





Events



CARIBBEAN LASER MIDWINTER REGATTA – The Annual Caribbean Laser Midwinter Regatta kicks off the world’s Laser Regatta calendar every January in Cabarete, the Kiteboarding Capital of the World. This event attracts top sailors from around the world. The Caribbean Laser Midwinter Regatta is hosted by the Laser Training Center with the assistance of the Dominican Sailing Federation. For more information, visit www.Caribwind.com.

CARNIVAL IN PUERTO PLATA – Carnival celebrations are held every Sunday in February along the Malecón of Puerto Plata, where celebrations date back to the 19th Century. Visitors and locals alike can enjoy parades, music and popular dances, Dominican dishes, demonstrations of arts and culture, and costumes.

MASTER OF THE OCEAN – National and international athletes in kiteboarding, surfing and windsurfing gather every April in Cabarete for Master of the Ocean. This ultimate water sports triathlon tests their physical conditioning, equipment and experience against two of the most powerful forces on earth – wind and waves. The event has an overall winner, “Master of the Ocean,” as well as individual winners in each discipline. For more information, visit www.masteroftheocean.com.

KITEBOARDING COMPETITIONS – Cabarete’s idyllic bay is known for hosting some of the world’s most spectacular kiteboarding events during the summer. The bay’s excellent trade winds and warm waters draw internationally recognized competitions that attract top-ranked water and wind sport champions globally.

MERENGUE FESTIVAL – Puerto Plata holds one of the most popular merengue festivals in Dominican Republic every October. The Malecón, Puerto Plata’s Ocean Boulevard, becomes a musical stage to celebrate the unique passionate and thrilling music of Dominican Republic.

JAZZ FESTIVAL – Jazz aficionados travel from around the world each fall to the annual Jazz Festival held on the beaches of Cabarete, which is held every November. The event features an impressive line-up of jazz musicians, including artists from the U.S., Cuba, Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic. For additional information, visit www.drjazzfestival.com.

MASTERS SURF REUNION – Every November, generations of surfers gather at Encuentro Beach, one of the most consistent surf spots on Dominican Republic’s North Coast, where they compete against one another in a surf contest for all ages. For more information, visit www.masterssurfreunion.com.

For an updated list of events in Puerto Plata and Dominican Republic, visit www.godominicanrepublic.com/events.



PUERTO PLATA





Beaches



PLAYA DORADA – Located just at the foot of the largest all-inclusive resort complex in the Caribbean, Playa Dorada is protected by reefs and features picture-perfect beaches and warm waters. Playa Dorada offers privacy and seclusion within its gated community. While anyone can drive into the Playa Dorada complex, non-guests must pay for a day pass.

COFRESÍ – Just a few minutes west of Puerto Plata lays one of the region’s most unique beaches, Playa Cofresi. Named after the pirate Roberto Cofresi, Playa Cofresi caters to those looking to relax and bathe in the sun as it greets beachgoers with pristine waters, a soft Atlantic breeze and golden sand.

CABARETE – On Dominican Republic’s North Coast, adventure seekers will fall in love with Cabarete Beach. One of the top five kiteboarding and windsurfing beaches in the world, Cabarete’s beach (often called “Kite Beach”) annually hosts an array of international championships. On any given day, visitors to the area will see the sky filled with hundreds of colorful kites carrying amateur and pro riders through the surf. The beach is bordered by world-class restaurants, bars, discos and lots of shopping.

SOSÚA – Located on a crescent-shaped bay, Playa Sosúa is a postcard perfect beach. Featuring a backdrop of towering cliffs, the turquoise-colored waters here are calm and clear. Impressive mountains reach down to the ocean and abundant almond trees line the beach in Playa Sosúa, where a few hotels sit nestled in the warmth of the Dominican sand. Playa Sosúa is perhaps one of the Caribbean’s most popular beaches, which may explain the crowds. However, with so much to do – shopping or eating in Sosúa, snorkeling or even taking a glass bottom boat tour – the crowds are worth the visit.

PUNTA RUCIA – West of Puerto Plata and just off the beaten path, Playa Punta Rucia boasts white sand beaches and beautiful mountain views. Popular with snorkelers due to the presence of a large coral reef just off the shore, Playa Punta Rucia offers a small selection of restaurants/bars and a peaceful lagoon that is good for bird watching.

PLAYA ENCUENTRO – Meaning “encounter” in English, Playa Encuentro lies only five minutes from Cabarete and is a favorite due to having perfect waves for surfing. Several schools are located nearby that offer lessons for beginners as well as board rentals. Surfers know the beach very well and somehow keep it a secret from the tourists. The beach is usually very empty making it an ideal escape from busier beaches in the area. The waters here are decorated with vibrant corals and inhabited by plenty of sea urchins.



Excursions



The delightful attractions around the Puerto Plata region are at your fingertips. For these tours and more, please contact your hotel's tour desk or representative.

CAYO ARENA – Puerto Plata's Atlantic Coast is a gifted region full of natural jewels and one of them is Cayo Arena, also called Cayo Paraiso, a very small island off the beaches of Punta Rucia and La Ensenada. This rare coral island in Dominican Republic is worth visiting. Upon arrival, you will feel as though you have arrived to the secret island of your dreams. The tiny island with soft white sand is surrounded by turquoise colored ocean waters where snorkeling is ideal.

OUTBACK SAFARI – Join us and be Indiana Jones or Crocodile Dundee for the day and let us show you the REAL Dominican Republic. You will be driven through some of Puerto Plata's most spectacular scenery where you will discover exotic tropical forests, rivers, mountains, secluded beaches and villages where time has stood still for hundreds of years! The excursion begins on the road that leads to Sosúa and the village of Los Muñoz. You will have the chance to go for refreshing swim in the Camú River or boogie board on Boca Nueva Beach in the village of Montellano.

MONSTER TRUCK – Immerse yourself in the greenery and purity of Dominican fields of sugarcane and wild grass along the North Coast. On this tour you will journey through small villages and cross rivers in Sosúa and Cabarete; visit a local community school, a typical family home and farm; and see how Dominicans live in rural areas; taste local food; and enjoy the warm hospitality of Dominican people. The tour ends with a late-afternoon visit to a Dominican ranch.

HELICOPTER TOURS – Discover Puerto Plata and its breathtaking land and seascapes from the thrilling helicopter tour. This flight will take you above the city and the bay of Puerto Plata. Fly over the Malecón, Fort San Felipe and across Puerto Plata's central park with its Victorian houses and historic cathedral. Depending on the length of tour you choose, you can see Ocean World Park and its marine animals from on high or even fly all the way to Maimón, Sosúa and Cabarete.

CATAMARAN TOURS – Enjoy stunning views of the Puerto Plata coast on a Catamaran with the wind, the sun and tropical cocktail in your hand. This excursion will take you from Playa Dorada to the beach of Sosúa on a journey where colorful fish and playful dolphins may swim alongside you in the warm waters. Dance on board the vessel to delightful merengue music, the national music of Dominican Republic.

ZIP LINING AT YASIKA ADVENTURE PARK – Once you arrive at Yasika Adventure Park, it'll be thrills and chills, where adrenaline rises to the highest level when you start flying, hung from a cable over green and lush valleys below. A team of professionals will give you all the necessary instructions on how to use the equipment (zip lining) and immediately you'll launch from the first platform for about 330 to 990 feet (100 to 300 meters) to the next at speeds of up to 30mph.

FUNNY BIKE – Explore the fields of Puerto Plata on your own "all terrain" motor bike guided by experts who will take you to the most beautiful, scenic spots in the region. The excursion will cross sugar cane fields, the Camú River and the villages of Montellano, Los Ciruelos and Los Muñoz. Enjoy a swim at the El Bergantin beach to cool off near the end of your trip.

PUERTO PLATA RUNNER – Come and admire the beauty of the region's flora and fauna and share memorable moments with Dominicans who live in the countryside, getting to know their customs and lifestyle. The tour leads you through Cofresi, Maimón, Palo Indio, El Toro and other places until the final stop at Rancho Puerto Plata Runners where you can relax on the beach.

BUGGIES – Hop on a buggy and see Puerto Plata. Tour leaders will take you to Los Muñoz and through many other communities and rivers in one unforgettable journey of direct contact with Mother Nature. Stops for local shopping and crafts include some refreshing tropical drinks and snacks.

MONKEY JUNGLE – Located 25 minutes from Puerto Plata between Cabarete and Sosúa, Monkey Jungle is a ½ square mile (1.3 square kilometer) natural wonderland of mountains and valleys, and is home to 15 squirrel and six capuchin monkeys. Here you can zip line from mountain top to mountain top, over valleys and down into a newly discovered cave. The ACCT certified course is exhilarating, safe and more fun than the barrel of monkeys that greet you in the jungle. This is a true, hands-on experience which has brought much joy to the hundreds of children and adults who have visited. www.monkeyjungledr.com.



Local Transportation

As the second largest country in the Caribbean, Dominican Republic offers a wide range of activities which can be a short or long distance away from one another. Many options exist for traveling on well-maintained highways to nearby attractions and also to more distantly located excursions.

BUS COMPANIES – Air conditioned motor coaches and vans arranged by local tour operators are available from most hotels. Major companies include Caribe Tours, Tel. (809) 586-4544 and Autobuses Metro, Tel. (809) 586-6063.

CAR RENTALS – Car rental offices and facilities can be found at all airports. Renters must be 25 with a valid driver's license.

BY PLANE – Air Century has regular flights twice a week from Puerto Plata to Santo Domingo, Santiago and Punta Cana. www.aircentury.com

GROUND TRANSPORTATION – Taxis are available at most hotels and tour operators are more than willing to provide additional options for getting around. Visitors should also check with their hotel for any recommendations.

TABLE OF DISTANCES BY LAND:

Puerto Plata to other regions

Santiago	1 hour
Jarabacoa	2 hours
Samaná	2 ½ hours
Santo Domingo	3 ½ hours
La Romana	5 ½ hours
Barahona	7 hours
Punta Cana	7 ½ hours

Puerto Plata to (within the region)

Cofresi	10 minutes
Playa Dorada	10 minutes
Sosúa	20 minutes
Damajagua	25 minutes
Cabarete	30 minutes
Playa Grande	1 ½ hours
Rio San Juan	1 ½ hours
Cayo Arena (Paraiso)	2 hours



Dominican Republic



KEY

- City and Town
- Point of Interest
- Cruise Port
- International Airport
- Domestic Airport
- Beach
- Protected Area/Park
- Golf Course
- Whales
- Highest Peak

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