The best places to eat, sleep and play in Puerto Rico this spring and summer

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INTRODUCTION

TripAdvisor, the most trusted source for where to eat, sleep and play in thousands of destinations around the world, has collected the best insider tips from its 50 million monthly visitors to produce a unique series of travel guides. In addition to the best hotels, restaurants and attractions for every type of traveler, you'll get great advice about what to pack, how to get around and where to find the best views. Be sure to check out the guides at www.tripadvisor.com.

PACKING TIPS

1. Bring at least one sweater to combat night chills and air conditioning.
2. Don’t forget sneakers if you want to visit the rainforest or take long walks on Old San Juan’s cobblestone streets.
3. Make sure to pack swimwear to splash in La Mina waterfall or swim in the stunning bioluminescent bays.
4. If hiking El Yunque rainforest, bring a disposable raincoat; it probably will pour for a few moments at some point.

Inside PUERTO RICO

Whether your ideal vacation features vibrant nightlife, world-class hotels, fine dining and white sand beaches, or rainforest hiking, moonlight kayaking and discovering secluded islets, Puerto Rico fits the bill. Culture-seekers will be astounded at the 110-by-35-mile island’s rich heritage and history, from Old San Juan’s charms to folk art and festivals in the outlying towns. Although in theory you can drive round Puerto Rico in a day, with so many fabulous distractions, why would you want to? Salsa and reggaeton pulse out of cars, clubs, bars and restaurants. Coffee plantations and colonial towns wait to be explored. An underwater world beckons scuba divers and snorkelers. Bioluminescent lagoons glow at night. Thrilling Spanish, African and Taino Indian-influenced dishes are concocted at restaurants specializing in “cucina criolla” and other Caribbean delights.

Rapid urbanization and increased population have affected “La Isla” since it became a semiautonomous commonwealth in 1952, but somehow Puerto Rico manages to maintain its singular identity, culture and joie de vivre.
PUERTO RICO'S BEST VIEWS

**Laguna Grande** "was indescribably wonderful, with the stars above and the water glowing below. I am a keen nature lover and have seen many wonderful wildlife spectacles, but this tops them all.”—TripAdvisor Member, Bala Cynwyd, Pa.

Laguna Grande, Cabezas Nature Reserve, Northeastern Coast

“Generally deserted and big enough to find your own little private spot,” **Zoni Beach** has spectacular views of Culebra’s smaller cays.—TripAdvisor Member, Bear, Del.

Zoni Beach, Isla Culebra

“The **Wet Bar**, on the rooftop of The San Juan Beach Club Hotel, provides marvelous open-air views of Isle Verde Beach to the east and west, the sea to the north and San Juan and mountains to the south.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

Wet, San Juan Water & Beach Club, 2 Tartak St., Isla Verde, 787 728 3666

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**Where to PLAY**

**TOP 10 Attractions**

1. Rincon Pottery, Carr. 4412, Rincon, 787 546 8435
2. El Morro (Castillo de San Felipe del Morro), Norzagaray St., San Juan, 787 729 6777
3. Museo de Arte de Ponce, Av. de Las Americas, 25, 787 848 0505
4. Flamenco Beach (Playa Flamenco), Culebra, 787 742 3880
5. Paseo de la Princesa, San Juan
6. Bioluminescent (Mosquito) Bay, Isla de Vieques
7. El Viejo San Juan (Old San Juan), San Juan
8. Castillo de San Cristobal, Norzagaray St., San Juan, 787 729 6777
9. El Yunque Rain Forest, El Yunque National Forest, 787 888 1880
10. Caribbean National Forest, Rio Grande

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**FAMILIES**

“Wow!” Dramatic fortress **El Morro** was “even better than the pictures. My kids ran wild through the rooms and stairs in imaginary battles.”—TripAdvisor Member, Texas

Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, Calle Norzagaray, Old San Juan, 787 729 6777

**Erin Go Bragh Charters** provides “a lovely change of pace” and “delicious barbequed lunch” on their sailing and snorkeling adventures.—TripAdvisor Member, San Diego, Calif.

Erin Go Bragh Charters, Puerto Del Rey Marina, Fajardo, 787 860 4401

**La Mina Falls** is perfect for swimming. “Ponce de Leon searched for the fountain of youth, but it was right here all along!”—TripAdvisor Member, Florida

La Mina Falls, Rio Grande, El Yunque, 787 888 1880

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**ROMANCE**

Take a romantic stroll through the University of Puerto Rico’s **Jardin Botanico**, which features “some very interesting large scale sculptures and lagoon areas that are nicely landscaped with palms and other local plants.”—TripAdvisor Member, New Jersey

Jardin Botanico, Highway 1 and Route 847, 787 763 4408

“...even better than the pictures”

**“To get away from the crowds,” head for pretty, isolated **Garcia Beach**.—TripAdvisor Member

Garcia Beach, Vieques, Puerto Rico

“...nothing short of magical”

**“When the moon is new, the sight is nothing short of magical. The bioluminescence sparkles on your skin when you emerge from the water” of the **Bioluminescent Bay**.—TripAdvisor Member, Buffalo, N.Y.

Bioluminescent Bay, Vieques

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ADVENTURE

Camuy Caverns, the world's third-largest cave system, is “worth the cost of the flight to Puerto Rico. Nature at its best!”—TripAdvisor Member
Camuy Caverns, Route 129, Arecibo, 787 898 3100

At Gilligan's Island's lazy river, “you swim all the way to the end, which can take 25 minutes, and then the current carries you back in about two minutes. This is the best lazy river you can find.”—TripAdvisor Member, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Gilligan's Island, off the southern coast of Guánica

Gilligan’s Island

“Nothing could be more spectacular than eating a picnic lunch at the top of eastern Puerto Rico” after hiking through the El Yunque Rainforest.—TripAdvisor Member
El Yunque Rainforest, Rio Grande, 787 888 1880

“Flamenco Beach was the best beach that I have ever seen! The sand is soft, and the waves were just perfect.”—TripAdvisor Member, Owensboro, Ky.
Flamenco Beach, Isla Culebra

BUDGET

“We paid fifty cents for a bag of corn and were immediately swarmed by pigeons at Parque de las Palomas. Tons of fun!”—TripAdvisor Member, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario
Parque de las Palomas, San Juan

“Flamenco Beach was the best beach that I have ever seen! The sand is soft, and the waves were just perfect.”—TripAdvisor Member, Owensboro, Ky.
Flamenco Beach, Isla Culebra

Coffee plantation Hacienda Buena Vista is “well kept and the guides are great in explaining every detail.” Admission is by donation.—TripAdvisor Member, Northfield, Minn.
Hacienda Buena Vista, Route 10, Ponce, 787 722 5834

EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL

El Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico is a “wonderful little museum,” with paintings, installations and local art. “It’s a fun place to spend a few hours, especially if you have time to kill in San Juan before an evening flight home.”—TripAdvisor Member, Raleigh, N.C.
El Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, 299 De Diego Ave., Santurce, 787 977 6277

“Flamenco Beach was the best beach that I have ever seen! The sand is soft, and the waves were just perfect.”—TripAdvisor Member, Owensboro, Ky.
Flamenco Beach, Isla Culebra

RELAXATION

“I went with my fiance to the Observatory of Arecibo, and we loved it. There’s a museum about the observatory, and you learn so much. The view is also awesome and tranquil!”—TripAdvisor Member, Florida
Observatorio de Arecibo, Rt. 625, Km. 3.0, Arecibo, 787 878 2612

Pick up a souvenir at Puerto Rican Art and Crafts, with “two floors of local art work and crafts to chose from.”—TripAdvisor Member, Wisconsin
Puerto Rican Art and Crafts, 204 Fortaleza St., Old San Juan, 787 725 5596

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Flamenco Beach, Isla Culebra

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What's the TOUR
How to Get Around

“Keep in mind that speed limit signs are in miles but distances are in kilometers, which can be tricky.”—TripAdvisor Member

City buses take only exact change.

Old San Juan is just a few miles across and has minimal public parking, so walking is a sensible idea in this area.”—TripAdvisor Member

WHERE to eat

Puerto Ricans cook the best pork in the world! An island favorite is roast suckling pig (lechon asado). Everyone roasts pork at Christmas, but you can find wonderful pork all year long in every town and city.”—TripAdvisor Member

FAMILIES

“My three boys review The Sandbox with one word: awesome! The burgers are so good and the service was excellent. We can’t wait to go back to try a different burger!”—TripAdvisor Member, Puerto Rico

The Sandbox Bar & Grill, Carr. 307, Ferrocarril 172, Boqueron, 860 416 9474

“Al Dente has “terrific service. Terrific atmosphere. Terrific presentation. Terrific accommodations for kids. They have small portions of spaghetti with meat sauce for finicky little people.”—TripAdvisor Member, Memphis, Tenn.

Al Dente, 309 Calle Recinto Sur, San Juan, 787 723 7303

ROMANCE

“Bistro de Paris is one of San Juan’s finest. You will never be disappointed by the outstanding service, great food and fantastic atmosphere.”—TripAdvisor Member, San Juan

Bistro de Paris, Avenue De Diego, Santurce, San Juan, 787 998 8925

“Try Ropa Vieja’s “great Cuban and Puerto Rican food among original artwork and romantic lighting.””—TripAdvisor Member, Washington, D.C.

Ropa Vieja, 1021 Ashford Ave., Condado, San Juan, 787 725 2665

The atmosphere at La Estacion is family-friendly and very laid-back. Best meal we had in Puerto Rico!”—TripAdvisor Member

La Estacion, Carr. 987 Km. 4, Las Croabas, Fajardo, 787 863 4481

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Al Dente, 309 Calle Recinto Sur, San Juan, 787 723 7303

BUDGET

“El Jefe, in the Luquillo kiosks, is your destination. It’s a great place to go and relax, with a wonderful view of the ocean.”—TripAdvisor Member, Puerto Rico

El Jefe Burger Shack, Route 3 Luquillo Kioskos #12, Luquillo, 787 615 0896

“Metropol is a great local favorite and cheap, too. It’s Cuban, has a packed parking lot almost every night and gives huge portions. Don’t miss the tres leche cake!”—TripAdvisor Member

Metropol, Avenue Isla Verde, Isla Verde, 787 791 4046

“Metropol is a great local favorite and cheap, too. It’s Cuban, has a packed parking lot almost every night and gives huge portions. Don’t miss the tres leche cake!”—TripAdvisor Member

Metropol, Avenue Isla Verde, Isla Verde, 787 791 4046

“Old San Juan is just a few miles across and has minimal public parking, so walking is a sensible idea in this area.”—TripAdvisor Member

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“...very laid-back”

“...great local favorite and cheap, too.”

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WHERE to eat

HEALTH-CONSCIOUS

“St. Germain Bistro is now our ‘official’ lunch spot. We appreciate the range of VERY fresh, prepared to order options. It is a bright and calm oasis in the midst of the hustle and bustle that is Old San Juan.”—TripAdvisor Member, Puerto Rico

Café Puerto Rico specializes in “awesome, awesome food! The vegetarian mofongo here is excellent.”—TripAdvisor Member, New Jersey

Café Puerto Rico, Calle O’Donnell 208, Old San Juan, 787 724 2281

“Vegetarian options abound” at Cocina Creativa. “Eclectic and wonderful, it’s the best food we found for non-meat eaters.”—TripAdvisor Member, Puerto Rico

Cocina Creativa, Carr. 110, Aguadilla, 787 890 1861

HIDDEN GEMS

“La Bombonera is an old-school bakery with an old-world ambiance. What makes this special is that it’s the real thing! Real bread. Real bakery goods. Real BACON. Mmmm.”—TripAdvisor Member, Silver Spring, Md.

La Bombonera, 259 Calle San Francisco, Old San Juan, 787 722 0658

“We’ve frequented many local restaurants over the years, but NEVER have we found a place as enjoyable and scrumptious as Pasta Y Pueblo. Great value, fantastic service and a cozy setting. Do not miss this gem!”—TripAdvisor Member

Pasta y Pueblo, Calle 14 de Julio Malecon La Pared, Luquillo, 787 909 2015

Café Puerto Rico

Fashionable Spanish restaurant La Casona is a longstanding local favorite, housed in a hundred-year-old mansion. “It was very romantic, and the wine list was fabulous.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York

La Casona, Calle San Jorge 609, Santurce, 787 727 2717

SPECIAL EVENTS

On the first Saturday of every month, Plaza de la Dársena fills with artists, musicians and dance groups during La Casita Festival. Local craftspeople sell their wares and nearby cafes serve up delicious Puerto Rican cuisine. (Ongoing)

La Casita Festival, Calle Delbrey, Plaza de la Dársena, Old San Juan, 787 721 2400

The Le Lo Lai Festival runs all year long in Old San Juan, Isla Verde and Condado, showcasing the Spanish, Taino and African heritage of the Puerto Rican people through traditional music and dance. (Ongoing)

Le Lo Lai Festival, Various venues, 787 721 2400

The Rincon International Film Festival seeks to support and promote the arts in Puerto Rico with a unique and fun series of events in a beautiful beachfront town. Enjoy parties, dinners and screenings, as the Festival gives out awards for everything from best independent horror movie to best music video to best surfing film. (April 10 - 15)

Rincon International Film Festival, Various venues, Rincon, http://www.rinconfilm.com

For two days in April, Escambrón Beach will be filled with the smell of local cuisine, as chefs and sommeliers show off their skills at Saborea Puerto Rico. Guided tastings, seminars, kitchen exhibitions and appearances by world-renown chefs make this annual event one of the most exciting (and delicious) festivals in the world. (April 21 - 22)

Saborea Puerto Rico, Escambrón Beach, San Juan, 787 758 8001

For over fifty years, fishing enthusiasts from all over the world have been heading to an area north of San Juan known as “Billfish Pass” or “Blue Marlin Alley” to try their hands at catching fish that can weigh over one thousand pounds at the San Juan International Billfish Tournament. A week of sun, sand, parties, prizes and fantastic big game fishing is guaranteed. (September 23 - 30)

San Juan International Billfish Tournament, Club Náutico de San Juan, 482 Fernández Juncos Ave., Miramar, 787 722 0177, http://www.sanjuaninternational.com

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Where to STAY

FAMILIES
“From the warm cookies at the reception check-in to the amazing design in the rooms, I was more than impressed with the Doubletree by Hilton San Juan.”—TripAdvisor Member, Kansas City, Kansas

Doubletree by Hilton San Juan, 105 Avenue De Diego, San Juan, 787 721 1200

“We were looking for the best hotel for the money and I think we found it” at the Hampton Inn and Suites, a 200-room hotel in hip Isla Verde.—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Hampton Inn and Suites, 6530 Isla Verde Ave., Carolina, 787 791 8777

“The hotel grounds of the Copamarina Beach Resort were lush with palm trees, flowers, cacti and succulents. The pictures on the website do not do it justice.”—TripAdvisor Member, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Copamarina Beach Resort, Route 333, Km. 6.5, Caña Gorda, Guanica, 787 821 0505

ROMANCE
“Tres Sirenas Beach Inn exceeded our expectations on all levels. The owners have done a wonderful job creating a peaceful oasis in the surfer town of Rincon.”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

Tres Sirenas Beach Inn, 26 Sea Beach Dr., Rincon, 787 823 0558

“The best part of the trip was the lack of TV, computer or any other electronics/media. We had the unusual experience of just being with each other with no distractions. Hix Island House was our favorite getaway yet.”—TripAdvisor Member, Boston, Mass.

Hix Island House, Vieques, 787 741 2302

“...a peaceful oasis”

“...our favorite getaway yet.”

BUDGET
Hotel Belgica is “in a convenient location at an affordable price. The rooms were spacious and clean, and we even had a big balcony. The staff was extremely friendly and helpful. All in all, a wonderful experience!”—TripAdvisor Member, Montreal, Quebec

Hotel Belgica, 122 Calle Villa, Ponce, 787 844 3255

Casa Alta Vista is a Caribbean bargain with “basic rooms that are comfortable and clean. It had the most important luxury, which is A/C. What really differentiates the place is the friendly staff and the outstanding service.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York

Casa Alta Vista, 297 Flamboyan St., Esperanza, Vieques, 787 741 3296

Casa Grande is “an exquisitely beautiful place nestled in the hills north of Utuado. It’s incredibly quiet during the day, and as darkness falls, the sounds of tree frogs and birds fill the night. A quiet, beautiful retreat.”—TripAdvisor Member, Boston, Mass.

Casa Grande Mountain Retreat, Utuado, 787 894 3939

LUXURY
“The architectural details were beautifully preserved, and the thick walls and high ceilings added to the authentically historic ambiance. The design details throughout El Convento were stunning, and there was no question of the building’s architectural and historical significance.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York

Hotel El Convento, 100 Cristo St., Old San Juan, 787 723 9020

“The La Concha provided a wonderful respite with a relaxing atmosphere, courteous and helpful staff and nice amenities.”—TripAdvisor Member, Fleming Island, Fl.

La Concha Resort: A Renaissance Hotel, 1077 Ashford Ave., San Juan, 787 721 8500

“...a wonderful respite...”

“The Primavera is by far one of the finest hotels I have ever stayed in. It was opulent. The marble floors and terra cotta were amazing. I loved the plunge pool. I want to put one in my backyard now!”—TripAdvisor Member, Westchester, Ill.

Horned Dorset Primavera, Apartado 1132, Rincon, 787 823 4030

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### HIDDEN GEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Review</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punta Santiago, Humacao</td>
<td>Barefoot Travelers Guesthouse</td>
<td>“Tucked within a colorful neighborhood far from the average tourist haunts, the Barefoot Travelers Guesthouse was just like staying with friends. It’s a great choice for people who consider themselves ‘visitors’ instead of ‘tourists.’”—TripAdvisor Member, Los Angeles, Calif.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humacao</td>
<td>Acacia Boutique Hotel</td>
<td>“Acacia was a beautiful surprise. It was the perfect spot—calm and cool, romantic and fun. When I come back, Acacia is where I will be staying, hands down.”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Park</td>
<td>Andalucia Guest House</td>
<td>“More than anything, I felt like I was in Puerto Rico, not some fake tourist invention of a place” at the affordable Andalucia. —TripAdvisor Member, Oakland, Calif.</td>
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**Acacia**

**Andalucia Guest House, 2011 McLeary St., Ocean Park, 787 309 3373**

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