

welcome to the Dominican Republic



Coastal Culture

The DR's hundreds of miles of coastline – some of it picturesque white-sand beaches shaded by rows of palm trees, other parts lined dramatically with rocky cliffs or backed by wind-swept dunes or serene mangrove lagoons – define the country. Whether it's fishing villages where the shoreline is used for mooring boats, indulgent tourist playgrounds with aquamarine waters, small towns where the social glue is all-night merengue blasting from modest corner stores, or cities like Santo Domingo, the Caribbean's largest, the sea is the common denominator, symbolizing both limits and escapes. Even with their glory days behind them, former engines of

industry like crumbling San Pedro de Macoris or Puerto Plata still see waves crash over their Malecóns. Some of the bays and coves where pirates once roamed are the temporary home of thousands of migrating humpback whales, and part of an extensive network of parks and preserves safeguarding the country's natural patrimony.

Peaks & Valleys

Beyond the capital, much of the DR is distinctly rural: driving in the vast fertile interior, you'll see cows and horses grazing alongside the roads, tractors ploughing large fields, and trucks and burros loaded down with produce. Further inland you'll encounter vistas reminiscent of the

Much more than beach resorts, this is one of the Caribbean's most geographically diverse countries, from stunning mountain scenery to desert scrublands, not to mention an evocative colonial architecture and warm welcoming people

(below) The old town hall and clock tower, Santo Domingo
(left) Tropical beaches and aquamarine seas, Isla Saona



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European Alps, rivers carving their way through lush jungle and stunning waterfalls, small towns where life revolves around the Parque Central, and villages ruled by the sun's rhythms. Four of the five highest peaks in the Caribbean rise above the fertile lowlands surrounding Santiago and remote deserts extend through the southwest, giving the DR a physical and cultural complexity not found on other islands.

Past Present

The country's roller-coaster past, a history of migrations of various peoples, is writ large in the diversity of ethnicities, not to mention the physical design of its towns and cities. Santo Domingo's Zona Colonial

exudes romance with white-washed and pastel-colored buildings, flowers blooming through wrought-iron filigree, beautifully restored monasteries and cobblestone streets where conquistadors once roamed. The crumbling gingerbread homes of Puerto Plata and Santiago remain from more prosperous eras, and scars from decades of misrule are marked by monuments where today people gather to celebrate. New communities have arisen only a few kilometers from the ruins where Christopher Columbus strode and where the indigenous Taíno people left physical traces of their presence carved onto rock walls.