



The Southwest & Península de Pedernales

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Why Go?

Talk about criminally undervisited. Few travelers make it to the southwest of the Dominican Republic: it's remote, and its little-known highlights take some effort to uncover – but that's exactly the reason to visit. Heading west from Santo Domingo takes you not only in the opposite direction to the eastern beach resorts but also to a different DR – one whose landscape isn't defined by tourism but by scenes of everyday life. You can explore the cloud forests of the mountains with their soundtrack of birdsong, or the cactus-studded desert that stretches all the way to the Haitian border. Then there's the stunning coastline of the Península de Pedernales, which offers miles of pristine, empty sands and clear turquoise sea. When you reach the Bahía de Las Águilas, a deserted 10km stretch of postcard-perfect beach, you'll feel as though you've hit the traveler's jackpot.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Rancho Tipico (p221)
- ➔ Casa Bonita (p215)
- ➔ Rincón Mexicano (p207)
- ➔ El Meson Suizo (p206)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Casa Bonita (p215)
- ➔ Eco del Mar (p221)
- ➔ Hotel Casablanca (p214)
- ➔ Salinas Hotel (p205)
- ➔ Ecoturismo Comunitario Cachóte (p212)

When to Go

- ➔ The best time to see the birds and wildlife of the biodiverse Laguna Oviedo is in March and April.
- ➔ With sunny skies and endless fiestas, December to February is the DR's busiest time.
- ➔ Caffeine fiends should make a beeline for Polo's organic-coffee festival (p219) in October.



Isla Alto Velo

The Southwest & Península de Pedernales Highlights

- 1 Bahía de Las Águilas** (p221) Taking a spectacular boat ride to the most remote and beautiful beach in the DR.
- 2 Eco del Mar** (p221) Drinking in paradise at the DR's most blissful beach bar.
- 3 Laguna Oviedo** (p216) Spotting flamingos and turtles on a boat tour to a salty lagoon.
- 4 Ecoturismo Comunitario Cachóte** (p212) Staying in a remote cabin in a tranquil cloud forest.
- 5 Lago Enriquillo** (p219) Spotting beefy iguanas at an inland saltwater lake.
- 6 Los Patos** (p214) Cooling off in an idyllic freshwater pool near Paraiso.
- 7 Península de Pedernales** (p210) Driving along one of the most beautiful and little-known coastal routes in the DR.
- 8 Larimar Mine** (p216) Sourcing semiprecious stone at a one-of-a-kind mine.
- 9 Haitian Market** (p210) Exploring the commercial spectacle at the border.