



PUERTO RICO: VISITOR'S FACT SHEET

- General Facts:** Located at the gateway to the Caribbean, the island of Puerto Rico is 110 miles long and 35 miles wide. San Juan, the capital city is a unique juxtaposition of old and new -- with modern business structures and services as well as traditional Puerto Rican and colonial Spanish flavors in Old San Juan. Puerto Rico's second largest city, Ponce is just 90 minutes from San Juan by car. In 1493 Columbus claimed Puerto Rico for Spain, and the island remained under Spanish rule until 1898 when Spain ceded the island to the U.S. in the Spanish-American War. In 1917, under the Jones Act, Puerto Rico's residents became U.S. citizens and the island became a commonwealth of the U.S. in 1952.
- Getting There:** Puerto Rico is easily accessible to visitors with its three major airports. The island's largest airport, the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport, is located in the Isla Verde section of San Juan, minutes from the Condado area.
- Airlines:** Most major hubs including Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. offer daily non-stop service to San Juan. Airlines serving Puerto Rico include American, Continental, Delta, JetBlue, Spirit, USAir, United, Pan Am, Northwest, Iberia, Dominicana de Aviación, Carnival, Aerolíneas Copa, Aces, TMA, Caribbean Star, Song, and ATA, among others. American Airlines has made San Juan its hub for all flights to other Caribbean destinations.
- Customs/Passport Requirements:** Puerto Rico is a commonwealth of the United States, and U.S. citizens do not need passports to visit the Island. Visitors of other nationalities must have passports. When leaving Puerto Rico to return to the U.S. mainland, checked luggage will be examined for agricultural purposes.
- Language:** Both Spanish and English are the island's official languages. English is widely spoken, especially in San Juan.
- Climate:** Year-round tropical climate with average temperatures between 70°F-86°F.
- Currency:** U.S. dollar

Ground

Transportation: Taxis, buses and rental cars offer visitors convenient ground transportation. Tour operators also service the area. Easily identifiable "Taxi Turistico" or tourist taxis operate on a fare-zone basis among the airport or cruise ship pier and designated tourist zones including Old San Juan and the San Juan resorts. All other times they are hired on a metered basis or rented on an hourly rate.

Accommodations: Over 12,000 guest rooms ensure that Island guests will be easily accommodated in Puerto Rico's world-class hotels and resorts. Puerto Rico's quarter million square feet of meeting space also makes the island ideal for meetings and incentive programs. Luxurious hotels and resorts, located conveniently throughout the island, reflect Puerto Rico's lush beauty and can accommodate groups of all sizes.

Tipping

Guidelines: At restaurants, nightclubs and hotel dining rooms, 15% of the bill is considered an appropriate tip. Fixed service charges are not usually included in the bill, except for special functions or banquets.

Clothing: Lightweight summer clothes are appropriate. At certain establishments informal evening wear is required -- jackets for men and dresses or dressy pants for women. Short pants are worn only for sporty occasions.

Recreation/ Entertainment:

Puerto Rico offers 272 miles of coastline and hundreds of beaches. Water sport lovers will enjoy activities such as snorkeling; scuba diving; sailing; deep-sea fishing and windsurfing. Sports enthusiasts also appreciate the more than 100 tennis courts and nine championship golf courses located throughout the Island. The island offers some of the finest dining in the Caribbean -- visitors can feast on Puerto Rican specialties -- a mix of Spanish, Creole and Indian flavors -- or choose to sample cuisines from around the world. Puerto Rico offers visitors a wide variety of nighttime and cultural activities including international casinos and nightclubs typically located in major hotels, and theater, dance, opera and outdoor concerts.

Shopping: From local crafts to international designer luggage, Puerto Rico offers shoppers a multitude of shops and factory outlets. Calle del Cristo is the main shopping area in Old San Juan where visitors will find discounted high quality gold and jewelry, as well as major outlets such as Ralph Lauren, Dooney & Bourke, and Coach.

Crafts:

Traditional & popular crafts steeped in Puerto Rican history include *santos* -- small, wooden figures of saints and religious scenes; *mundillo* -- intricate, handmade bobbin lace; and *vejigantes* -- Island masks made of papier mache or coconut.

Sightseeing:

Historical **Old San Juan** -- the only walled city in the Caribbean -- is a haven for history buffs. The city boasts four fortresses from the Spanish colonial empire. Visitors can walk the cobblestone streets of the old city or visit the myriad historic sites and buildings dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. Outside San Juan, visitors can explore the unique **El Yunque Rainforest**, the only tropical rainforest in the U.S. National Forest system. The island's oldest natural wonder, the **Camuy Caves** is the site of one of the longest underground river systems in the world. Certain to amaze visitors is **Caguana Indian Ceremonial Park**, a treasured preservation of stone monoliths and petroglyphs dating from 800 A.D. Man-made attractions include the **Arecibo Observatory**, the site of the largest radio/radar telescope in the world.