



San Juan

POP 368,000

Includes ➔

Sights	54
Beaches	69
Activities	70
Courses	72
Tours	73
Festivals & Events	74
Sleeping	74
Eating	78
Drinking & Nightlife	83
Entertainment	85
Shopping	88
Around San Juan	92

Best Places to Eat

- José Enrique (p82)
- Cocobana (p81)
- Acapulco Taqueria Mexicana (p81)
- Kasalta (p81)
- Marmalade (p80)

Best Places to Sleep

- Casa Sol (p75)
- Condado Vanderbilt Hotel (p76)
- Olive (p76)
- Dream Inn (p76)

Why Go?

Established in 1521, San Juan is the second-oldest European-founded settlement in the Americas and the oldest under US jurisdiction. Shoehorned onto a tiny islet that guards the entrance to San Juan harbor, the old town was inaugurated almost a century before the *Mayflower* laid anchor in what is now Massachusetts, and it is now a historic wonderland that juxtaposes historical authenticity with pulsating modern energy.

Beyond its timeworn 15ft-thick walls, San Juan is far more than a collection of well-polished colonial-era artifacts – it's also a mosaic of ever-evolving neighborhoods such as Santurce, which has a raw vitality fueled by street art, superb restaurants and a bar scene that takes over the streets at night.

And then there's the beaches. Silky ribbons of sand line San Juan's northern edge from swanky Condado to resort-filled Isla Verde. You can land at the airport and be splashing in the azure waters an hour later.

When to Go

Winter is the most popular time to visit San Juan as the frozen masses from colder climes come to thaw out. The weather also happens to be at its best – highs in the mid-80s, lows in the high 70s and little humidity.

During the high season (December to February), Old San Juan's streets fill with cruise-ship passengers and bookings are essential at the hottest hotels and restaurants. The boisterous street party of Festival de San Sebastián in mid-January is a high point, especially for locals.

At other times of the year, San Juan is much quieter, even though the beaches remain alluring year-round. From April to October you'll find fewer crowds and plenty of deals, especially in the bigger hotels.



San Juan Highlights

- 1 El Morro** (p54) Exploring 16th-century forts transports you back in time.
- 2 Nuyorican Café** (p85) Feeling the rhythm during a late-night salsa session.
- 3 Balneario Escambrón** (p69) Hitting some of the best urban beaches you'll find anywhere.
- 4 Old San Juan** (p54) Being seduced by the charm of the old town while wandering the blue cobblestone streets.
- 5 La Placita de Santurce** (p84) Losing yourself in the narrow streets around Santurce's market street party.
- 6 Pifiones** (p93) Exploring bike paths and beaches amid the wild beauty.
- 7 Café Cola'o** (p83) Savoring locally grown coffee at an exquisite cafe.
- 8 Hiram Bithorn Stadium** (p88) Cheering on the home baseball team as the Cangrejeros de Santurce knock it out of the park.