



Rincón & West Coast

POP 260,000

Includes ➔

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Boquerón	188
El Combate	190
Refugio Nacional Cabo Rojo	191
San Germán	192
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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Chateau Rose at the Horned Dorset Primavera (p180)
- ➔ La Copa Llena (p180)
- ➔ La Rosa Inglesa/English Rose Inn Restaurant (p180)
- ➔ Mangia Mi (p180)
- ➔ Annie's Place (p190)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Tres Sirenas (p178)
- ➔ Blue Boy Inn (p179)
- ➔ Dos Angeles del Mar Guesthouse (p179)
- ➔ Surf 787 Guest Villa/B&B (p178)
- ➔ Horned Dorset Primavera (p178)

Why Go?

West is best – at least as far as those quintessential snapshots of Puerto Rico go. Here the azure ocean assumes a visceral palpability because this is the place to get in it: paddling to catch a ride on one perfect wave after another, or swimming off sandy strands that regularly grace ‘world’s best beach’ lists.

The region’s pièce de résistance is Rincón, a surfin’ safari outpost (named in a Beach Boys song, for goodness’ sake!) where beach bums catch waves in the salty dawn, then fuel up in the area’s eclectic eateries or mingle around beach bonfires. Meanwhile in its set-piece wilderness, Refugio Nacional Cabo Rojo, every ounce of this land’s seaside seductiveness – its stormy shorelines, beguiling beaches and down-to-earth coastal villages – gets showcased.

Bite down on a conch fritter and prepare to brave the waves, bask in the sunsets and absorb the mellow spirit of slacker independence.

When to Go

Welcome to the endless summer: the west coast is pleasantly hot all year round. It gets heavy rain in late summer and early fall, but otherwise, expect it to be sunny, breezy and around 80°F nearly every day.

If you’re here to surf, winter is an ideal time to visit, although surfing competitions kick off from mid-October. Around this time cold fronts bring big waves to the western beaches, when average crests of 5ft or 6ft can grow as large as 25ft. In December and February, you may also spot migrating whales offshore.

Those who aren’t here to ride the waves will find the calmer waters more inviting for swimming and deep-sea fishing in summer.



Rincón & West Coast Highlights

- 1 Rincón** (p173) Surf beside beach bums and vacationing businessmen on the legendary breaks here.
- 2 Fido's Sangria Garden** (p185) Get giddy on Sangria de Fido, the local punch of Mayagüez.
- 3 Cycling Cabo Rojo** (p189) Hire a bike at the west's best bike shop in Boquerón, then pedal the

beach-hugging byways of the Cabo Rojo area.

- 4 Refugio de Vida Silvestre Iris L. Alameda Martínez de Boquerón** (p188) Meander mazes of mangroves in this mysterious forest.

- 5 Annie's Place** (p190) Chow down on conch fritters at one of Puerto Rico's most idyllic beach bars in hidden-away El Combate.

- 6 Los Morrillos Lighthouse** (p192) Peer at the endless sea from the top of the lighthouse overlooking idyllic Playa Santa, then cool off with a swim.

- 7 San Germán** (p192) Play colonial adventurer on the labyrinthine historic streets and enjoy some of the west's best food.

History

The consensus is that Columbus first arrived in Puerto Rico in November 1493 and docked somewhere off the west coast (though there is some dispute as to actually *where*). Fifteen years later he was followed by Juan Ponce

de León, who landed near Cabo Rojo before heading off east to found the settlement of Caparra close to San Juan. San Germán, the island's second-oldest city, was founded near Mayagüez in 1511, and moved to its present site in 1573.