



# Punta Cana & the Southeast

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## Why Go?

A Caribbean workhorse of sun and sand, the southeast is synonymous with go-big-or-go-home tourism and carries the weight of the Dominican Republic's most dramatic beaches and turquoise seas on its deeply tanned shoulders. Sprawling resort developments, some like city-states unto themselves, line much of the beachfront from Punta Cana to Bávaro, offering families, couples and the young and restless alike a hassle-free Caribbean holiday in some of the most idyllic environs in the region. But there is life beyond Punta Cana. Less-crowded beach towns like Bayahibe and Juan Dolio offer only slightly less dramatic seascapes but sands that go unshared with the masses. Isolated get-aways like Playa Limón, beyond the sugar plantations and inland mountains to the north, showcase a different and worthwhile side of the southeast if you can tear yourself away from the buffets long enough to take the rewarding journeys required to make their acquaintance.

## When to Go

- ➔ If you can hold off just past the winter holidays, January and February offer the same sun and sand as Christmas and New Year's Eve – but a whole lot less people.
- ➔ If you're looking for a fiesta, join North American spring breakers descending upon Punta Cana in March. If you're not on spring break, this is probably a bad time for that leisurely family vacation.
- ➔ For those pinching pesos, October bridges the gap between hurricane season and the preholiday onslaught. ¡Salud!



## Punta Cana & the Southeast Highlights

### 1 Punta Cana (p110)

Throwing caution to the wind on an all-inclusive binge of pristine beaches and bountiful buffets.

### 2 Parque Nacional Los Haitises (p121)

Ogling

mangrove-infested forests on a tranquil kayak excursion.

### 3 Parque Nacional Cotubanamá (p102)

Dunking into crystal-clear waters on a snorkeling or diving trip.

### 4 Montaña Redonda (p120)

Gawking at the cinematic 360-degree views on this jaw-dropping hilltop.

### 5 Cueva de las Maravillas (p99)

Plunging into a fascinating illuminated