



DESTINATION GUIDE

Artisan EcoTour: Forests to Furniture

Puerto Rico

May 7 - 16, 2023

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Know before you go:

Traveler Documentation to Enter Puerto Rico

American travelers can enter Puerto Rico with a valid government-issued photo ID, including a driver's license or passport. If you are not a US citizen, make sure you have all the required travel documents to enter the United States.

Travel Insurance

GreenWood requires all travelers, except for Puerto Rican residents, to purchase travel insurance that covers medical expenses related to COVID-19 while in Puerto Rico.

GreenWood strongly recommends all travelers purchase Cancel for Any Reason travel insurance to protect you from unexpected events. Flights can be delayed or canceled, causing travelers to miss part or all of your trip. We are also living through a pandemic, and entry requirements and border closures can occur quickly and without notice. As a reminder, the trip fee is non-refundable after April 14, 2023.

Please note that some insurance options require the purchase of a policy within 24 hours of making payment for your trip. GreenWood recommends all travelers evaluate the insurance options available for their personal needs and inquire with providers about insurance that will provide coverage if the trip is canceled.

GreenWood partnered with [Yonder Insurance](#). You are welcome to purchase travel insurance through our partners at Yonder Travel Insurance, or you can acquire travel insurance from any vendor of your choosing. Contact Yonder at hello@insureyonder.com or call at 855-358-6433 (Monday – Friday, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm



WE PROMOTE sustainable use of wood resources

Immunizations

Before travel, GreenWood strongly recommends that you look into recommended immunizations for Puerto Rico. We are not a licensed health care provider, so we cannot advise travelers on which immunizations they may need. We recommend all travelers:

Consult with a travel clinic or physician regarding immunizations and other precautions you may need to participate in this journey. You should do this well in advance of your trip as some vaccinations require time to take effect, and you may need to allow time between a series of shots.

Visit the [CDC Website for Puerto Rico](#) to view recommended vaccines and medicines, travel health notices for the region, and other tips for staying healthy and safe.

COVID-19

Covid protocols and regulations are updated every 30 days on the Health Department of Puerto Rico, but they may change with little or no notice. For travelers, you will find the most updated portals on the [Discover Puerto Rico Website](#).

Also, please refer to Greenwood's online portal for [Covid protocols](#). Kindly note, we update the GreenWood portal every 30 days.

Other Health Considerations

This will be a fantastic journey, but as with all travel, a spirit of adventure and a degree of flexibility will enhance your enjoyment of this program. This will be a moderately active program, walking on narrow, cobblestone streets, or forest trails and in farm fields. Some of the drives may be long, with sections of bumpy roads and several travel days with early departures and activities scheduled throughout the day and evening.



Safety Recommendations

Your guides will give you recent briefings on safety while in-country, but please let your guide or GreenWood staff know if you have any safety concerns. Please review emergency procedures at the Verdanza Hotel in case of an earthquake while on-site.

Documentation

In case of emergency, it is advisable to record all your essential information and email it to yourself and your loved ones. Here are some ideas on what to include:

- A photocopy of your photo ID
- A photocopy of your vaccine card
- Travel insurance policy details and 24-hour emergency number
- Details of relatives/friends and your primary care physician to be contacted in an emergency
- Bank and credit card details, camera serial numbers, etc.

Money

The local currency in Puerto Rico is the US dollar (USD). Credit cards are accepted in Puerto Rico, and there is an ATM at the hotel. Gratuities for guides and drivers have been included with the cost of the trip. However, you may want to bring a small amount of cash for incidentals and souvenirs. We recommend a budget of \$50 to \$60 dollars a day.

ATMs in remote areas can be finicky and may not work on a given hour or day. We recommend traveling with 2 or 3 crisp \$100 bills stored safely in your carry-on luggage to be exchanged in case the ATMs are not working for you.

In-Country information:

Communications

Wi-Fi: In many places, you will visit in Puerto Rico, Wi-Fi will be available. Speed, bandwidth, and availability may be less reliable than you are used to, especially in remote parts of the island. Often, the connection is stronger in the lobby of hotels than in your hotel room.

International calls: If you are in Puerto Rico and trying to reach a number outside the US, dial 011 before dialing the country code and local number.

Staying connected: Here are the most common methods for making local/international calls:

Smartphone apps: If your current phone and phone service do not work in Puerto Rico, consider using apps such as Skype, WhatsApp, Messenger, and Viber (when Wi-Fi is available).

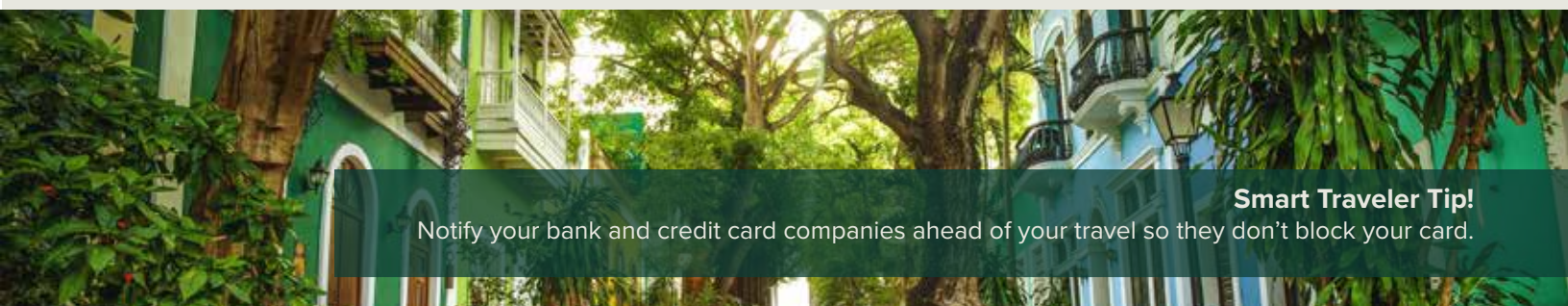
To call numbers in Puerto Rico from the U.S. dial:
+ 1 + 787 [area code] + seven-digit local number
+ 1 + 939 [area code] + seven-digit local number

Getting an international calling package: Most major US cell phone carriers* provide service in Puerto Rico, so American travelers do not need an international calling plan as their US phone plans will work on the island. We recommend that travelers confirm with their cellphone providers that they have coverage in Puerto Rico.

Use a local phone/SIM card: SIM cards are recommended for international travelers coming from outside the US for making calls within Puerto Rico as international calls can get expensive. Please be aware of any requirements your phone has in order to accept the local SIM cards (i.e. size of SIM card, jailbroken, etc.).

Call from hotel: Please be advised that some hotels impose a surcharge that can be more than double the cost of international calls. Be sure to check the hotel policy before placing an international call from your hotel.

*Note to Verizon Wireless Customers: Verizon customers may have more spotty coverage than users of other networks as Verizon does not have a local network in Puerto Rico. Thus, travelers using Verizon will be connecting to their partner networks on the island.



Smart Traveler Tip!

Notify your bank and credit card companies ahead of your travel so they don't block your card.

Electricity

Puerto Rico uses a standard of 120V, 60Hz, and plug Type A and B; the same is used throughout the US. The following images show the type of plugs, sockets, and adapters you can use while traveling in Puerto Rico.



Type A plug



Type B plug

Time

Puerto Rico is in the Atlantic Time Zone, GMT - 4. Puerto Rico does not observe Daylight Savings Time.

Water

Although tap water is considered safe to drink in San Juan, it is not always safe in more remote parts of the island. Water and ice are safe to consume in restaurants in San Juan, but similarly, not in other parts of the island. We recommend travelers bring their own refillable water bottles to reduce waste.

Weather Conditions

Puerto Rico boasts summer temperatures all year long. During May, daily highs are typically between 80°F (27°C) and 90°F (32°C), with lows between 70°F (21°C) and 75°F (24°C). While we are traveling in Puerto Rico, occasional rainstorms and overheating temperatures are still possible. It is best to plan for hot, warm, humid, and possibly wet weather.

Photography

Puerto Rico is a beautiful destination, and you will want to take lots of pictures. When photographing people, always ask permission first—this is a sign of respect. You can do this with gestures or ask your guide to translate. The only exception to this is when you are photographing a public scene with a lot of people in it, aiming at no one in particular. If you are uncertain about whether or not photography is permitted, your instructors will be there to advise you.



Smart Traveler Tip!

When entering a restaurant or cafe, you may notice other patrons and restaurant staff greeting each other by saying 'Buen provecho,' which means 'Enjoy your meal' coupled with a greeting appropriate for that time of day.

Language

The two official languages of Puerto Rico are English and Spanish. Spanish is more predominant throughout the island having been introduced to the island in the 15th century by Spanish colonists. In 1898, English was introduced to the territory when the US seized Puerto Rico from Spain.

Although many of the locals you will be interacting with will speak English, it's always considerate and may be helpful to learn a few phrases in Spanish. Below are some examples to get you started:

English

Hello
Goodbye
Sorry
Thank you
Yes
No
Excuse me
My name is...
Pleased to meet you
Where is the toilet?
Have a nice day!
I don't understand
What is your name?

Spanish

Hola
Adios
Lo Siento
Gracias
Sí
No
Disculpe / Permiso
Me llamo...
Mucho gusto
¿Donde está el baño?
Qué tenga un buen día!
No comprendo
¿Como se llama usted?



Local Cuisine & Drink

Puerto Rico is a food lover's paradise. Its distinctive Afro-Caribbean cuisine is often intertwined with an international flair, mainly European and Middle Eastern flavors. Many of the island's renowned chefs experiment with traditional staples. Here are some traditional dishes to try while in Puerto Rico:

- Mofongo is an authentic Puerto Rican comfort food of deep-fried plantain pieces mashed with garlic and meat. The mofongo is made of green plantains but can also be made of yuca and sweet plantains.
- Tostones and Amarillos - These two dishes are different varieties of cooked plantains; the former is made from a more savory green plantain and the latter a sweeter, ripe plantain.
- Lechón asado - Lechón is a whole pig. This dish is roasted for several hours until the skin is crispy and the meat is juicy.
- Arroz y habichuelas - This is Puerto Rico's quintessential rice and beans dish. The pink beans are stewed with vegetables and herbs in a sofrito sauce, made by blending onions, garlic, peppers, cilantro, and oregano.
- Pasteles - Similar to tamales, pasteles are made with green bananas and stuffed with stewed pork. Vegetarian and vegan pasteles are often cooked with yuca rather than meat.
- Arroz con gandules - Gandules are pigeon peas, and in this dish, the peas are cooked with rice and coated in a traditional sofrito sauce.
- Frituras - Deep-fried fritters which are often stuffed with some sort of meat or seafood.
- Desserts - Traditional desserts include tembleque (a silky coconut custard), arroz con dulce (rice pudding with cinnamon and raisins), flan (vanilla custard cake), and casquitos de guayaba (guava paste paired with local white cheese).

Cultural Considerations

Experiencing different cultures is one of the joys of traveling. Please take note of the information below to better understand and respect these cultural differences in Puerto Rico.

Politics: Puerto Rico has a democratic republic form of government under the jurisdiction and sovereignty of the United States as an organized, unincorporated territory. Puerto Rico's governor, the head of government, municipality mayors, and the legislature members are elected every four years by popular vote. It's important to note that as a United States territory, Puerto Rican residents pay taxes and can serve in the US military but are not represented in Congress or able to vote for representatives of the US government.

A Mixed Identity: Puerto Rican people and culture are uniquely influenced by their Spanish, African, and indigenous Taíno roots.

Body Language & Gestures: Puerto Ricans are known for their friendliness and warmth, often greeting each other with a handshake or a hug and kiss on the cheek. They use expressive body language and gestures in conversations to convey their emotions with intensity and passion.

The pace of life: The pace of Puerto Rican life is slower and more relaxed than in other parts of the US. Meals are meant to be relaxed and not hurried. This requires some getting used to, and a willingness to adapt to a different lifestyle. Travel with an open mind and flexibility, and use this as an opportunity to slow down.

Responsible Travel Tips

Keep an open mind: Try to observe local customs and respect traditional cultures and people. Here are a few tips that can help enrich your experience as a responsible traveler:

- **Language:** Learn a few basic greetings and "thank you" in the local language.
- **Local economy:** Support locally owned businesses, restaurants, and other services. Shop from local artisans to promote traditional artistry, crafts and encourage contemporary arts.
- **Respect:** It is important to acknowledge the privacy and dignity of others and ask before photographing or filming people. Ask permission before entering sacred places, homes, or private land, and take heed of local customs (i.e. remove shoes, hats, cover hair with a shawl, etc). Please ask your guide if you are unsure; they are there to support your introduction to the culture!
- **Community and environment:** Contribute to organizations that support traditional cultures and protect the natural environment. Keep to designated trails, and do not disturb plants and animals or their natural habitats.
- **Properly dispose of trash:** Avoid using plastic bags and try to minimize the use of other disposables. When traveling in areas away from cities, be sure to take out what you take in. Try using a reusable water bottle and treating your own drinking water when possible.
- Bring your own Personal **Protective Gear for COVID**. It is best to bring your own masks, shields, gloves, and hand sanitizer. Do not rely on local destinations to have these items available, and we want to avoid depleting local destinations' stock of these items.
- **Don't feel pressured to give away money or material items:** We try to discourage giving away money or items as it can actually accentuate an unequal relationship between visitors and locals.

Smart Traveler Tip!

In travel, especially in remote parts of the world, things happen. Expect the unexpected! Keep an open mind, be flexible, and enjoy the moment. Sometimes the best memories come out of the unplanned.