

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

FALL & WINTER GUIDE 2011 – 2012



The best places to eat, sleep and play
in Dominican Republic this fall and winter

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INTRODUCTION



TripAdvisor, the most trusted source for where to eat, sleep and play in thousands of destinations around the world, has collected the best insider tips from its 50 million monthly visitors to produce a unique series of travel guides. In addition to the best hotels, restaurants and attractions for every type of traveler, you'll get great advice about what to pack, how to get around and where to find the best views. Be sure to check out the guides at www.tripadvisor.com.



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PACKING TIPS

1. "Your best friend for chilly nights (or in air conditioning) are **Pashmina shawls!** I recommend you pack one or two matching with your evening clothing."—TripAdvisor Member, Santo Domingo
2. "After sun, sand, chlorine, salt water, a bit of wind and a few hangovers, **eye drops** helped a lot. Pack a few **band-aids** for blisters or small cuts and some **Polysporin cream**. It won't hurt and you don't want to buy it there. The same goes for anything else that's in the pharmacy that you might need."—TripAdvisor Member, Montreal, Quebec
3. "Please pack **at least one change, or more, of 'vacation wear'** in your carry-on bag. This will make you feel much more comfortable upon your arrival if your bags are a day or two behind."—TripAdvisor Member, Punta Cana

Inside

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Back—way back—when Columbus was on the move, he sailed past the island that is now the Dominican Republic and reportedly proclaimed, "There is no more beautiful island in the world." Some 500 years later, his sentiment still holds true.

The Dominican Republic lies in the same waters as Cuba and Puerto Rico, taking up the eastern two-thirds of the island it shares with Haiti. It has a lush interior with a mix of caves, Victorian gingerbread houses and the lore of pirates; it's also outlined by beaches along nearly 900 miles of coastline. The Dominican Republic's people are arguably the friendliest in the Caribbean, although poverty is common and crime is a concern (it's typically the pickpocket variety, though, so just pack common sense in your suitcase).

Oh, and did we mention the Dominican Republic is family friendly, has just-about perfect year-round weather and is very affordable?

Top VIEWS



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC'S BEST VIEWS

We thought the beaches in Punta Cana were nice, until we arrived at **Saona Island**. It was the most beautiful place I have ever been to and I would go back in a heartbeat."—TripAdvisor Member, Vancouver, British Columbia

For an elevated view of Puerto Plata, ride a cable car to the top of **Mount Isabel de Torres**. "The cable car ride was great. There was a beautiful view on the way up and down and we actually went into a cloud. All we could see around the cable car was pure white. At the top of the mountain was a beautiful garden, the statue of Jesus, and many different spots with great views."—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Where to PLAY

TOP 10 Attractions

1. Damajaqua Cascades (27 Waterfalls), Puerto Plata
2. Tabacalera de Garcia, Zona Franca I, Casa de Campo, La Romana, 809 556 2127
3. Punta Espada Golf Course, Cap Cana, 809 227 2262
4. Altos de Chavon and Catalina Island, Punta Cana, 809 200 1778
5. Bayahibe, La Romana
6. Teleferico, Mount Isabel de Torres, Puerto Plata
7. Macao Beach, Punta Cana
8. El Salto del Limon, Samana Peninsula
9. Juan Dolio Guayacanes, Santo Domingo
10. Isla Saona, Parque Nacional del Este



FAMILIES

"Our family day at the **Macao Surf Camp** was great. The kids enjoyed the surfing. It was good to see that, besides having fun, there was great attention to safety. Fun for everyone at a very reasonable price."—TripAdvisor Member

Macao Surf Camp, Macao Beach, Bavaro, Punta Cana, 809 430 9017

With **Caribbean Festival**, "the kids were treated to first class attention by the crew, who snorkeled with us. First, they take you to a reef and let you swim with tropical fish, then they take you to the pen with the sharks. Our kids got a kick out of the shark costumed character that chased them around the boat."—TripAdvisor Member, Dryden, Ontario

Caribbean Festival Snorkel Tour, Punta Cana, Arrange excursions from any large hotel

"I would recommend the **Jardin Botanico Nacional** to anyone. It is a national treasure. The gardens are immense and a beautiful getaway in the heart of Santo Domingo."—TripAdvisor Member, Dominican Republic

Jardin Botanico Nacional, Arroyo Hondo, Santo Domingo, 809 385 2611

"Tears sprang to my eyes"



ROMANCE

Sosua Beach: "The memory of watching the sunset...with my girlfriend, in utter relaxation, knowing we were completely out of reach of the world back home, is one that will continue to nourish me for a lifetime."—TripAdvisor Member, Belle River, Ontario

Sosua Beach

"Don't miss the perfect way to see the DR." Take a romantic horseback ride at **Rancho Lorilar** "through little villages, rivers, mountain forest and sugar cane fields. We stopped off for drinks and a merengue dance with the guides!"—TripAdvisor Member, England

Rancho Lorilar, Puerto Plata, 809 320 0498

In the cultural village of **Altos de Chavon**, "the amphitheater is breathtaking. Tears sprang to my eyes because I was so overwhelmed by the beauty and view... I can't recommend it enough."—TripAdvisor Member, Sandwich, Ill.

Altos de Chavon, La Romana, 809 523 8011

Where to **PLAY**



BUDGET

If you seek “crystal clear, blue water on a beach large enough to find a secluded spot,” **Playa Rincon** delivers “above all expectations.” Hop on a group boat from Las Galeras to Rincon—“the more people on the boat, the cheaper it is!”—TripAdvisor Member, New York

Playa Rincon

“**Polo Magnetico** is a road in the middle of nowhere, where things appear to roll uphill! When we arrived, the cabdriver turned off his engine on a seemingly uphill part of the road, he put the gearbox in neutral, let go of the brakes and we started rolling uphill! It was the weirdest experience...It’s just an optical illusion. If you’re ever in the south of the Dominican Republic, go visit this place.”—TripAdvisor Member, Antwerp, Belgium

Polo Magnetico, between Cabral & Polo, West of Barahona

The **Teleferico** is an “awesome experience! Really cheap, with spectacular views! You really get to see how green the island is and how beautiful the beach and waters are.”—TripAdvisor Member, San Francisco, Calif.

Teleferico, Mount Isabel de Torres, Puerto Plata

“...a road in the middle of nowhere, where things appear to roll uphill”

TripAdvisor members have posted more than 8,000,000 traveler photos on the site. The good, the bad and the very candid. It’s almost like being there!



ADVENTURE

“The windsurfing staff and facilities at **Vela Windsurf** were the best in the area. They speak several languages and welcome all types of people.”—TripAdvisor Member, Atlanta, Ga.

Vela Windsurf Resorts, Cabarete, 800 223 5443

Also in Cabarete, there’s horseback riding in **Parque Nacional**. “The ride is mostly uphill. Once you get to the top you enjoy a great view from the mountaintop.”—TripAdvisor Member

Parque Nacional, Cabarete, On the northern shore

Do some **big-game fishing** and “look forward to catching blue marlin, barracuda and dorado among others. Arrangements can be made at hotel front desks.”—TripAdvisor Member

First Class Fishing, El Cortecito, Punta Cana, 809 867 0381



EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL

Fort San Felipe “was beautiful to see. The view of the Atlantic Ocean is breathtaking. There are old canons, guns and so many other weapons the men used when at war. This is one stop you’ll have to make.”—TripAdvisor Member, Ottawa, Ontario

Fort San Felipe, Puerto Plata

Alcazar de Colon, one of the first structures built in the oldest remaining city in the Americas, is “an extremely fascinating place. On one side is the Ozama River; on the other is an expansive plaza, which becomes ‘the happening place’ in the evening.”—TripAdvisor Member, Reading, Penn.

Alcazar de Colon, Plaza de Espana, Puertas de les Artazanas y San Diego, Santo Domingo, 809 686 8657

“What an abundance of history” there is in the **Colonial Zone**. “I never realized that this small Caribbean island was the birth place of the New World.”—TripAdvisor Member, Knoxville, Tenn.

Zona Colonial (Colonial Zone), Santo Domingo

“A delight for an architecture buff.”



RELAXATION

“The **South Coast** of the island is the quietest. I don’t think it will be for long, as more people will be discovering the pristine beaches.”—TripAdvisor Member, Ontario

South Coast

The Teeth of the Dog is “one of the top golf courses in the world. The views from the ocean holes are stunning. The course is maintained by an army of greens keepers.”—TripAdvisor Member, Atlanta, Ga.

Teeth of the Dog Golf Course, Minitas Beach, La Romana, 809 523 3333

“**Parque Luperon** is Puerto Plata’s central park and an ideal spot for people watching. Puerto Plata’s historic past is also on display here; many of the town’s 19th-century Victorian mansions are gathered around this area. A delight for an architecture buff.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

Parque Luperon, Puerto Plata

What's the **TOUR**

How to Get Around



"The **Outback Safari** was very good. You go on a truck through the countryside and you get a reality check of what life is really like outside of that pretty resort! It's a cultural tour."—TripAdvisor Member, Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Outback Safari, Plaza Turisol, Local 7, Ave. Luperon Km 2.5, Puerto Plata, 809 244 4886

From "Extreme Adventures" to "By Air," **Isaira Tours** "have a great reputation with tourists and are fully insured. Wonderful friendly people and great prices."—TripAdvisor Member, Newfoundland

Isaira Tours, Plaza El Doral, Puerto Plata, 809 320 1433

Mel Tours is "very accommodating and friendly and ready to customize a tour for you. Mel told us that we could pay him on the way home from the tour: 'If you are not happy, I don't want your money!'"—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Mel Tours, Beach Way Plaza, Sosua, 809 571 2057

"I would not recommend renting a car."—TripAdvisor Member

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WHERE to eat

FAMILIES

"**Cafe Claro** is my favorite restaurant in all of Cabarete! The menu offers a variety of healthy food and even a kid's menu. This restaurant is so relaxing for our family because the kids can play with the Claro toys while we sip our coffee."—TripAdvisor Member, Cabarete

Cafe Claro, Calle Principal, Hotel Casa Blanca, 809 889 1406

"Okay, the best pizza in the world does live in New York. But **Pizzarelli** beats other contenders in the D.R., thanks to a focaccia-like crust that is neither too thin nor thick. It's never greasy and has a slightly sweet, lightly spicy tomato sauce. Decent pasta and mozzarella sticks, too."—TripAdvisor Member

Pizzarelli, Locations throughout the Dominican Republic

"The family-run atmosphere at **Los Charros & Los Pinches Chaparros** is so welcoming, and the owners are some of the nicest people I've ever met. Make a point to be there on Sunday evening for the traditional Mexican show!"—TripAdvisor Member, Manchester, U.K.

Los Charros & Los Pinches Chaparros, #5 Playa, Cofresi, 809 970 3332

ROMANCE

"If you're looking for that very special restaurant for that very special relationship, **Beach Restaurant** is a must! The best restaurant on the North Coast. Period."—TripAdvisor Member, Washington, D.C.

The Beach Restaurant, Calle Coson, Las Terrenas, 809 962 7447

Enjoy a charming atmosphere and unique Caribbean Continental cuisine at **Le Papillon**. "The lobster at Le Papillon was huge and delicious."—TripAdvisor Member, Cincinnati, Ohio

Le Papillon, Cofresi, Puerto Plata, 809 970 7640

The **Jellyfish Restaurant** has "the most romantic setting around. I tell everyone I know to visit here. It's always a grand experience!"—TripAdvisor Member, Cleveland, Ohio

The Jellyfish Restaurant, Bavaro, Punta Cava, 809 840 7684

BUDGET

"Whether it's for a delicious sandwich, fresh cup of coffee or one of their home-baked pies or cakes, **Cafe Cubano** is simply fantastic. You just have to stop and experience it for yourself."—TripAdvisor Member

Cafe Cubano, Calle Pedro Clisante #17, Sosua, 809 571 3493

For "great meals and good prices," try the **Red Grill**. "It's a great choice to start the night or have lunch with friends."—TripAdvisor Member, Santo Domingo

Red Grill, Santo Domingo, 809 732 9502

"Try **Restaurant Orchidee**—you'll love it. Excellent food and prices. The chef is a very personable man who welcomes diners nightly and makes you feel like family."—TripAdvisor Member, Ottawa, Ontario

Restaurant Orchidee, Calle Dr. Rosen 24, Sosua, 809 779 9929

WHERE to eat



HEALTH-CONSCIOUS

“Fresh is what’s on the menu” at **Resto Veintiuno**. “The breakfast was superior, with lots of fresh fruits and different rolls, breads, etc. The salads were fresh and nicely arranged.”—TripAdvisor Member

Resto Veintiuno, Calle Piano 1, Casa Veintiuno, Sosua, 809 571 4174

What could be better than the freshest seafood? **El Pescador** “was our favorite. We ate so much. Lots of food and the plates are very big. Lobster (tail), fish, jumbo shrimps, squid, name it they have it!” —TripAdvisor Member, Miami, Fla.

El Pescador, Bavaro Princess All Suites Resort, Playa Bávaro, Higüey, 809 221 2311

“**Kite Club Cafe** rocks! They have the most laid-back atmosphere, and the food is always fresh and delicious. Don’t forget to try their homemade baked treats.”—TripAdvisor Member

Kite Club Cafe, Kite Club Cabarete, Cabarete

Have questions about Dominican Republic? Get insider advice from local experts in our forums. The majority of questions are answered within 24 hours.



HIDDEN GEMS

“Papi’s is delicious! It’s a quaint little spot on the beach, out of the sun. The service was prompt and friendly. The shrimp a la **Papi** was fantastic – if you like shrimp, it is a must have!”—TripAdvisor Member, Omaha, Neb.

La Casita De Dom Alfredo Papi, Carretera Principal, Cabarete

“**Embocca** is beautiful. It’s directly on the beach, but still a little off the beaten path. The tapas were outstanding—Spanish specialties with French touches. The salsa dancing was cool, too.”—TripAdvisor Member

Embocca, Carretera de Cabarete a Sabaneta de Yasica, Km. 3, Cabarete, 809 571 0173

You’ll literally enter a cave at **El Mesón de la Cava**. Dive into its tasty Dominican fare. Reservations required. “Spectacular.”—TripAdvisor Member, Santo Domingo

El Mesón de la Cava, Av. Mirador del Sur 1, Bella Vista, Santo Domingo, 809 533 2818

SPECIAL EVENTS



Educate yourself on some of the world’s pressing social issues during the **Global Dominican Film Festival**. For the first time in its history, the festival will feature thematic panels discussing the historical and social contexts of the entries. (November 16 – 22)

Global Dominican Film Festival, Various venues, 809 685 9966, <http://www.drglobalfilmfestival.org>

Kick up your heels to the beats of Latin jazz and merengue at the **Dominican Republic Jazz Festival**, featuring a saucy menu of hot music to enjoy. (November 26 – 27)

Dominican Republic Jazz Festival, Playa Cabarete, Cabarete, 809 571 0882, <http://www.drjazzfestival.com>

Could you be the **Master of the Ocean**? Prepare to get drenched as kiteboarders, surfers and windsurfers compete to become the best overall water sport athlete. (February 23 – 28)

Master of the Ocean, Cabarete Beach and Playa Encuentro, North Shore, 809 963 7873, <http://www.masteroftheocean.com>

The Malecon comes to life with costumed performers, professional dance groups and musicians, all led by the Carnival King at the **Santo Domingo Carnival Parade**. Street parties and festivities continue after the parade into the night. (March)

Santo Domingo Carnival Parade, El Malecón, Santo Domingo

Where to STAY



FAMILIES

At **Casa de Campo** “you’ll have the vacation of a lifetime, especially if you are an avid golf player.”—TripAdvisor Member, Dominican Republic

Casa de Campo, Bayahibe Beach, La Romana, 809 523 3333

Club Med Punta Cana is “great for families. There are great beaches, beautiful palm trees around the pool and lots of variety in food and beverage. Snorkeling was fun for small kids, too. You don’t need to get a trip far away: Fish are all around the beach close to kids.”—TripAdvisor Member, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Club Med Punta Cana, Provincia La Altagracia, Apartado Postal 106, Higüey, 809 686 5500

“**Hotel Alisei** is a great place to stay in Las Terranas. It’s a kid-friendly hotel with plenty to keep them entertained: such as the swimming areas around the beach, the pool, a tree swing and a trampoline.”—TripAdvisor Member, Winter Park, Fla.

Hotel Alisei, Calle Francisco Camaño Deno, Las Terranas, 809 240 5555

“...by far the best hotel in Santo Domingo!”

ROMANCE

“Staying at the **Victoria Resort Golf & Beach** has been the best holiday ever. First-class, fab, fab, fab!”—TripAdvisor Member, Dominican Republic

Victoria Resort Golf & Beach, Playa Dorada, Puerto Plata, 809 320 1200

“**Zoetry Agua** is simply mind-blowing! It is more beautiful than you could imagine. The breeze that came in off the ocean was fantastic.”—TripAdvisor Member, Sarasota, Fla.

Zoetry Agua Punta Cana, Playas de Uvero Alto, Punta Cana, 809 468 0000

“**Hotel Atarazana** is by far the best hotel in Santo Domingo. The hotel is beautiful, the courtyard is stunning, the innkeepers are first-class and very personable. End the day with a drink on the roof deck for a great view of the city.”—TripAdvisor Member

Hotel Atarazana, Vicente Celestino Duarte #19, Zona Colonial, Santo Domingo, 809 688 3693

“First-class, fab, fab, fab!”

BUDGET

Tropix Hotel “is a secret hidden place in the city. You’ll be very well welcomed in a place completely different from big resorts.”—TripAdvisor Member, Paris, France

Tropix Hotel, 7 Calle Libre, Sosua, 809 571 2291

Camp David Ranch Hotel is an “unexpected treat. I live in the DR and I have yet to find a better city view. Our room was huge and worth every penny. If seclusion and relaxation are what you’re looking for, then this is the place for you.”—TripAdvisor Member, Baharaona

Camp David Ranch Hotel, Carretera Luperón, Km. 7 1/2, Santiago, 809 276 6400

“A relaxing, comfortable stay: That is exactly what I got when I stayed at **Hotel Alegria!** The hotel was quiet and warm and located right off the beach. The rooftop jacuzzi and gym were inviting. The entire experience was wonderful.”—TripAdvisor Member, Dominican Republic

Hotel Alegria, Callejon de los Perez, Cabarete, 809 571 0455

LUXURY

“**Iberostar Bavaro** rocks! Whether it was the cleaning service, gardening, bar or table service, it was always friendly and fast. The beach is truly beautiful and is extremely long. You could walk for hours to go from one end to the other. The sand is soft as flour.”—TripAdvisor Member, Paris, France

Iberostar Bavaro, Playa Bavaro, Higüey, 888 923 2722 or 809 221 6500

“**Tortuga Bay** is a little bit of Heaven on Earth. From the minute you get off the plane to the minute you step back on your plane, they treat you like royalty. You have to experience their VIP Airport Service to believe it, and it only gets better with the care and attention you receive from everyone at the resort.”—TripAdvisor Member, Long Island, N.Y.

Tortuga Bay, Punta Cana, Higüey, 809 959 2262

“We know one thing for sure: **Casa Colonial Beach & Spa** is a hidden diamond at Puerto Plata. The rooms were very spacious; staff was friendly. Pool and pool service, spa, fitness—all were above what you may expect of a 5-star hotel.”—TripAdvisor Member, Antwerp, Belgium

Casa Colonial Beach & Spa, Playa Dorada, Puerto Plata, 809 320 3232

Where to **STAY**



HIDDEN GEMS

“The owner of **Caribbean Crib Guest House** loves what she’s doing—throwing a nice cozy party each day for the guests who arrive.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

Caribbean Crib Guest House, Playa La Rinconada 4, Cabarete, 809 571 0335

Hotel Palacio is “a classic gem in the heart of Santo Domingo. The hotel is very quiet and peaceful, which is refreshing after coming in off the Conde Street with the many vendors and pedestrians.”—TripAdvisor Member, Washington D.C.

Hotel Palacio, Calle Duarte 106, Esq. Salome Ureña, Zona Colonia, Santo Domingo, 809 682 4730

“**Casa Serena** is a haven of tranquility just outside Sosua. Situated on a hill, it benefits from a gentle breeze, taking the edge off the baking sun. The rest of the world seemed a million miles away.”—TripAdvisor Member, Leeds, U.K.

Casa Serena Guesthouse, La Mulata Uno, Sosua, 809 571 3885

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