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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

THE DR ISSUE #01

FROM THE
EDITORS OF
We're local.
**Travel
Savvy**

What's Inside:

Punta Cana
Cap Cana
La Romana

Has it all.

PLUS FEATURED LISTS:

Beautiful Beaches
Books to Bring to the Beach
Perfect Day in Santo Domingo



Dominican Republic
Has it all

Editor’s Letter

By Paula Keung



If I’m being perfectly honest, my idea of the perfect vacation has never involved the mountains, snow, or anything that doesn’t involve lots of sun, sand, and many fresh seafood dinners. In putting together this special issue of Travel Savvy with the Apple Vacations user in mind, I feel like I’m working with thousands of kindred spirits. We all seem to have the same goal: relax on the beach with nothing to do but figure out whether we’ve slathered on enough SPF. If the mood strikes, perhaps we might dive into the crystal clear water to visit with the pretty fish. Well readers, I’m happy to report that the entire country of Dominican Republic is filled with locals who share the same love of this relaxed lifestyle.

In speaking with Reynaldo Infante, a local news anchor living in Santo Domingo, I learned all about the beaches of the beautiful Dominican Republic. Tanya de los Rios, Manager at Punta Cana’s Hard Rock Café, shared with me a great excursion package with Tropical Storm cruises, where you can spend the day on a catamaran drinking cocktails and swimming with the beautiful tropical marine life. And of course, you’ll probably bring a book or two with you, so I asked Forbes columnist Elisa Mala to provide me with a list of DR-inspired novels to pack. My Travel Savvy team has laid everything out here in the following pages, complete with links and photos so you can start planning your perfect stay. Read on, and learn all about the many activities you’ll enjoy in the paradise that is Dominican Republic.

Paula Keung
Travel Savvy
www.trvlsvvy.com

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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC | SANTO DOMINGO



Santo Domingo Eateries

By Alex Gil

Alex Gil's well-written and thoughtful blog *Cafe Amargo* (www.elotroalex.com/cafe) focuses on topics ranging from reviews of literature old and new, pop culture, globalization, and a variety of other topics that interest him. As he puts it, *Cafe Amargo* is "like a good little cup of coffee, served in that fragile little ceramic kiss, it is a prelude to good afternoon conversation." Alex hails from the Dominican Republic capitol of Santo Domingo, where his parents, both tourism executives, raised him on a steady stream of *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *Star Wars*. He came to the United States when he was 17, lured by the world he saw depicted in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. Since then he has had ample time to change his mind about America and has gone back to the Dominican Republic every summer, consistently. Here, Alex shares his favorite dining choices in Santo Domingo, where his parents still live.

Sushi-Ya

Ave Sarasota No. 133, Bella Vista, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Telephone 809 331 1110

Sushi-Ya is the best place to eat sushi in the whole world-and I've been around, trust me. It's a chain and they have several in the city; this is a location I like.

Creperie Soleil

Gustavo Mejia Ricart 72, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Telephone: 809 683 9291
Website: www.creperiesoleil.com

There is a menu of crepes that is inconceivably long and inviting. They have crepes of all kinds..Mexican crepes, Teriyaki crepes, you name it, they've got it. Delicious and interesting!

Adrian Tropical

Ave George Washington 5, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Telephone: 809 221 1764

If you want local cuisine, you go to Adrian's. Many tourists and locals come here, because it's the perfect place to have mofongo (made with plantains, garlic and spices, and pork cracklings).



Adrian Tropical



Creperie Soleil

Spend a Day in Santo Domingo

By Aimee Sehwoerer



Aimee Sehwoerer is a backpacker, traveller, diner, proud momma, culturephile, twiterer, SEO-marketing specialist, and most importantly, 100% Dominican. Here, she offers you a look at how to spend a day in Santo Domingo. Follow Aimee at www.twitter.com/aimeesehwoerer, or reach her via her LinkedIn profile: <http://do.linkedin.com/in/aimeesehwoerer>

Segafredo Caffé Zona Colonial

Calle El Conde No. 54,
Zona Colonial, Santo Domingo
Tel: 809 685 4440

Located in the unique Colonial Zone of Santo Domingo, Segafredo Caffé is a sprawling indoor/outdoor cafe that's the perfect place to stop for a cup of coffee and an elegantly prepared Italian meal. You can dine on the outdoor patio area or choose the air-conditioned interior; either way, you'll enjoy the service and excellent pizzas, pastas, and salads. The coffee is expertly brewed, and the locals meet here for the happy hour.



Adrian Tropical Restaurant

Av. George Washington 5,
Santo Domingo
Tel: 809 221 1764

100% Dominican Food
Located right on the beach, this is where you should go for excellent regional cuisine. A few things to try: the "Sancocho," which is a hearty stew with chicken and beef, regional vegetables, and herbs; the "Mofongo" which is made from mashed fried green plantains with bits of fried and mashed pork; and the "Dominican Flag" or "La Bandera" which consist in a plate of white rice, meat (pork or chicken) and red beans. You'll cherish the culinary experience, and you'll love the warmth of the service from the Dominican waiters dressed in tropical outfit and a big smile!!

Ciudad Colonial, aka 'Zona Colonial'

This area, casually called 'Zona Colonial' by locals, is a downtown district in Santo Domingo that features many important historic landmarks such old churches, the New World's first hospital, and several small museums. There are also many quaint shops, dining establishments and cafes, and boutique hotels. The area dates back to the 1500's and was part of the explorer Christopher Columbus's first settlement in the New World. Walking through the district, which borders the Ozama River, is perfect way to spend an afternoon in Santo Domingo.



Boutique del Fumador

Calle el Conde No.109,
Zona Colonial, Santo Domingo
Tel: 809 685 6425

This is the first cigar shop established in the Colonial Zone, where you can watch the cigar makers roll Cohibas as well as a local brand called Caoba. You can try the smokes as well as get tastes of the locally grown organic coffee. You'll also love the selection of dark, smoky chocolate and of course, the Dominican rum!

Backpack enthusiast like Aimee? She recommends checking out the coastal fishing town Las Terrenas and Jarabacoa, in the mountains of Dominican Republic where you can visit the famed Monastery Waterfalls.



Boutique del Fumador



Segafredo Caffé Zona Colonial



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC | LOCAL KNOWLEDGE



The Beautiful Beaches of the Dominican Republic

by Reynaldo Infante

Local prime time news anchor Reynaldo Infante was born in Salcedo, a small province in the Northern region of the Dominican Republic. His entire family--including his parents and all six brothers and sisters and their families--live in various parts of the DR, making reunions busy and colorful. In addition to reporting the news to fellow Dominicans on DR's Channel 37, Rey is also a voice talent

(www.reynaldoinfante.com), providing Spanish voice over narration for projects like video games, commercials and video.

An avid golfer and beach-goer, Rey enjoys traveling to the various parts of the DR coast with his wife Cinthia and his daughter Elizabeth. Here he shares with you the best beaches of his homeland.

Cabarete Beach, Puerto Plata

Cabarete Beach, Puerto Plata Sports Enthusiasts' Choice

With one of the most beautiful beaches on the North Coast of the island, exceptional seafood restaurants, and an active night life, Cabarete Beach promises a passionate experience. Widely known as the 'Windsurfing and Kite surfing Capital of the Caribbean,' people flock to Cabarete Beach year after year for the annual watersports competitions. At night, the hotel zone--where visitors can find a place to stay to fit any budget--takes on a magical feel with the sound of rock music and crashing waves, making Cabarete Beach one of the most popular places to visit in the Dominican Republic.

Bahía de las Aguilas Beach, Pedernales The Adventurous Traveler's Destination

Bahia de las Aguilas, a 8 kilometer stretch of isolated white sand beach and crystal clear blue waters, is arguably one of the most beautiful beaches in the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean.

Driving to this beach requires a 4x4 vehicle and an expert driver; by water, the journey takes around 15 minutes bordering the coast. Regardless of your transport, visitors can hire drivers or boat captains near Pedernales, a village that's a short distance away. It is truly a virgin area; located within the national park Parque Nacional Jaragua, there are no accommodations or restaurants to disturb the pristine beach. Many local travel agencies or your hotel concierge can arrange visits to the beach that should be made during the day only, so people get to know this marvel of Mother Nature.

Punta Cana, La Altagracia For the sophisticated traveler looking for the All-Inclusive Experience

Punta Cana is one of the most popular destination for tourists coming to the Dominican Republic. It is an expansive area composed of several beautiful beaches: Fat Sand Beach, the famous Bavaro beach, Ubero Alto beach, Macao beach and El Cortecito beach. Here, summer exists

all year long and some of the best hotels in the country dot the area. There are several all-inclusive and "boutique" hotels for the more sophisticated traveler. It is an easily accessible area, as there is an international airport nearby. If you are looking for great beaches and quiet nights, this is the place to visit.

Bayahibe beach, La Romana

Start point towards Saona Island

Bayahibe is a rural community of fishermen with a great beach. The charming town offers white sand beaches, humble houses, and a host of modern hotel facilities. Scuba lovers delight in Bayahibe's many dive sites; dive shops are plentiful here. It is also a great start point for a journey by sea to the famous Saona Island and Catalina Island to enjoy their protected areas that belong to the National Park, Parque Nacional del Este. The beaches on these islands offer the most gorgeous blue-green waters and stretches of impossibly beautiful white sand beaches. On the way to Saona Island by boat, you will likely anchor for a moment





near La Piscina (the Pool) which is a spot of high sand in the middle of the sea. Jump in and swim in this natural wonder that makes you feel as though you are in a pool since it is not deep. Bayahibe beach is located about 10 miles from La Romana; both areas are home to many all-inclusive hotels in the area and it is only 45 minutes from the capital city, Santo Domingo.

Las Terrenas, Samaná “Boutique” Tourism, and my personal favorite destination

Las Terrenas is a very small town located in the province of Samaná, in the northern part of Dominican Republic. This area has the biggest concentration of coconut trees in the world. The town has only two streets which are the only ways in and out of Las Terrenas. In all, Las Terrenas has about 15 kilometers of great beaches; Playa Bonita, Coson, Las Ballenas, and Portillo are some of the most famous in the area. You can find hotel and lodging accommodations of all kind: all-inclusive hotels, cabins, con-

dos, bungalows, and even rooms for rent, which makes Las Terrenas a very special place. Visitors can really get a feel for local everyday life in this town. There are few cars; people mostly use bikes, horses, or motorcycles for transportation. Most of the restaurants are located on the beach, side by side. You can also fish your own dinner and then have a local or a beach restaurant cook it for you. In addition, there are small markets at the beach early in the morning where you can welcome the fishermen and buy fresh fish, shrimp, and lobster directly from them. The most famous dishes in Las Terrenas are seafood dishes and a variety of old-style cooked pizza. Water sports are a popular activity in the area, and the clear waters allow you to see the colorful coral at shallow depths. Get to know the town residents; you'll find that almost half are foreign citizens that came to visit once and never left this enchanting little town.

Planning on swinging the wrenches in the DR? Rey recommends 2 courses in particular: **Punta Espada at Cap Cana** and **Diente de Perro at Casa de Campo**.



Bavaro Beach, Punta Cana

Bahia Aguilas Beach, Pedernales



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC | PUNTA CANA



Delicioso! Punta Cana Dining

By Nelson Pereira,
Imagine Nightclub
Carretera Arena Gorda, Coco Loco
Friusa, Bavaro, Punta Cana
Tel: 809 446 1049
www.imaginepuntacana.com
facebook Page →

Nelson Pereira has been living in the Dominican Republic for 8 years. Originally from Argentina, Nelson moved to the DR to pursue two of his beloved hobbies: kite surfing and scuba diving. "The Dominican Republic is wide open in terms of where you can pursue your sport of choice--I can kite surf on any beach, and the scuba in this country is unmatched. There's so much to explore: sunken ships, coral reefs, it's all open to you," he explains.

When he's not gliding across the ocean or diving the depths of the great blue, Nelson manages and promotes Imagine, the largest nightspot in Punta Cana which is nestled in a converted underground cave with a capacity for 1000 people nightly. The subterranean club offers visitors a unique place to dance to global beats while enjoying cocktails like "Mamajuana," made with rum, honey, a special tree root, and red wine. The club has three separate 'caves' each with a different DJ and music style, and the bartenders entertain with fire-breathing tricks of their own. There's even a bus service to-and-from most Punta Cana hotels that starts at around 11PM. Bus passengers can pay one fee for a one-time visit, or \$55 for the 'Open Bar' package that includes entry for an entire week. How's that for planning ahead!

We asked Nelson where to grab a bite before coming to Imagine; he obliged with the following list.

Jelly Fish

On the beach between Melia Caribe Tropical Hotel and Ifa Resort, Bavaro
Tel: 809 868 3040
www.jellyfishrestaurant.com/jelly-fish.html
Jelly Fish Facebook Page →

La Yola

In the Punta Cana Marina at the Punta Cana Resort.
Tel: 809 959 2262 ext 8002
www.puntacana.com/dining-recreation/restaurants/la-yola

Beautiful restaurant! Check out the see-through portal on the floor where you can watch the fish swim as you dine.

Chez Mon Ami

Adorable place for French Cuisine. Bring cash; they don't accept credit cards.
Plaza Nautica, Av. Alemania, El Cortecito, Bávaro
Tel: 809 552 6714
Chez Mon Ami Facebook Page

Cappuccino Mare

Ave Estados Unidos,
Arena Gorda , Bávaro
Tel: 809 468 4646

Soles Resto Bar

Very chill place where you can hang out and relax while enjoying a nice meal.
Los Corales Beach, Bavaro
Tel: 809 910 4371
Soles Resto Bar Facebook Page →



Jelly Fish

Apple Vacations Hotels: → La Romana

Zoëtry Agua Punta Cana
Dreams Palm Beach Punta Cana
Dreams Punta Cana Resort & Spa
Iberostar Grand Hotel Bavaro
Iberostar Bavaro All Suite Resort
Melia Caribe Tropical Resort
Riu Palace Punta Cana

La Yola





DOMINICAN REPUBLIC | PUNTA CANA



Points of Interest In Punta Cana

By Tanya de los Rios

Hard Rock Cafe Manager Tanya de los Rios has been living in the Punta Cana area for more than 3 years after moving from the bustling metropolis of Mexico City. A world-traveler, Tanya has been all over the globe as a team member with the Hard Rock Corporation, including Cancun, Venezuela and Barcelona, and now has settled in the Dominican Republic.

Wondering what to do in Punta Cana? Here's a few ideas from Tanya:

Manati Park

Ctra. Manatí, s/n, Bávaro
Tel: 809 221 9444
www.manatipark.com

Need a place that will entertain the entire family? Visit the wonderful Manati Park--it's a cross between a botanical gardens

and a theme park. Here you can spend the entire day taking in the natural wildlife and flora of the Dominican Republic, enjoy themed shows and dances that recreate the history of the Dominican people, visit the iguanas and watch the sea lions, and even swim with dolphins. When you're hungry, dine at one of the restaurants on the property, and pick up a souvenir in the many gift shops.

Tropical Storm Bavaro Cruise

Plaza Vecarian, Playa Jellyfish, Bávaro
Tel: 809 552 8788
www.tropicalstormdr.com

If you're coming to Punta Cana, chances are you love the water. Make sure to fit in a day on a catamaran with the Tropical Storm team. There's a daily day-cruise out into the crystalline waters, or you can charter one of their other full-service options. You'll do a little snorkeling with the abundant marine wildlife, and you'll relax while listening to the sound of the waves. Note: They offer pick-ups from any hotel in Punta Cana; just ask your concierge or contact the Tropical Storm team directly.

Plaza Palma Real Shopping Village

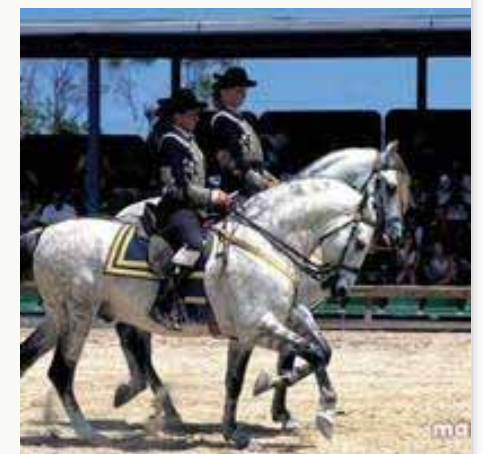
Carretera El Cortecito #57
Punta Cana
Tel: 809 552 8725
www.palmarealshoppingvillage.com

Spend a nice afternoon at Plaza Palma Real Shopping Village. The atmosphere is excellent, and the partially-outdoor mall itself is swanky yet still charming. You can pick up clothes from familiar high-end brands like Diesel, Guess, Puma and Geox; there is also a wine shop, a cigar boutique, and an Amber and Larimar Museum where you can pick out beautiful pieces of jewelry and home accents made from these natural substances. The dining areas are well appointed and the selection of restaurants is varied. They have beautiful water features and panoramic terraces.

Hard Rock Cafe, Punta Cana

Carretera El Cortecito #57
Punta Cana
Tel: 809 552 0594
www.hardrock.com

While you're happily shopping at the Plaza Palma Real, certainly make sure to visit Tanya and her team at the Hard Rock Cafe. Tanya explains, "Hard Rock has the best rock museum in all of the Dominican Republic. We also offer delicious American food and an unforgettable experience. My team is eager to meet you while you're in town!"



Recommended Reads Inspired by the Dominican Republic

by Elisa Mala
[twitter →](#)

A columnist for the Booked blog of Forbes.com, Elisa Mala has contributed to the New York Times, Newsweek, ESPN The Magazine, New York Post, Psychology Today and a cover story for Rolling Stone Bulgaria. Read her column at: blogs.forbes.com/booked/author/elisamala/

We asked Elisa to give us a list of Dominican-inspired reads that will move you to connect with this beautiful culture in ways beyond the average 5-day Caribbean vacation. These stories will stay with you long after you've returned from your tropical getaway.

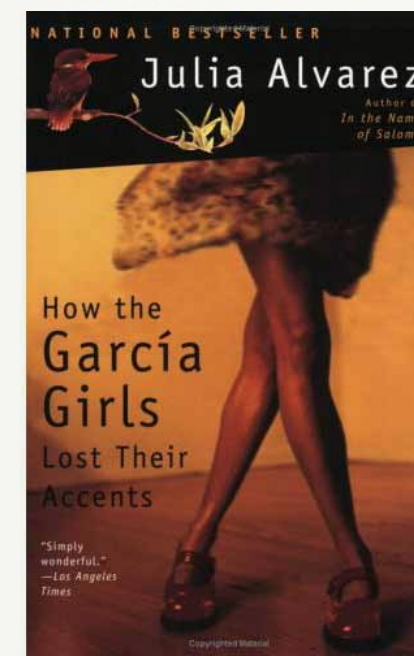
Geographies of Home Loida Maritza Perez

When a college student puts her studies on hold to return to Brooklyn and help her beleaguered family, it seems like just another case study of social mobility gone awry. Dashed dreams are the least of anyone's problems, for sexual assault, domestic abuse, mental illness are never too far in the distance for this Dominican-American family. As these complicated dynamics unfold at a quick and addictive pace, the questions that arise - Is home really where the heart is? Does your home leave you just because you leave it? - are at once microscopic and universal.

How the García Girls Lost Their Accents

Julia Alvarez

Presented in reverse chronological order, these are the adventures of four sisters who seem to share nothing other than blood. Trading an oppressive Dominican regime for the Land of the Free, they soon discover the darker side of the American Dream, and that in a strange land, even perfect language skills can only go so far.



The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

Junot Diaz

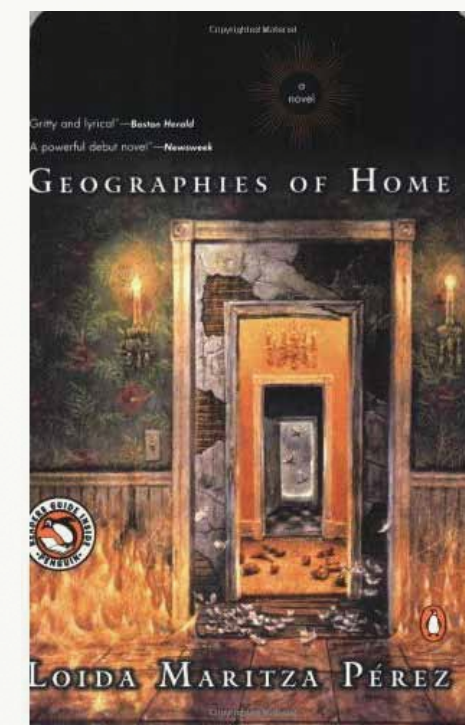
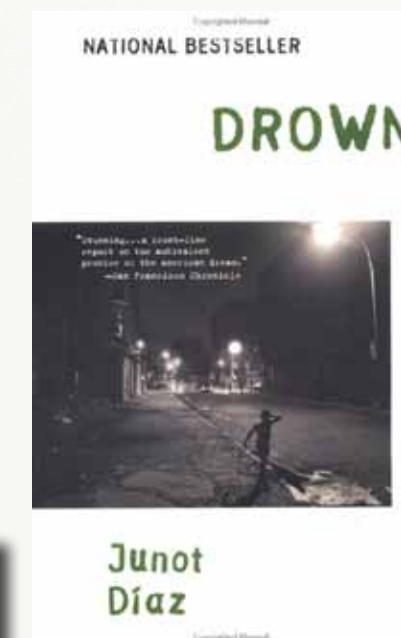
Just as the title pays homage to literary legends - Hemingway penned a short story with a similar title, while Oscar Wilde serves as a namesake - the novel itself is a blend of story-telling styles, often in ways that turn convention on its head. What begins as a sci-fi geek's search for love spirals into a multi-national hunt for insights about responsibility, fate, free will and ultimately, redemption. Weaving many a science fiction reference between moments of crushing reality, this thought-provoking tragicomedy explores the painstaking expectations that are set forth by society.

The Brief
 Wondrous
 Life of
 Oscar Wao
 Junot Díaz

Drown

Junot Diaz

For a detailed snapshot of the Dominican-American experience, this collection of 10 stories traverses the space between the DR and the US, between Spanish and English, and between hopes and nightmares, but in a very digestible format.



[Click to Purchase at Amazon](#)



Travelling in Tropical Climates: Photography Tips by Justin Stailey

Leica Camera Product Specialist Justin Stailey shares tips to help protect your photographic equipment when travelling to tropical destinations and improve your pictures' quality. Being mindful of the tropical sun, extreme temperatures and great amount of moisture in the air should be the first step to capture images of unmatched brilliance and protect your equipment. For more information, visit us.leica-camera.com.

Overexpose. Washed-out colors diminish the appeal of a beautiful beach shot. Because of the tropical sun's intensity and powerful reflection, don't hesitate to overexpose beach scenes by 1-2 stops. Slightly underexposed images will have more saturated and intense colors.

Pay attention to your surrounding elements to add character to a beach shot. Palm trees and rocks are wonderful details to help frame your picture.

Watch out for humidity. When travelling in tropical climates, be mindful of the significant moisture found in the air. While some water resistant cameras are manufactured for such conditions, most photographic equipment can be severely damaged by high humidity. Carrying desiccant packs in your camera bag is a great way to help absorb unwanted moisture and protect your gear. Also consider changing lenses as little as possible, preferably at night when the temperatures are cooler.

Carry a bag. Changes in temperatures are yet another environmental factor that can put your camera at risk. When entering an air conditioned room, be mindful of the temperature drop. While temperature changes do not create risks in and of themselves, they can produce condensation and fogging, which affect both lenses and camera bodies. Keep your equipment protected in a camera bag or Ziploc bag and slowly introduce it to the ambient temperature by gradually opening the bag. This should protect your equipment from condensation and fogging.

Wipe down. Don't let a defective equipment cause you to miss priceless vacation pictures. Salt spray from the ocean will cause your equipment to corrode. Stailey always keeps a damp cloth in a Ziploc bag to wipe off his tripod and camera.



Cap Cana Luxury

by Reyson Pimentel

Director of Sales
Secrets Sanctuary Cap Cana
Tel: 809 562 9191 ext. 5121
Tel: 888 892 0587



Located in the Eastern part of Dominican Republic, Cap Cana is a new development designed with truly luxurious living in mind. The area overlooks more than 3 miles of pristine sugar sand beaches and is centrally located to both the Punta Cana International Airport and the La Romana International Airport. Cap Cana's marina is the biggest in the Caribbean, with over 1,000 slips for those who've sailed to the country on their yachts. Soon, Cap Cana visitors will be able to enjoy the new Las Iguanas golf course, to be centrally located in town.

Reyson Pimentel is the Director of Sales for the magnificent Secrets Sanctuary Cap Cana, an all-inclusive, adults-only resort nestled atop a cliff overlooking its own picture-perfect half moon beach. The hotel, a distinguished Preferred Hotels Group® property, is the flagship of the Secrets brand operated by AM Resorts®.

Here, Reyson offers a look at the splendid activities that visitors can enjoy in Cap Cana.

Play Golf On One of the Most Beautiful Courses

The view from the bluffs overlooking the Caribbean Sea is a stunning backdrop for golf, particularly when the course, Punta Espada, is a Jack Nicklaus Signature course that has taken its place among the world's foremost golf experiences. Las Iguanas, the second Jack Nicklaus signature golf course, is scheduled to open in 2011, offers perfectly placed holes to exhibit the natural splendor of the surroundings. Many ecological areas with its unique beauty have been incorporated in the design of this spectacular course, to achieve both, the protection of the area as well as to provide necessary experience to the golfer. The Cap Cana Championship of the PGA Champions Tours has been played here since 2008. For more information about this excellent course, visit: www.nicklaus.com/design/capcana/

Enjoy Deep Sea Fishing and Ocean Excursions

Cap Cana boasts the largest marina in the Caribbean and the largest private marina in the Dominican Republic. Several deep sea fishing trophies are disputed here every summer in what's known to be "The Marlin's Highway"....great fishing spots for billfish and Marlins of every kind are located just offshore in the Mona Passage that connects the Caribbean with the Atlantic and stands between the DR and Puerto Rico. If you want to arrange for deep sea fishing, call Cap Cana's management team at (809) 227 2262 or e-mail anew@capcana.com. You can also catch a Catama-

ran daytrip to nearby beaches including world famous Juanillo Beach; visit www.rh-tours.com.

Adventure

Scape2CapCana is the newest attraction to open in Cap Cana, offering exciting eco trails to blue water holes, buggy rides, horse back riding as well as paint ball and mountain bikes.

The website provides all information and activities: www.scape2capcana.com.



Dine with us at Secrets

Cap Cana's marina offers excellent gourmet dining options. In particular, Faith at Farallon is a unique Asian-Fusion restaurant set in a Japanese style villa, offering gorgeous views of the Caribbean Sea 300-feet elevation. On the Secrets property, there is Blue Marlin Restaurant, well-known for its fresh catch suggestions and Seafood Paella, and The Steakhouse, with authentic Argentinian-style Empanadas and delicious "Churrasco" which is grilled Argentinian-style flank steak.

Apple Vacations Hotels:
→ Cap Cana

Secrets Sanctuary Cap Cana



Cap Cana at a Glance

by Evelyn Miranda-Mirabal

Evelyn Miranda-Mirabal is an owner at Aquamarina Luxury Residences (www.capcanaluxury.com), a condominium and marina complex that has been designed with luxury in mind. The complex is located in the heart of Cap Cana's marina, making the condo complex a perfect choice for boating and fishing fans seeking a long or short term rental. In addition to providing top-notch creature comforts within each unit, the complex is within walking distance to the famous white-sand beaches and nearby the world-class golf course, Punta Espada.

A self-proclaimed foodie and travel enthusiast, we asked Evelyn about dining in the area. Originally from La Vega, DR, Evelyn moved to the US when

she was 7. She continued to come back to her homeland annually, and moved to Cap Cana permanently over a year ago. What brought her back? She came to live near "one of the most beautiful beaches (she) has ever seen," and to enjoy life in the DR where she could pursue her passions: dining, cooking, swimming, snorkeling and photography. Below are three places she recommends in Cap Cana, as well as her favorite place for authentic Dominican cuisine in Santo Domingo.

Acqua Mare Bar and Lounge Restaurant

At the Marina de Cap Cana, Punta Cana
Tel: 809 469 7342
www.aquacapcana.com

The Asian-Fusion restaurant Acqua Mare is located in Cap Cana's marina. Order from their great selection of sushi, pastas, risottos, and grilled seafood--and for meat lovers, their signature burger is very good.. and huge! The ambiance of the restaurant is both

elegant and relaxing at the same time; it's perfect for any occasion- a romantic dinner, a family outing, or even just for drinks or dessert. On the weekends you can dine while listening to live music.

Faith at Farallón

At Farallon, Cap Cana
Tel: 809 469 7450
www.faithrestaurant.com

Faith Restaurant, which is located in Cap Cana's Farallón Estates section in the marina, has an oriental flair and a beautiful interior garden. Among other things, their menu includes Caldo Farallon, Lobster Croquettes, Blue Cheese Salad, several sushi options, traditional ceviche, fresh fish, and top meats. Aside from the food, the one thing that must be experienced at Faith is the breathtaking views from the top of the restaurant. Bring a camera--you won't want to miss the bird's eye views of the entire Cap Cana complex.

Mitre

At the Marina de Cap Cana, Punta Cana
Tel: 809 562 9191 Ext. 5185
www.mitre.com.do

Mitre Cap Cana offers diners an upscale Italian experience with a modern flare. In particular, Evelyn recommends the Foie Gras appetizer, the ceviche, and because she's a big fan of this dish- the Ossobuco. During the day, diners can enjoy the lovely terrace with its spectacular views of the sea surrounding it. At night, the restaurant takes on three very different personas; the terrace becomes a romantic candle-lit spot, the lounge opens and offers guests a posh spot to have a drink and catch up with friends, and the dining room becomes a cozy space to share a family dinner.

And when you're in Santo Domingo, go to:

El Meson de Bari

Santo Domingo
302 Calle Hostos,
Santo Domingo
Tel: 809 687 4091

Order the Caprito en fricase, which is a goat meat stew. I always run into friends and family here. The place is filled with locals--which is a good sign in any country!



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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC | LA ROMANA



Visit La Romana and Bayahibe

by Ricardo Domínguez

Director Iberostar Hacienda Dominicus, Bayahibe
Tel: 809 688 3600
Ricardo's Web Page →

Ricardo Dominguez has a great job. He's the Director of the all-inclusive 5-star resort, Iberostar Hacienda Dominicus. This means he enjoys the beautiful beaches of Bayahibe and is a stone's throw from picturesque La Romana. He's got what we all crave at his fingertips: sunny white sand beaches, gorgeous marine life and the natural wonders of Dominican Republic, and cool sea breezes at night. The resort offers loads of choices in terms of food and entertainment, and he particularly recommends the Japanese Teppan-yaki-style dining at La Geisha. For after dinner entertainment, "Our theater is the perfect place to delight in the live music shows. This is where you can get the most out of true Caribbean rhythm."

We asked Ricardo what to do in the area to experience in and around La Romana and Bayahibe. Here's what he suggested.

Eat fresh fish. The Bayahibe – Dominicus area is a rural community of fishermen and features a beautiful beach. It is one of the most spectacular Caribbean sites in the Dominican Republic. Also, the La Romana International Airport is easily accessible and located about 15 minutes away by car to the Bayahibe area. Make sure to visit any beach restaurant along the shore to enjoy the 'Catch of the Day,' usually something that is just out of the ocean.

Visit Catalina and Saona Islands. Enjoy the beautiful beaches and the pristine shallow waters, and watch the colorful fish swim along with you. An occasional group of dolphins may even come along on your journey. The excursion can be booked through almost any tour operator. They have representatives at most resorts. Scuba diving fans particularly like Catalina Island-which leads me to the next activity:

Dive and snorkel in the coral reefs. La Romana and Bayahibe are the best areas in the country to enjoy scuba. Contact Dressel Divers at www.dresseldivers.com/en; their website is comprehensive and a great way to book an excursion.



Iberostar Hacienda Dominicus

Journey to the shores of the National Park of the East. With fine white sandy beaches, crystal clear water, extensive coral reefs, coconut forests and mangroves swamps, this park is an ecological wonder. Somehow there's even cacti and dry scrub scattered around the Park. Stick close to the shore where you can enjoy the view and avoid getting lost. You'll also find several Taino sites in the park; Taino refers to the indigenous population that the explorer Christopher Columbus came upon in the 15th Century. It's only about 2 miles from the hotel, but a cab is recommended.

Spend the day in Altos de Chavón. This re-creation of a medieval Mediterranean village, originally designed by a Paramount set designer, sits overlooking the Chavón River. Nowadays, this vibrant cultural village features many of Dominican Republic's finest tradition of crafts and art. The distant mountains of eastern Hispaniola merge with the sea to create the perfect setting for this charming village complete with cobblestone walkways that lead to artists' studios, crafts workshops, art galleries, and fantastic restaurants and cafés. There's even a small church that is popular for weddings, and an amphitheater which hosts talents as wide-ranging as Andrea Bocelli and Alicia Keys. A cab is the best way there.

Snorkeling off Bayahibe



Altos de Chavon



National Park of the East



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