



Puerto Rico

All information was compiled from listed websites, CruiseCritic.com members, travel guides, cruise magazines and a variety of friends and sources. Please remember to check the accuracy of this information yourself before using it to finalize your vital cruise plans. Thanks to all!

San Juan



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San Juan & Puerto Rico

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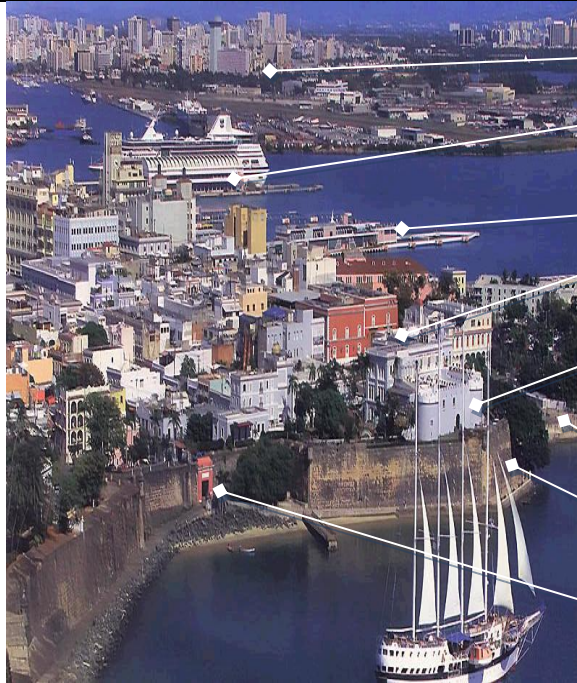
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Helpful Websites	
	www.puertoricowow.com ; (for up to date local news and info) http://www.frommers.com/destinations/puertorico/ (the best of Puerto Rico from Frommer's) http://www.covacations.com/Frommers (Continental/Frommer vacation guide to PR) http://www.fodors.com/world/caribbean/PR (choice PR travel experiences from Fodors) www.travelmaps.com ; (interactive island maps) http://travelandsports.com/ (create your own MasterGuide to Puerto Rico) http://www.prwow.com/ (Puerto Rican information portal) http://www.meetpuertorico.com/ (information from Puerto Rican Convention Bureau) http://www.gotopuertorico.com/PDFs/guide_north_eng.pdf (San Juan & North travel guide) http://welcome.topuertorico.org/index.shtml (Magaly Rivera's tribute to Puerto Rico) http://www.iit.edu/~PR/prne.html (directions, maps and photos of visiting areas of Puerto Rico) http://www.photosofpuertorico.com/movies.htm (photos and videos of PR)
	http://www.eyetourpuertorico.com/ (interactive independent guide to Puerto Rico) http://gopuertorico.about.com/ (PR travel information from about.com) http://www.gotopuertorico.com/ ; (Puerto Rico Tourism Company search engine) http://www.gotopuertorico.com/travelplanner/flash/imap.en.php (travel planning interactive map) http://www.gotopuertorico.com/puerto-rico-entertainment.php (find concerts, shows and events) www.gotopuertorico.com ; (small site with what you need, when you need it) http://www.musicofpuertorico.com/index.php/links/hits/ (current popular music of Puerto Rico.) http://www.mensjournal.com/pr/?esitecname=Men%27s+Journal (PR video journal with Jay Harding) http://www.puertoricodaytrips.com (extensive walking tour of OSJ and Puerto Rican day trips) http://www.downislandmagazine.com/Paseo.html (eat, drink explore adventurous Puerto Rico)
	www.casiano.com/quepasa ("Que Pasa" magazine and maps) http://www.qpsm.com/ ("Puerto Rico Guest" magazine; lots of articles & photos; everything Puerto Rican!) http://www.truveo.com/Top-Ten-Puerto-Rico-Old-San-Juan/id/3860834861 (Discovery shows on Puerto Rico) http://www.culebradivers.com/topdives.htm (Culebra diving tours) http://www.topozone.com/states/PuertoRico.asp?county=San+Juan&feature=Park (topographical maps) http://www.solboricua.com/sanjuan.htm (images of Old San Juan) www.sanjuaninbox.com (home style living in San Juan)
	http://www.epictrip.com/San-Juan-travel-l29615,Puerto-Rico.html (one of the best reviews EVER written)
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Overview	
<p>To Condado Ocean Park Isla Verde Santurce & Greater San Juan</p>	
	<p>Puerto Rico has over 350 miles of coastline and a population of 4 million. It is a dependent territory of the US facing the Atlantic on the north and the Caribbean on the south and the oldest Spanish settlement under American sovereignty. It is the smallest and easternmost of the Greater Antilles running 100 miles east-west and 35 miles north-south. It has no natural lakes. San Juan is linked by causeways and bridges to the rest of Puerto Rico.</p>
	<p>Puerto Rico offers an enriching experience, stemming from 500 years of history and an authentic Latin culture. A stroll through the cobble-stoned streets of historic Old San Juan reveals marvelous colonial buildings, centuries-old fortresses, including El Morro, and incredibly preserved architecture. To the south, the city of Ponce is home to some of the island's finest colonial buildings, commissioned by wealthy merchants who established the city as a center of Puerto Rican culture. Plaza Las Delicias and the Ponce Museum of Art are among the finest examples of the island's rich culture.</p>



Average temperature is a temperate 82—never cold but with cooling breezes. Old San Juan has the finest restaurants and hippest nightspots on old cobblestone streets. *Pinones* (east of San Juan) is known for its open-air seafood restaurants playing local music nightly. The beach at *Isla Verde* is wide and expansive. *El Yunque* is the only tropical rainforest in the US National Forest system. The baseball season commences in October. The world’s largest JC Penney is here.



Greater San Juan

OSJ Cruise Pier #3
Duty Free Shops

OSJ Cruise Pier #1


Paseo de la Princesa
(promenade--east end)

La Fortaleza
(Governor’s Mansion)



Raices Fountain

Paseo de la Princesa
(promenade—west end)




San Juan Gate (red door)
(passage thru wall to OSJ)

	<p>Hiking to the top of Cerro Punta or diving off Cayo Diablo are just a few of the experiences that make Puerto Rico a paradise for nature lovers and adventure seekers. One of the most memorable experiences is night swimming in Puerto Rico's Bioluminescent Bays in Vieques and La Parguera, where tiny microorganisms light up like fireflies as the water splashes and moves. Another popular natural attraction is Rio Camuy Cave Park, a massive cave system with an underground river flowing through it, which visitors can visit via tram, spelunking or body rafting. At El Yunque tropical rain forest, more than 100 billion gallons of annual rainfall account for lush flora and fauna, and the famous coqui frog can be heard singing its song. Guanica Biosphere Reserve, a dry forest where cacti and rugged hills contrast against the ocean shore, offers miles of trails perfect for mountain bikers and hikers. Visitors to the preserve have much to see, such as a tree that has been dated to be more than 1,000 years old. Birdwatchers will delight in what is the densest population of birds on the island. Kayakers and snorkelers will find watery bliss on the beach and surrounding cays.</p>
	<p>Scuba diving and snorkeling, for beginners and experts alike, are the reason why Puerto Rico is often called the Caribbean's best-kept underwater secret. Off the southwest coast, from the village of La Parguera to the city of Ponce, lie some of the island's most extraordinary dive sites, including the Parguera Wall, home of the Caribbeans rarely seen black coral. Another noteworthy spot is Mona Island, off the west coast of Puerto Rico, known as the Galapagos of the Caribbean. It is home to sea turtles, dolphins and a wide variety of species of rare marine life. For visitors looking to get close to the water, but not necessarily submerged in it, Puerto Rico offers various other water sports in many parts of the island, such as great snorkeling, world-class surfing, windsurfing, sailing, catamaran trips, sea kayaking and deep-sea fishing</p>
	<p>Founded in 1521 by Ponce de León, the capital of Puerto Rico, San Juan, is the oldest city in US territory. Home to 1.6 million (more than a third of the island's citizens), it is also the heart of Puerto Rican tourism. What draws travellers here year-round are miles of smooth, clean beaches, a wide range of accommodation, fabulous restaurants and, of course, Old San Juan, whose beautifully restored historic sights surrounded by crashing turquoise surf are reason enough to make a trip to Puerto Rico. Along with Old San Juan, resort-filled Condado is the most popular neighborhood for visitors thanks to its excellent beachfront and fine boutiques, and these two sections of the capital share the highest concentration of restaurants and lodging options. There's also much to explore as the city extends to the south and east, including the beachfront neighborhoods of Ocean Park and Isla Verde; up-and-coming Santurce with its numerous art galleries; the financial district of Hato Rey; and the college-town vibe in Rio Piedras. Within just a couple hours' drive from San Juan are Puerto Rico's rarest natural resources and some of the best beaches and coral reefs in the Caribbean. The El Yunque rainforest, Luquillo Beach and the Rio Camuy Cave Park all make excellent day trips. <i>Information by Rough Guides</i></p>
	<p>In 1508, Juan Ponce de León founded the original settlement, Caparra (named after the province of Cáceres, Spain, birthplace of the then-governor of Spain's Caribbean territories, Nicolás de Ovando). The ruins of Caparra are known as the Pueblo Viejo sector of Guaynabo, behind the almost land-locked harbor just to the west of the present San Juan metropolitan area. In 1509, the settlement was abandoned and moved to a site which was called at the time "Puerto Rico" (meaning "rich port" or "good port"). In 1521, the name "San Juan" was added, and the newer settlement was given its formal name of "San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico", following the usual custom of christening the town with both its formal name and the name which Christopher Columbus had originally given the island, honoring John the Baptist.</p>
	<p>Puerto Rico was discovered by Christopher Columbus and claimed for Spain on his second voyage to the new world in 1493 and the first colony was established here in 1508. At that time the Spanish, English, and Dutch had all amassed fortunes built on colonial empires and desirable colonies were</p>


	taken from rival countries by force. In 1625 the Dutch burned San Juan to the ground, including the churches and the bishop's library – at the time the most famous and complete collection of books in America. Strong defenses meant survival. El Morro was built over a period of 241 years. The 6 level fortress on the western end of Puerto Rico dominates the entrance to San Juan harbor and its walls extend out to enclose Old San Juan. It is the largest fortification in the Caribbean and it is huge and imposing even today.
	<p>The capital city of San Juan is split into three distinct areas: Old San Juan, the beaches and the modern metropolitan business district. Old San Juan is the historic core of the Capital City but the city as such includes the suburbs of Santurce, Hato Rey and Rio Piedras. The so called Metropolitan San Juan area encompasses also the cities of Bayamon, Carolina and Trujillo Alto. This is the political base, economic powerhouse and cultural center of the island, and home to about one third of all Puerto Ricans.</p> <div data-bbox="224 655 600 867" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>The tourist area of <i>El Condado</i> with its glittering beachfront strip of modern hotels is linked to Puerta de Tierra and Old San Juan by the Dos Hermanos Bridge, built in 1910. The greater neighborhood of Santurce, adjoining the Condado, was once the most exclusive in San Juan is now in decline.</p> <div data-bbox="224 905 472 1094" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>The <i>Isla Verde</i> sector, also a tourist area with beautiful but crowded beaches is located to the east of Santurce and El Condado and is the closest beach/hotel area to the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport.</p> <div data-bbox="1161 905 1448 1094" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>The <i>Hato Rey</i> district, situated to the south of the Martín Peña Canal, is today the "Wall Street" of the West Indies. Housing the banking district within the "golden mile" it is so named because of the large number of banking institutions within a mile stretch along Muñoz Rivera Avenue; just several miles from Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport. Puerto Rico is home to 57 Fortune 100 and 178 Fortune 500 companies.</p> <p><i>Rio Piedras</i>, south of both Hato Rey and Santurce is most known as the location of the main Campus of the University of Puerto Rico and its dazzling <i>Jardín Botánico</i> (Botanical Gardens with 200 species of tropical vegetation on beautifully landscaped grounds) and its student population.</p>
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Old San Juan (Viejo San Juan)	
	<p>Old San Juan is the oldest city under the US flag—founded by Juan Ponce de León in 1508. He personally laid out El Viejo San Juan (Old San Juan) and here, in 7 square blocks of narrow cobblestone paved streets dotted with sidewalk cafes, art galleries and museums, you can visit 500 years of history in restored old colonial homes and fortresses. It is hilly with many beautiful plazas and parks but often devoid of sidewalks.</p> <div data-bbox="1307 1570 1437 1736" data-label="Image"> </div>
	<p>Old San Juan sits on a peninsula separated from “new” San Juan by a couple of miles and a couple of centuries. Old San Juan is approximately ½ square mile full of culture and is youthful and vibrant with many streetside cafes, restaurants, art galleries, and plazas with musicians. Old San Juan and Condado are nighttime destinations for casinos, discos and clubs with streetside/beach terraces open until the wee hours. Free trolleys swing through Old San Juan all day looping to the cruise piers and stopping at</p>

	signs marked "Parada" on their routes (including stops at the long footpath that leads to El Morro fort.)
	<p>You'll notice that even the cobblestones have color in Old San Juan. Rather than being cut from stone or cast as bricks these cobblestones were an ingenious use of slag from Spain's iron foundries. Slag is the waste when iron is refined and was usually piled in huge slagheaps at foundries. But cast into blocks the slag made terrific long-lasting cobblestones. The stones were brought to the island as ballast in ships in the 16th century and their blue tint gives the streets a colorful look. Puerto Ricans have a saying here: "The Spaniards took all the gold in trade for adoquines" (cobblestones).</p> 
	<p>Old San Juan has been around since the days of the Spanish conquistadors. The colonial-style buildings are representative of that time period when the Spanish used to race their horses through the cobblestone streets. Today, Old San Juan has a little something for everyone to make spending a few hours here worthwhile. For the history buffs, there are 16th-century residences, forts, and other landmarks to visit within this walled section of the city. There is a visitor center at the waterfront that provides historical and modern information about Old San Juan (great maps and rum samples!) Since the area only occupies seven square blocks, you'll certainly take in a little history just by wandering. There are plenty of stores to browse in this area. They range from small antique and specialty shops to name-brand retailers and department stores..</p>
	<p>Old San Juan is a walking city as streets are steep and narrow with little or no parking. Traffic often comes to a standstill for long periods of time. Our day of walking in Old San Juan ended by the waterfront, where there was a live merengue band performing onstage. I've been told there are often live concerts on the waterfront on the weekends. vendor booths selling clothing, jewelry, music, and artwork</p>
	<p>For the best walking tour of OSJ, take a cab from the pier to the 16th century fortress El Morro and then meander back down through the streets of Old San Juan. It is an easy 30-minute downhill walk back. For a good walking tour of San Juan http://www.frommers.com/destinations/sanjuan/0323010008.html Take your own audio tour of Puerto Rico: http://www.audioguiapr.com/ For a good aerial map http://www.langland.org/cruises/sanjuan.asp</p>
	<p>There are many well-known "sanjuaneros", among them: writer Manuel A. Alonso, journalist José Julián Acosta, comedian José Miguel Agrelot, former governor Luis Muñoz Marín (the island's first elected governor), anthropologist and archeologist Ricardo E. Alegría, writer and historian Tomas Blanco, actor Raul Julia, golfer Juan "Chi-chi" Rodríguez, painter Jose Campeche, educator Rafael Cordero, former governor Pedro Rosello and musician and composer José Enrique Pedreira</p>
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MUSIC	
	<p>Bomba is African based drum and dance music. Plena is a melodic country music that uses cuarto and scratch gourds. Musica bohemia is nostalgic sultry music. (Music collection/suggestions/weblinks will be added here)</p>
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TRANSPORTATION	
	<p>Puerto Rico's main cruise docks are in the San Juan metropolitan area usually along <i>Calle Marina</i> in Old San Juan. On busy port days, they may dock at Isla Grande's <i>Pan American Pier</i> or Puerta de Tierra's <i>Frontier Pier</i>. Publicos, taxis and tour buses meet passengers at the piers. Publicos have fixed fees (ex: \$10 to and from Old San Juan and Puerta de Tierra.) In Old San Juan, there is a bus station on Calle Marina near the pier (for independent trips to El Yunque, Luquillo Beach, etc.) Metropolitan Bus Authority (787-767-7979 for route information) buses operate on regular schedules (usually up to 9pm) and stop at magenta, orange and white signs marked "PARADA". Buse Routes: http://www.dtop.gov.pr/ama/rutas.htm</p>

	http://www.legendsofpr.com/transit_bus.htm ; http://www.meetpuertorico.com/about_pr/getting_around.asp
	<p>Tren Urbano (urban train) is a 10.7 mile metropolitan rapid-transit system which links the central business district to residential and employment areas in San Juan, Bayamón, and Guaynabo. At the present the Tren Urbano is composed of 16 stations, ten of which are elevated, four at grade or in open cuttings, and two underground. Plans for other phases will extend the system to the Minillas Government Center in Santurce, the municipality of Carolina, Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport in Isla Verde, Old San Juan, and Caguas. The train runs everyday with from 5:30am to 11:30pm. The one way rate is \$1.50, students, Golden age (60 to 74 years of age) and handicaps .75¢ and free rides for passengers 75 years of age or older or 6 years of age and younger. The fare includes a one-way transfer to ride the bus. For information call: 1-866-900-1284 http://edac2.com/samples/map3.gif (station locations)</p>
	<p>The majority of cruise ships dock at the piers along <i>Calle Marina</i>, just south of Old San Juan, in an area that includes shops and facilities and almost directly across the street from the Sheraton San Juan. Between Cruise Piers #3 and #6 is a long waterfront boardwalk – <i>El Malecon</i>. Clean affordable hotels near the pier are Sheraton San Juan, Hotel Milano, Howard Johnson San Juan and the Radisson Ambassador. When you get off the ship at the <i>Terminal San Juan</i> (Old San Juan Piers) you are almost in Old San Juan. Disembark and turn left to Plaza de Darsena and turn right to start up the gentle incline of Calle San Justo to be in the heart of the historic district.</p> 
	<p>When the port is busy, ships may berth across the harbor at the <i>Pan American Dock</i> which is some distance from Old San Juan (not walkable) but most ships provide a free shuttle service to OSJ in this occurrence. If not, the Pan American pier is across the harbor and requires a taxi to Old San Juan (\$6). <i>Some cruisecritics may say you can walk from Pan Am pier to Old San Juan but this would be almost impossible and quite difficult (they may be confusing the Pan Am Pier with the NavyFrontier Pier but even that would be a lengthy walk.) Apparently you could walk to the Caribe Hilton near the Pan Am Pier and take a \$.75 city bus to OSJ.</i></p>
	<p>Pier 1 - A modern two-tiered terminal 770 feet in length. Equipped with pier-side passenger and baggage gangways, elevators, parking and shopping concessions. Pier 3 - Used for transit cruise ships, mainly used by the Royal Caribbean line. Pier 4 - A modern terminal at the north shore of the harbor with a total length of 1,196 feet. Managed by Carnival Cruise Lines. Pier 6 - A marginal wharf with a total length of 1,196 feet. Frontier Pier - A single berth used for cruise vessels and conventional ocean carriers handling open storage cargo. Pan American Pier - A modern, two-tiered passenger terminal with a marginal wharf 2,000 feet in length. Managed by Royal Caribbean International.</p>
	http://www.langland.org/cruises/sanjuan.asp (aerial view of San Juan piers, airport, hotels etc.)
	<p>For information on the cruise piers in San Juan http://www.continentalshipping.com/Port_of_San_Juan.htm http://www.gotopuertorico.com/cruiseweb/san-juan-pier-facilities.php</p>
	<p>To find out where your cruise ship will dock http://www.cruiseclues.com/portschedules.htm#cruisecalls http://www.portschedules.com/</p>

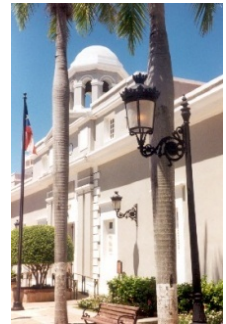
	http://www.gotopuertorico.com/Calendar/calendar.asp?id=89760&date=4-8-2006
	Don't take the excursions to San Juan unless it is the free trolley ride to the forts and then walk back down through town. San Juan is like America with McDonalds, KFC, Walmart etc
	San Juan is one of the hottest places in the Caribbean but there is plenty of shade in the old town's streets. Puerto Rico has one of the most unvarying climates in the world—it is usually 70-80 degrees all year long, day or night! Puerto Rico enjoys summer-like conditions year-round, with the daytime highs ranging from 75° to 85°F. Summer is the rainy season and there is almost a daily brief afternoon thunderstorm. Summer months have a higher rainfall than from November to April, when there is little rain. Water temperature remains relatively constant and varies no more than 4 degrees from the air temperature. Traffic is horrendous and walkers often overtake the tourist buses. There is a free green open-air trolley (not air-conditioned) that runs a loop around Old San Juan and offers continuous commentary about the area. You can hop on and off if you get tired but you could actually walk faster!
	Free trolley rides take you around Old San Juan and can provide you with <i>Que Pasa</i> maps for walking tours. Trolleys originate at the Covadonga parking lot of the main bus terminal across from Pier 4. There are two routes: 1) leave the pier and travel north to Calle Norzagaray and El Morro then returning south on Calle Cristo to Calle Fortaleza, Calle San Justo and back to Calle de Marina and the cruise piers. 2) leave the pier and travel to Plaza de Armas then south on Calle San Jose back to the cruise piers. Trolleys make stops at signs marked "Parada" on their routes. There are several stops along the waterfront including Plaza de Darsena. Hop on and off anywhere for free. Hint: it can often be a 15 minute wait for a trolley and when it arrives it could be full already!! 
	Caribbean Carriage Company provides "calesa" tours in horse-drawn buggies for \$30-60 per couple. Rides start near the waterfront and La Casita on Plaza de Darsena. 
	La Lancha de Cataño (Cataño Ferry) ferry to Cataño and Bacardi Rum Factory leaves from Pier #2 every 30 minutes up to 4:30pm. The ride last 6 minutes and can be very crowded during rush hours. Agua Expreso 787-788-1155
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TAXIS	
	Taxi turisticos are painted white with a garita sentry logo (the sentry guard towers on El Morro.) They charge set rates by zone and run from cruise ships to Condado, Isla Verde, Old San Juan and Ocean Park for \$6-16 per car. City tours start at \$30 an hour. Old San Juan is a complex pattern of steep one-way streets which often make a cab ride seem quite a bit longer than if you just walked it. Still, it is best if you take a cab to the northern Atlantic edge of Old San Juan and then walk back downhill to San Juan Bay and the cruise piers. Taxis may charge a small fee (\$.50) for each piece of luggage. Tons of cabs are waiting at the cruise piers for your arrival and almost all hotels have a line of cabs waiting in front. You can make arrangements on your own by calling: Atlantic City Taxi 787-268-5050. Rochdale Cab 787-721-1900 Mejor Cab 787-723-2460 
	They tell you the shopping is within walking distance but, trust me, take a taxi. It's a long, long walk and when it's hot out, it's not pleasant
	El Morro is a \$5 cab ride from the cruise pier in Old San Juan. It is a 15 minute walk from there to San Cristobal fortress. Each are \$3-5 entrance fee and it is easy to walk to the heart of the historic district from either one.
	You can get a \$10 cab for a 1 ½ hour tour of the city by grabbing a cab right at the pier.
	For fixed taxi rates

	<p>http://www.gotopuertorico.com/go_visitPuertoRico.php?language=english&page=100</p> <p>Zone 2 applies to the Pan American Pier that is across the street to the Convention Center and nearby Miramar.</p> <p>Use the following rates that apply to the PanAm Pier:</p> <p>Airport / Condado / Miramar - \$14.00</p> <p>Piers / Condado / Miramar - \$12.00</p> <p>Panamerican Piers / El Morro - \$10.00</p>
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<p>Car Rentals</p>	
	<p>When renting a car, don't forget insurance for \$12-20 .</p> <p>Avis, Budget Hertz (rent from the Ashford Avenue location if cruising-\$5 cab to pier, the airport location if flying)</p> <p>Charlie: Charlie Cars (airport, Isla Verde, Condado and San Juan locations) friendliest car rental in Puerto Rico 786-866-2865 http://www.charliecars.com/ http://www.puertoricocarrentals.com/ (airport and 10 minutes to pier)</p> <p>L & M National Thrifty</p> <p>ROAD MAPS:</p> <p>http://escape.topuertorico.com/get/ (scroll down for a great PR road map: East, East-Center, West, West-Center)</p> <p>http://www.dtop.gov.pr/act/mapaisla.htm (same great PR road map in Spanish)</p>
	<p>Traffic in San Juan is very congested. moves at a snail's pace and often comes to a standstill during rush hours and after school hours. You may even find you can walk faster than the traffic and this can <i>double</i> your usual travel time. In Old San Juan, all streets are one way and every intersection features a cop asking the drivers to slow down. Drivers often run red lights after 10pm and neglect to use turn signals. When driving in PR, remember that the traffic signs are for decoration only. If you obey those signs then you are a tourist.</p>
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<p>Attractions & Excursions (Overview)</p>	
	<p>Definite "must sees" in Puerto Rico are the four UNESCO World Heritage Sites (means the world community has deemed these locations as important legacies for all mankind) on the island:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.The San Juan National Historic Site and Fort San Felipe del Morro/San Cristobal include most of the surviving fortifications from the early Spanish colonial era. 2.La Fortaleza was first built in 1533 and has been the residence of 170 governors. 3.The Porta Coeli ("Gateway to Heaven") cathedral is located in San German and was originally built in 1606. Restored and now serving as a museum, Porta Coeli is one of the western hemisphere's oldest churches. Built in 1606 the Porta Coeli ("Gateway to Heaven") cathedral is one of the oldest church structures in the western hemisphere. Located in San German, Puerto Rico, it was restored by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture and now serves as a museum of religious paintings and wooden carvings dating back from the 18th and 19th centuries. There are also some interesting examples of architecture and architectural details in and near the city's plaza.
	

	<p>4.The Luis Munoz Rivera Park in Puerta de Tierra, Alto Rey, San Juan is a welcome attraction for tourists tuckered out by climbing old fortifications, spiraling lighthouse steps and even San Juan's expansive shopping malls. The park spreads over 27 acres at the entrance to Old San Juan and dates back to 1928. A thorough reconstruction in 1990 brought the park back to its original lush state, and visitors can enjoy the fragrant breezes and lovely views of the city from the comfort of a shaded park bench. This park is administered by the Park Trust of Puerto Rico, and it is the best-known, most frequently visited children's playground in Puerto Rico -- although it has equal appeal to adults. Conceived as a verdant oasis in an otherwise crowded urban neighborhood, it's a fenced-in repository of swings, jungle gyms, and slides set amid several small lakes. Here you'll also find an incomparable view of San Juan. A small-scale cable car carries passengers aloft at 10-minute intervals for panoramic views of the surrounding landscape (\$2 per person). http://www.parquesnacionalespr.com/munoz_rivera_par.asp</p>  <p>In 1919, land was set aside to create a large recreational park for the residents of San Juan. The land that was set aside once formed part of the third line of defense for the city during the 17th and 16th century. The powder house built in 1769 ("El Polvorín") which supplied Fort San Jeronimo is still located on the grounds of the park. The east side of the park is bordered by the Puerto Rican Supreme Court building designed by architects Toro Ferrer. To the north lies the public beach called "Escambron", the Parque del Tercer Milenio and the Sixto Escobar stadium, former home of the San Juan Senators and Santurce Crabbers baseball clubs.</p>
	<p><i>In Old San Juan, we would recommend going on your own and touring the fort, cathedral, etc. by taking a taxi from the port to the top of the hill where the fort is and then walking from there downhill back toward town. You will be given a map of Old San Juan from Royal Caribbean or pick one up at La Casita (near the waterfront). This would be an economical way to see Old San Juan. It is estimated there are at least 400 structures of historic value in Old San Juan. Here's a sample of things to see:</i></p>
	<p>Old San Juan is not large; only a seven -block-square and is thus easy to explore by foot...The streets were designed similar to "steps" and are meant to be walked over and then up a block, over and then up another block all the way to El Morro. However you should really start at <i>El Morro</i> at the top of the hill..enjoy the breathtaking views of the Bay and the Atlantic and then walk downhill to the piers. As you leave the grounds of El Morro to the east, you'll come to the new <i>Plaza del Quinto Centenario</i> --or Quincentennial Square. Set on steps and on various levels, the square has a totemic monument and a fountain with over one hundred jets of water symbolizing the past five centuries. Children love to play in these jets.The upper western level offers a majestic view of the old <i>San Juan Cemetery</i> with the Atlantic Ocean in the background. Nearby is the <i>Cuartel de Ballaja</i> or Ballaja military barracks, once home to Spanish troops and their families and the largest building engineered by the Spaniards in the New World. It will be the <i>Museum of the Americas</i>. Close by is the Dominican Convent, dating from the 16th Century and now headquarters of the <i>Institute of Puerto Rican Culture</i>...stroll on <i>San Jose Plaza</i> with its statue of Juan Ponce de Leon; the Plaza looks like any other provincial square in any outpost of the Spanish empire.The statue was made from cannons captured during the unsuccessful British attack on San Juan in 1797. Facing the Plaza is <i>San Jose Church</i>, the oldest church building in Puerto Rico and the second oldest in the New World. Close by visit the <i>Pablo Casals Museum</i>. Follow the Wall to the <i>Casa Blanca</i> built for the first Governor who, however, never lived there.The family of Ponce de Leon lived there until 1779; after departing, the house was used as headquarters of the Corps of Military Engineers until 1898 and is now a museum of family life in the 16th and 17th century Puerto Rico. A sweeping view of San Juan harbor can be seen from the small plaza at the end of the Caleta Las Monjas, the <i>Plazuela de las Rogativas</i> . Go to Cristo Street and the <i>Cathedral of San Juan</i></p>

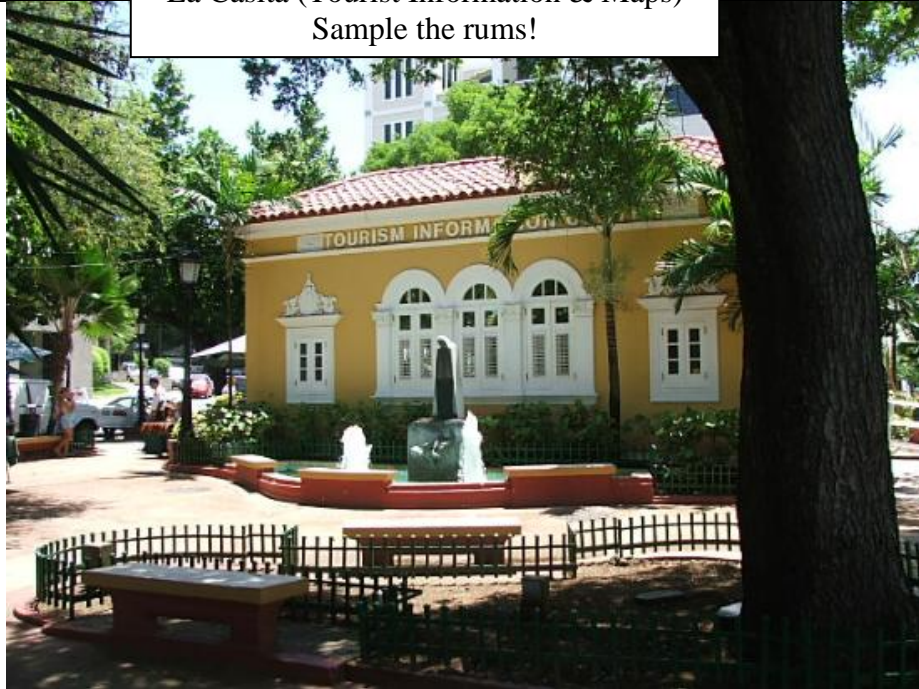
originally built in the 1520's. The original, built of wood and thatch and built on the most prominent spot of the town, facing the port, was destroyed by a hurricane. In 1540 a substantial structure was begun but the Cathedral seen today is largely the result of work done in the early 19th Century. The Cathedral contains the marble tomb of Ponce de Leon whose remains were transferred here from San Jose Church in 1908. The *San Juan Gate* is a short walk away, the only gate of the original six still standing. It was built on the little cove just north of La Fortaleza where small ships in early times preferred to anchor; on its top is a sign that reads; "Benedictus qui venit in nomini Domini". The door was closed down at sunset to cut off access to the city. Just outside the gate, facing the cove, a statue honors Queen Isabella of Spain--it is inscribed "*Isabela la Catolica-Madre de America.*"

Visit *La Fortaleza* , the Residence of the Governor of the island, completed in 1540 but rebuilt in 1846. Re-take Cristo Street and visit the charming *Plaza de las Palomas* , a small park with trees and benches but overrun by pigeons -for which it is named. The park is built along the top of the city wall and is next to the historic *Capilla del Cristo* on the southern wall, dedicated to the Christ of Miracles. Then take *Fortaleza Street* towards the main plaza or *Plaza de Armas*, also known variously during its history as the Plaza Principal, Plaza Alfonso XII, and the Plaza de la Constitucion; recently remodeled and named that way because citizens trained there in case they had to defend the city. Later the plaza became a social center; on certain evenings a band played there; the scene of parades, speeches, demonstrations, weary tourists, running children and pigeon feeding. The four statues that preside over the square represent the four seasons and are over a hundred years old. *La Alcaldia* or City Hall is adjacent to the Plaza; completed by 1789 it is a beautiful building with a double arcade facade flanked by two towers which is said to have been inspired by Madrid's City Hall.



Walking more down the hill you will reach the Bay front with historic *Paseo de La Princesa* where sunsets are spectacular. The promenade, elegantly landscaped with trees, statues, benches, streetlamps and kiosks faces the bay and a fountain with a bronze sculpture depicting the island's cultural roots. Close by is the old *Princesa Jail* (small photo) built in 1837, now restored Headquarters of the Tourism Co. The height of the city wall can well be appreciated here. *La Casita*, (large photo) a miniature building, today houses the P.R. Tourism Co. information center. The newly renovated tourism piers at the Marina area are the base for arrival and departure of the most beautiful and largest of cruise ships in the Caribbean; San Juan is the second largest home port for cruise passengers. Rest in shady parks and enjoy a traditional *refresco* such as a *piragua* (tropical fruit flavored snow cones) or *helados* (ices),

La Casita (Tourist Information & Maps)
Sample the rums!



Then ascend the hill again in the eastern side past the *Tapia Theater*, built in 1832 and named after Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, Puerto Rico's first prominent playwright. The theater was last restored in 1976 at 300 times its original cost. Go up to magnificent *San Cristobal Castle* on Norzagaray Street. The fort is also administered by the National Park Service as part of the San Juan National Historic Site.

Private tour companies and operators:

<http://www.castillotours.com/> ;

<http://www.aaaislandtours.com/> ;

<http://www.puerto-rico-sunshinetours.com/> ;

<http://www.ricosuntours.com/> ;

<http://www.puertorico-tours.com/> ;

<http://www.anticipationtours.com/> ;

<http://www.wordtravels.com/Travelguide/Countries/Puerto+Rico/Regions/Excursions>

<http://www.legendsofpr.com/> ; (I believe this is the one highly recommended by cruisecritics for her cultural and culinary expertise and professionalism.)

<http://www.angelfire.com/super/sanjuan/index.html> ;

<http://www.angelfire.com/fl2/adventours/>

<http://captainduck.com/> ; 90 minute land and sea excursion around Old San Juan, San Juan Bay and Bacardi; amphibious bus/boat rides around Old San Juan and in San Juan Bay \$24 adults \$17 child) 787-725-0077



<http://www.puertoricoexcursions.com/> ;

<http://www.expage.com/amtours> ;


www.pr4lesstours.com (San Juan's number one horseback riding tour company; rainforest/beach \$135PP; bio-lagoon \$75.) 787-627-5214 or email pr4less@asol.com

<http://travelandsports.com/cgi-bin/exp.cgi?lng=ENG&typ=TO&lk=to>

www.freewebs.com/countrysidetourspr 787-593-9014 or email countrysidetourpr@yahoo.com


Pedro Santiago Cell 787-413-2970 Home 787-768-3022 or

	<p>Victor Balbin is a government certified tour guide endorsed, by the Puerto Rico Tourist Board . He can easily arrange tours and transportation for groups of 2 to 50. Dependable, flexible , responsible and over all with a great concern that vistors to the island receive the best service.</p> <p>http://www.destinationpuertorico.com/ (Alvin is a wonderful tour guide in San Juan who owns Island Boy Tours. We did the combo bio-bay and rainforest tour...both were excellent. He knows his biology and loves to talk about the ecosystem. He picked us up at our hotel at noon and stayed with us until around 11pm...he even made special arrangements for us at the bio-bay because we thought it was too windy to do the kayaks email at destinationpr@hotmailcom)</p>
	<p> www.legendsofpr.com www.viptours.com www.jimboatrips.com www.waterfun-pr.com (all water sports on Isla Verde) www.mikebenitezfishingpr.com (deep sea fishing) www.biobay.com (Island Adventure BioBay Tours) http://www.egbc.net/ (Erin go Braugh sailing/snorkeling charters to Vieques and Culebra) http://www.eastwindcats.com/ (East Wind day charters on power orsail catamarans) </p> <p> www.segwaytourspr.com (tour Old San Juan on segways) Read all about them at http://www.puertoricodaytrips.com/2008/03/28/old-san-juan-segway-tour/ the two-hour tour takes a number of stops at historical places along the route. All along the way, Jose explains you what you are seeing and what it's significance is. We went along the waterfront, and then along the Princess Promenade. We stopped at the Roots Fountain and had our picture taken. Then up through the San Juan Gate to El Morro. Old San Juan is full of beautiful statues and buildings. You'll pass many of them, such as the Roagtiva and La Forteleza, where Jose explains the who, what where, when & why of what you're looking at. We also made a quick stop at Casa Blanca, to see the gardens. And we went by the cemetery and a number of public squares. The two-hour tour also includes entrance to El Morro fort and about 30 minutes of a guided <i>walking</i> tour inside (you leave the Segways parked outside the fort). We have been in the fort loads of times, but when you go with a guide, it really adds another dimension to the place. Jose has lots of little known facts, and he points out many easily overlooked things. The 45-minute tour follows the first part of the route of the two-hour tour. You will see and learn about the old jail, the city wall, the Old San Juan city gate, and many of the lovely statuary along the way. <i>Segways of Puerto Rico's</i> tours start at Pier #2 (the short one) Left Wing Office 4 east of the ferry terminal (an ice cream shop is on the corner) \$70 for 2 hour \$30 for 45-minute tour 787-598-9455 </p>
	<p>You might also want to book shore excursions through two slightly discounted web sites prior to your cruise. Portpromotions.com and shoreexcursions.com both offer on-line booking of popular shore excursions worldwide at rates that are often (but not always) lower than the cruise line's. For example, shoreexcursions.com's rates range from \$5 to \$15 off a typical cruise line rate. Note that with this option, your travel mates on these excursions might include passengers from other ships in port that day.</p>
	<p>Annual events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● International Film Festival (November 2006) ● Pablo Casals Music Festival (November 2006) ● Discovery of Puerto Rico Day (Nov. 19, 2006) ● Bacardi Artisan's Fair (Dec. 3 to Dec. 10, 2006) ● Christmas Eve (Dec. 24, 2007) ● La Casita Festival (first Saturday of each month) ● Three Kings Day (Jan. 6, 2007) ● Eugenio María de Hostos Day (second Monday in January 2007) ● World's Best 10K Race (Feb. 25, 2007) ● Puerto Rico Danza Week (May 2007) ● Puerto Rico Heineken Jazzfest (June 2007)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San Juan Batista Day (June 2007) • Loiza Carnival (July 2007) • International Billfish Tournament (August and September 2007) • Typical Dishes Festival (October 2007)
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Attractions & Excursions (Alphabetical)	
	Alcadia: 153 Calle San Francisco & Plaza des Armas; San Juan's original city hall; built between 1604-1789; arcades, towers, balconies, inner courtyard; houses tourist information and art museum on first floor. Weekdays 8-4pm.
	Arecibo Ionospheric Observatory lies a 90 minute drive (70 miles) west of San Juan in the northwest mountains and is the world's largest radio telescope focused on the stars. It's massive dish is larger than a dozen football fields and tuned to detect the slightest sounds from the farthest stars. It is the home-base for NASA's SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) project names SETI@Home. A visitor's center is equipped with interactive exhibits to demonstrate how the huge structure works. Visitors can hike to the viewing platform to view the vast tiled dish. (More walking than you would expect!) Open Wed to Friday 12pm to 4pm Weekends 9am to 4pm \$4. 787-878-2612 http://www.naic.edu/
	Dubbed "an ear to heaven," Observatorio de Arecibo contains the world's largest and most sensitive radar/radio-telescope. The telescope features a 20-acre dish, or radio mirror, set in an ancient sinkhole. It's 1,000 feet in diameter and 167 feet deep, and it allows scientists to monitor natural radio emissions from distant galaxies, pulsars, and quasars, and to examine the ionosphere, the planets, and the moon using powerful radar signals. Used by scientists as part of the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI), this is the same site featured in the movie <i>Contact</i> with Jodie Foster. This research effort speculates that advanced civilizations elsewhere in the universe might also communicate via radio waves. The 10-year, \$100 million search for life in space was launched on October 12, 1992, the 500-year anniversary of the New World's discovery by Columbus.
	Unusually lush vegetation flourishes under the giant dish, including ferns, wild orchids, and begonias. Assorted creatures like mongooses, lizards, and dragonflies have also taken refuge there. Suspended in outlandish fashion above the dish is a 600-ton platform that resembles a space station. You are allowed to walk around the platform, taking in views of this gigantic dish. At the Angel Ramos Foundation Visitor Center, you are treated to interactive exhibitions on the various planetary systems and introduced to the mystery of meteors and educated about intriguing weather phenomena. Tours are available at the observatory Wednesday through Friday from noon to 4pm, Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 4pm. The cost is \$4 for adults, \$2 for children and seniors. There's a souvenir shop on the grounds. Plan to spend about 1 ½ hours at the observatory.
	Directions to Arecibo Observatory, outside the town of Arecibo --from San Juan head west along four-lane Route 22 until you reach the town of Arecibo. Bring plenty of quarters as it is a toll road and you do NOT want to be in the Cambio (Change) lane and each of the four toll booths will be 50-75 cents. At Arecibo, head south on Route 10; the 20-mile (32km) drive south on this four-lane highway is almost as interesting as the observatory itself. From Route 10, follow the signposts along a roller-coaster journey on narrow two-lane roads. Still following the signposts, you take routes 626 and 623, crossing the lush Valley of Río Tanamá until you reach Route 625, which will lead you to the entrance to the observatory.
	On the same day you visit the Arecibo Observatory, you can also visit the Río Camuy caves about 30 minutes away. The caves also lie south of the town of Arecibo. Follow Route 129 southwest from Arecibo to the entrance of the caves, which are at km 18.9 along the route, north of the town of Lares. Like the observatory, the caves lie approximately 1 ½ hours west of San Juan. Cruiscritics have reported driving from metro San Juan to Camuy Caves in 80 minutes. The cave tour itself is 2 ½ hours

	and you must wait at the entrance for the group to board the tram.
 	<p>Bacardi Rum Distillery is across the bay south of Old San Juan in Cataño. A ferry (<i>La Lancha de Cataño</i>) leaves from Pier #2 every 30 minutes up until 4:30pm from a berth next to the cruise ships pier for a 20-minute ride across San Juan Bay and charges \$1 roundtrip. Then a short cab ride to the factory was \$3 per person each way. Entrance to the distillery is free. Often called "the Cathedral of Rum," the Bacardi Distillery at Route 888 is the largest of its kind in the world and produces 100,000 gallons of rum daily. At the site, you can go to the Casa Bacardi Visitor Center, Carretera 165, (787-788-8400), for free 90-minute tours Monday to Saturday from 8:30am to 4:15pm, Sunday 10am to 3:45pm. You are taken on a visit of seven historical displays, including the Bat Theatre, and the Golden Age of the Cocktail Art Deco bar. Upon entering the first floor, you'll get a glimpse of what rum production was like a century ago, including oak barrels used in the aging process and an old sugar-cane wagon. On the fifth floor you'll enter the Hall of Rum with a collection of beverages made by the corporation over a period of years. You'll then witness "the birth of rum" -- the fermentation processes of molasses (it takes 100 gallons of molasses to produce one barrel of rum). You'll visit the Bacardi Family Museum, documenting the family's history, and you can watch a short video about the bottling process. At the end of the tour you're taken on a trolley ride to the Hospitality Pavilion where you can pick up a souvenir and have one for the road. (787-788-1500)</p>
	<p>Bacardi Rum Distillery (RCCL \$28 2 hours) Learn about San Juan history and the development of its unique sugar cane industry. At the plant, you will be able to see the giant fermenting tanks that turn sugar cane into molasses and finally into rum. You will be able to follow the process from vat to barrel to bottle, and then have a chance to sample the results. The tour will end at the pier. This tour will give you the opportunity to learn about San Juan's History and the development of its unique sugar cane industry. Bacardi Corporation is the largest rum distillery in the world. At the plant you will be able to see the giant fermenting tanks that turn sugar cane into molasses and finally into rum. You will be able to follow the process from vat to barrel to bottle, and then have a chance to sample the results. You will also have the opportunity to visit the Bacardi shops and museum. Note: Guests taking this tour at the end of their cruise vacation, please verify your flight time prior to booking. This tour is only available to guests with domestic flights departing from San Juan at 2:30 PM or later, and guests with international flights departing from San Juan at 3:30 pm or later. The tour will conclude at the airport. For in-transit sailings to San Juan this tour will return to the vessel.</p>
	<p>Bahia Mosquito (Vieques) is a bioluminescent bay with sparkling sea creatures resulting in a magnificent and unique light display. Kayak through glowing waters. 90-minute trips by passenger vessels travel to the out island of Vieques three times daily for \$2 one way.</p>
	<p>Bosque Nacional del Caribe (El Yunque) East of San Juan is a 28,000 acre national rain forest 26 miles southeast of San Juan (about an hour) and located between Rio Grande and Luquillo along Route 191. Thirteen hiking trails (many easy to walk, well marked and less than 1 mile long) loop past giant ferns, more than 50 species of exotic orchids, 100-ft trees, dramatic mountain ranges (they make their own weather), streams and cool soothing waterfalls. El Yunque receives 100 billion gallons of precipitation annually (240 inches!) making trails slippery and shoes very wet. Do not drink the water as the river snails produce a schisto bacteria harmful to your liver. It contains 240 tree species and 68 types of birds including the endangered PR green parrot, cotorra (one of the world's 10 rarest birds). They are only 12 inches long with a raucous squawk and there are only 44 of them left (Update: following Hurricane Hugo, 30 are left including only six breeding pairs.) Look up in the red-barked Palo Colorado tree for cotorra nests. Look for giant snails and listen for the tiny coqui tree frogs. Bring camera and binoculars to spot the elusive parrot. Wear long pants, a hat/visor and bring sunscreen and</p>

	<p>water. Be prepared for showers, especially if you plan to hike to the top. Remember this is a rain forest, though rain shelters are often available. Bug repellent is a must but be aware that it can be harmful to aquatic systems in the rainforest. Beware: There are no poisonous snakes; but there are 12 poisonous plants (their pictures and descriptions are available on the El Yunque website. www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/caribbean)</p> <p>Hike to the top of <i>El Torro</i> (highest elevation in forest 3,532 feet.) 787-888-1880 or drive along Rt 191 for observation posts. The road to El Yunque is loaded with food kiosks in Luquillo for fritters and cold beer—don't miss the lobster empenadas. In Pinones 10 miles east of San Juan there are open air seaside eateries and dramatic ocean views. Try a chilled agua de coco right from the coconut shell. Noteworthy food in Pinones: <i>bamboobei</i> funky tropical bar with outdoor seating fronting the bike path and beach. <i>The Waterfront</i> has a wooden deck perched above a secluded beach and serves fresh oysters, crab fritters and fried chicken and cheese. Stop at Luiza with its African heritage and renowned museum-quality masks made from coconuts.</p> <p>http://welcome.topuertorico.org/reference/yunque.shtml ; www.hechoenpuertorico.org/yunque ; http://www.hechoenpuertorico.org/yunque/ www.solboricua.com/elyunque/ykephoto.htm ; www.elyunque.com/about.html ; www.iit.edu/~PR/elyunque.html</p>
	<p>Don't miss the rain forest. Take a taxi--get a group together- cost us \$32. It is 1 hour and 20 minutes away but worth it!</p>
	<p>Travel to El Yunque. Don't count on 45 minutes !!! You haven't seen San Juan traffic yet !!! El Yunque is part of the United States National Forests....it is 28,000 acres so quite large.... easiest hike to La Mina waterfall is about an hour down (yes down) and an hour back up (what goes down must come up) so plan on spending 3 hours driving time.... 1 hour at visitors center and getting to the hike area and 2 hours hiking time (minimum).</p>
	<p>For El Yunque, I waited too long to book. We went with Atlantic San Juan Tours (www.puertoricoexcursions.com), and our tour guide was Andres who I felt was quite good, however the rates were a little higher than what the cruise ship was asking (\$45/ adult, \$40 for kids). (Another company email info@gsipuertorico.com had similar rates.) On the upside, we had a very nice air conditioned van with only 11 passengers including us that day. El Yunque is an hour's drive away from San Juan. The only drawback, was that after we were in El Yunque and had visited the observation tower, we learned that there were 2 trails our guide recommended. (A short one which people with inappropriate footwear and health conditions choose, and a longer one (1 hour) which went past La Mina Falls which half our group went on.) Our guide stayed with the group on the short trail. I think it would have enriched our experience to have the guide with us. Perhaps it was my own faulty expectations, but I was hoping to see one of the tree frogs that reside in the rainforest. We could hear them, we just never saw one. We could also hear birds in the tree canopy, but only saw a humming bird, and one other black and yellow bird. We also stopped to see La Coca waterfall (the one supposedly believed to be Ponce de Leon's fountain of youth). In all fairness, I'm sure the waterfall is spectacular after a heavy storm.</p>
	<p>Along the way, eat at <i>Las Vegas</i> for casual atmosphere serving seafood and local dishes to El Yunque hikers; <i>Villo Pesquera</i> with a view of Rio Espiritu (this river begins at the highest elevation in El Yunque and is PR's only navigable river) serving savory seafood with a great sunset; <i>Chef Wayne</i> a large white house in the rain forest on the front balcony facing the ocean or the back balcony facing the forest --well off the main road down a winding unmarked road. 787-889-1962</p>
	<p>Horseback ride along Rio Mameyes at the edge of El Yunque and along Balneario de Luquillo \$45 hour at <i>Hacienda Carabali</i> 787-889-5820</p>
	<p><i>La Mina Trail</i> the most popular. About 1 mile long, takes about 1/ ½ hour round trip steep narrow concrete steps on return trip</p>

	<p>This was our second time in San Juan. The last time we were there, we spent a few days on the island and we rented a car to go to the El Yunque rainforest. The rainforest is lush and beautiful, and was the highlight of our vacation. We definitely wanted to go back, especially to take my parents along. Given our tight schedule of 12:30 -8:00 p.m. in port, we were unsure of what to do. We did not want to take an organized tour, as they only give you a half hour to walk around, and do not take you to the out-of-the-way <i>Mina Falls</i> (35 foot cascade). The only way to explore the Mina Falls is to hike down, which the tours do not offer. The Mina Falls are, in our opinion, the jewel of the rainforest and to miss it is like going to Rome and missing the Coliseum. Before I left, I spoke with a Puerto Rican car rental agency and arranged with them to pick us up at the pier and shuttle us to their lot. The shuttle was complimentary, and it meant that we did not have to negotiate the hectic Old San Juan traffic. Also, their agency was just off the main highway, so it was easy to find them on the way back. As promised, we called them when we arrived in port and the shuttle bus came within 20 minutes. We arrived at the rainforest just as the Explorer of the Seas tour bus was pulling in! We were chatting with some friends while snapping photos in front of the pretty <i>Coca Falls</i>. But while those on the tour had to leave soon after, we hiked down to the <i>Mina Falls</i> where my husband swam under the refreshingly cool waterfall. It really is breathtaking, and it is a shame there are not any tours that explore this area of the forest. To be on the safe side, We left El Yunque by 5:00 p.m. The rental agency shuttled us back to the pier, and we were in Old San Juan by 6:30. We toured the city for a bit, bought a bit of booze and boarded the ship at 7:30.</p>
	<p>We learned a lot about the area and felt it was one of the best tours we have gone on. This was my children's favorite tour. When we returned home my son called his best friend and told him all about the frogs in the rain forest and how cool our guide was.</p>
	<p>Visit one of the rain forest's several information centers—the best one is <i>Centro de Informacion El Portal</i> for \$3 admission. Download a trail map (including the easy Bano del Oro trail looping 1 mile through the palm forest), the El Caimitillo trail for ½ mile, the challenging El Yunque-Mt Britton climbing the peak (which takes about 3 hours with mild ascents). www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/caribbean</p>
	<p>For El Yunque tours, we used a wonderful gentleman named Javier Lombda last year. He was outstanding, trustworthy, and well informed. You can count on him, and he is very knowledgeable about the area. Here is his contact info: JJESJAV@aol.com</p>
	<p>Capilla Del Cristo- at the base of Calle del Cristo; the legend behind this little 18th century chapel is that a young man named Baltazar Montanez raced down the street on horseback and plunged over the cliff here; during his descent he prayed to one of the Catholic saints to spare his life. Legend has it that he survived and the horse died. Historical records indicate that both died. The church was built to commemorate this spectacular event. The church is beautiful and has a large amount of pigeons around it. Directly to the right of the church is a little park where schoolchildren come and feed the pigeons. The church has 2 large iron gates that lead inside. The inside is inlaid in gold and has a couple frescoes that are worth seeing. Christ</p> <p>Chapel's small silver altar is dedicated to the Christ of Miracles. The altar is made of thousands of silver “milagros” that are given as offerings for a wanted miracle. According to legend, the chapel stands in honor of a youth whose life was spared in 1753 when his horse miraculously stopped before hurling the two of them over the city wall. Capilla del Cristo (Christ's Abbey) and <i>Parque de las Palomas</i> (Dove Park) in Old San Juan is an amazingly beautiful place. The Chapel is not that big and not that far from everything else in Old San Juan. The Parque de</p> 

	las Palomas is a Puerto Rican tradition--If you have a small kid you have to take them there--it is a beautiful Spanish-style plaza which houses thousands of doves--they are very docile and eat from your hand. It is a nice relaxing place with trees and benches so you can take a break from all the sight seeing. Open Tuesday from 10am-3:30pm.
	<i>Carabali Fourtracks ATV:</i> (RCCL \$115 4 hours) Riders are given a 10 minute introduction on how to ride and operate a four track, including safety instructions. The real adventure begins as riders follow guides along outlined tracks through farmland into the rainforest. Individual riders will take it all at their own speed and within their own capabilities. One passenger per vehicle. Closed shoes and long trousers are recommended. Bring cash, towels, bathing suits, and extra clothing. Minimum age: 16, with a valid driver's license. Upon arrival, riders will be given a ten minute introduction on how to ride and operate a four track, including safety instructions. Then the real adventure begins as riders follow guides along outlined tracks through farmland into the rainforest. The tracks are carefully laid out for safety. The group will climb hills, negotiate tight corners, roam through rugged terrain, splash through the river water, and much, much more. Individual riders will take it all at their own speed and within their own capabilities. So, whether you are an experienced rider or a first time rider, you can be sure of an exhilarating ride. A tour highlight is the panoramic view from the Bamboo Lounge where riders can see miles of ocean and rainforest views. Note: Limited to 1 person per vehicle. Closed shoes and long trousers are recommended as is bringing cash, towels, bathing suits, and extra clothing to change into after the tour. Minimum age to participate is 16 years old with a valid driver's license.
	<i>Carabali Rainforest Horseback Riding:</i> (RCCL \$92 4 hours) Guides will teach you the safety points and basics of horseback riding and then lead you down the foothills of El Yunque Rain Forest. You will have an opportunity to swim as well. Long pants and enclosed shoes are recommended. Guests must be at least 12 years and the tour is not available for pregnant women. Located in the town of Luquillo, a one hour and 15 minute bus ride from the pier, is the Hacienda Carabali. This Hacienda provides stables for the fine Paso Fino and well-trained horses which are carefully matched to each rider's ability. Upon arrival at the farm, you will be taught the safety points and the basics of horseback riding on the Puerto Rican Paso Fino horses. An experienced trail guide will lead you down the foothills of Puerto Rico's El Yunque Rain Forest, while you enjoy the incredible views and experience the stunning flora and fauna of this unique eco system. The fresh clear waters of the Mameyes River are perfect for cooling off, as you will have approximately one half hour to enjoy the stop. Don't forget your swimsuit if you plan to swim! Note: The horseback riding portion of the tour is 1 hour long. Long pants and enclosed shoes are recommended. This is a slow-paced, walking-only horseback ride. Guests must be at least 12 years of age and weigh less than 250 pounds in order to participate on this excursion. Bottled water and refreshments are included. No pregnant women are allowed.
	Casa Blanca (1 Calle San Sebastian) on the western end of San Sebastian near the Parque de Beneficencia and the entrance to El Morro; within a block or two of Plaza San Jose and Parque del Quinto Centenario; the ancestral home (built in 1521 and rebuilt in 1523 after being destroyed by a hurricane) of Juan Ponce de Leon (who sailed with Columbus to the new world; founded the first PR settlement in 1508 and became its first governor). De Leon died in Cuba never having lived in the home but his descendents lived in the home for 250 years. A small archaeology museum is on the second floor while select rooms as well as a surrounding garden with fountains is open to the public. Garden was destroyed by Hurricane Georges in 1999 but is restored. \$2 Tues-Sat 9- 12 and 1 to 4:30pm. www.icp.gobierno.pr
	Casa de Ramon Power y Giralt: 155 Calle Tetuan; restored home of 18 th century naval hero; display of musical instruments; diorama with bird calls; an active beehive; gift shop with toys and candles; Tues-Sat 10-4pm
	Casa del Libro: 255 Calle Cristo; exhibits of books and bookbinding techniques; 6.000 books, sketches with 200 rare volumes produced before 1501; antique printing presses; \$2 Tues-Sat 11-4:30PM; www.lacasadelibro.org
	Casinos: Many visitors come to Puerto Rico on package deals and stay at one of the posh hotels at the

Condado or Isla Verde just to gamble. Nearly all the large hotels in San Juan/Condado/Isla Verde offer casinos, and there are other large casinos at some of the bigger resorts outside the metropolitan area. The atmosphere in the casinos is casual, but still you shouldn't show up in bathing suits or shorts. Most of the casinos open around noon and close at 2, 3, or 4am. Guest patrons must be at least 18 years old to enter.





Ritz Carlton Casino: The casino generating all the excitement today is the 18,500-square-foot (1,719 sq. m) Ritz-Carlton Casino, Avenue of Governors, Isla Verde 787-253-1700), the largest casino in Puerto Rico. It combines the elegant façade of the 1940s with tropical fabrics and patterns. This is one of the plushiest and most exclusive entertainment complexes in the Caribbean. You almost expect to see Joan Crawford — beautifully frocked, of course — arrive on the arm of Clark Gable. It features traditional games such as blackjack, roulette, baccarat, craps, and slot machines.

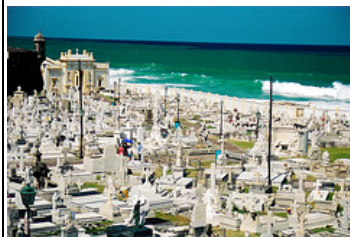



Sheraton Old San Juan Hotel & Casino One of the smallest of San Juan's casinos 100 Calle Brumbaugh 787-721-5100, with some 240 slot machines and roulette tables. You can also try your luck at the **Wyndham El San Juan Hotel & Casino** (one of the most grand), 6063 Av. Isla Verde 787-791-1000), or the **Wyndham Condado Plaza Hotel & Casino**, 999 Av. Ashford 787-721-1000).

Castillo de San Felipe del Morro (El Morro - meaning "promontory") construction of the castle and fortress began in 1533 on the rocky promontory which dominates the entrance to San Juan Bay (kite flying is amazing here—buy one in the gift shop) and took 248 years to complete. With some of the most dramatic views in the Caribbean, it is an intriguing labyrinth of dungeons, barracks, vaults, lookouts, sentry posts (garitas) and ramps. El Morro rises over 140 feet above the sea and has walls from 18 to 25 feet thick in places. [San Cristóbal is over 150 feet straight up from the Atlantic shoreline.] take the triangular staircase to the Santa Barbara Bastion for the best vantage point. The city


walls which join the two fortresses and once encircled the entire colonial capital city are 3.4 miles long. The size of the cannon determines the range of the shot. The average cannon found in El Morro 200 years ago could shoot a cannon ball a mile covering all of the areas between the forts and across the Bay. Some of the 18 pounders which shot a solid cannonball about 6 inches in diameter had a 3 mile maximum range. This maximum range for the smooth bore cannon is the origin for the 3 miles offshore international limit. It achieved World Heritage status (like the Great Wall of China and Egyptian pyramids) in 1983. Tour the dungeons, barracks, turrets, towers and tunnels; small museum displays ancient Spanish guns, uniforms, and fort blueprints; gift shop. There is also a restored lighthouse (right photo). With the purchase of a ticket here, you don't have to pay the admission for San Cristóbal (approximately one mile or 20 minute walk from El Morro) if you visit during the same day. El Morro is a \$5 cab ride from the cruise ships and a 15 minute walk back downhill (though shopping may make it an hour). To get the most out of your visit, you can get the history by paying a few dollars more for a guided tour, take a self-guided tour with a map provided or watch a video in English or Spanish. NO ONE who has done it recommends walking UP to El Morro!! Open 9-5 June-Nov and 9-6 Dec —May.



		
	 <p data-bbox="623 926 1446 1207">As you stand at the entrance to the fort it is hard to imagine the sheer will that it would have taken to assault this fortress, crossing its dry moat and attempting to scale its walls with ladders; all while under fire from above. Yet El Morro was attacked numerous times, and conquered once while still in the early stages of construction. Walk up the steep ramps inside its walls and you can easily imagine the fierce hand-to-hand battles that once raged inside these walls.</p>	
	<p data-bbox="228 1220 1240 1344">Catedral de San Juan 153 Calle Cristo; a Roman Catholic cathedral in Old San Juan, one of the oldest buildings in San Juan, and is the second oldest cathedral in the Western Hemisphere; construction began in 1521, contains the marble tomb of the Spanish explorer and settlement founder Juan Ponce de León;</p>	
	 <p data-bbox="521 1356 1446 1621">Across the street from El Convento Hotel), Catedral de San Juan is one of the few examples of authentic medieval architecture; dates back to 1521; glass-cased remains of the martyr Saint Pio and a glittering blue statue of La Virgen de Providencia (Puerto Rico's patroness). Sebastian Ramirez, the first bishop to be consecrated in the New World, was ordained here. Singer Marc Anthony married Miss Universe Dyanara Torres here. \$1 donation; weekdays 8:30-4pm with mass at 12:15; masses pm Sat at 7[m and Sunday at 9am and 11am. www.catedralsanjuan.com</p>	

	 	<p>Cementerio de San Juan (San Juan Cemetery; also Santa Maria Magdalena de Pazzis Cemetery) is located between El Morro and the rocky cliffs above the Atlantic is considered one of the most picturesque of burial grounds anywhere. The cemetery is particularly noteworthy for its elaborate tombstones and the circular neoclassical chapel dedicated to Mary Magdalen. The most notable piece is a circular, red-domed chapel, which dates back to the late 19th century. Visitors should be wary while visiting this cemetery due to its proximity to the crime-ridden La Perla neighborhood.</p>	
	<p>Centro Nacional de Artes Populares y Artesanias; 253 Calle Cristo; colonial building next to Casa del Libro and a repository of island crafts. Mon-Sat 9-5</p>		
	<p><i>City Tour & Bacardi Rum Distillery</i> (RCCL \$35 4 hours) This tour includes a stop at the San Cristobal Fortress and the Bacardi Rum Distillery. The tour includes views of Old San Juan and the more modern parts of the city. This tour takes you for a visit to view the massive ancient fortresses and the great stone walls that have protected the capital since the conquistadors built it in the 16th century. A stop is made at the San Cristobal Fortress where you have the opportunity to explore the old fort at your leisure. This is an unaccompanied visit and guests should be aware that the walk into the fort includes a steep gradient. During the drive through the old city, you will see many restored buildings that give Old San Juan its Spanish colonial flavor. Afterwards, the tour continues to the world famous Bacardi Rum Distillery, where you will have the opportunity to learn about the San Juan history and the development of its unique sugar cane industry. You will enter the new Bacardi Amphitheater where you will see the complete history of the Bacardi family and the process of making rum. You will then visit the Bacardi museum where you will be able to smell the different kinds of Bacardi Rums and even sample the results. The tour will continue with a drive through the Condado and Isla Verde areas, where you can see the modern part of San Juan.</p>		
		<p>Convento de los Dominicas: 98 Calle Norzagaray; built by Dominican friars in 1523 and now home to the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture; contains religious manuscripts, artifacts and art; book and music shop on premises, occasional classical concerts; hear Gregorian chants. Mon-Sat 9-5pm.</p>	
	<p>Culebra and Vieques dubbed “the enchanted isles”, Vieques and her smaller sister Culebra lie off Puerto Rico’s east coast accessible from Fajardo by ferry. Vieques is 20 x 5 miles wide and consists largely of the biggest wildlife sanctuary in the Caribbean. Some of the world’s most beautiful beaches with azure clear waters and sugary white sand are to be found in the sanctuary. Stay overnight to experience the Bio Bay or Laguna Grande—which glows on moonless nights with bioluminescence radiated by microscopic one-celled organisms called a dinoflagellate. Culebra is 7 x 3 miles and is renowned for its clarity of the waters. The island has no rivers or streams and is unspoiled; offering unrivalled snorkeling and scuba diving in its magnificent encircling reefs. Kayak and hiking expeditions wind through the Culebra National Wildlife Refuge. Bring binoculars to spot one of over 120 seabird nesting colonies.</p>		
	<p><i>Culinary Puerto Rican Experience</i> (RCCL \$99 4 hours) Prepare to enjoy an evening at one of Puerto Rico’s most delightful restaurants, The Terracampstre. Guests will have the opportunity to experience a two in one show – the culinary delights of Puerto Rico and a Folklore show. Upon arrival, guests will be greeted by the designated staff, who will offer a complimentary beverage. Sit back and enjoy the cooking and the folkloric music of Puerto Rico. Guests will enjoy drinks, dinner and deserts. Two alcoholic beverages included. Prepare to enjoy an evening at one of Puerto Rico’s most delightful restaurants, The Terracampstre. Guests will have the opportunity to experience a two in one show — the culinary delights of Puerto Rico and a Folklore show. Upon arrival, guests will be greeted by the</p>		

	<p>designated staff, who will offer a complimentary beverage. Sit back and enjoy the cooking and the folkloric music of Puerto Rico. Guests will enjoy drinks, dinner and deserts. Two alcoholic beverages included.</p>
	<div data-bbox="219 304 766 724" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>El Castillo de San Cristóbal, a 17th century fortress built between 1634 and 1785; larger but not as impressive as El Morro, it is 4-5 blocks from the ship and approximately one mile or 20 minute walk from El Morro. This huge 27 acre fortress, begun in 1634 and reengineered in the 1770s, is one of the largest ever built in the Americas by Spain. Its walls rise more than 150 feet above the sea; a marvel of 18th century military engineering, San Cristobal dominates Plaza Colon and the eastern approach to Old San Juan. Five free-standing structures are connected by tunnels and are larger than El Morro (though not in area covered).</p> <p>The Wall's average height is 40 feet but reaches 48 feet by La Fortaleza and the width varies from 20 feet at the base to ten or 12 feet at the top. The Wall still exists on the northern and western sides but was torn down on the southern and eastern side to make room for expansion of the city. San Cristóbal protected San Juan against attackers coming by land as a partner to El Morro, to which it is linked by a half-mile of monumental walls and bastions filled with cannon-firing positions. It is located on eastern end of Calle Norzagaray; fort built in to guard the north end of the city (El Morro is on the western end of Calle Norzagaray). Sometimes if you plan on visiting both forts on the same day it is a reduced \$5 for both (daily 9-5pm) . www.nps.gov/saju</p> <div data-bbox="948 798 1445 1167" data-label="Image"> </div>
	<p><i>We took a leisurely, nice walk to Fort San Cristobal, shopping at some wonderful artsy stores on the way. There are also street vendors selling nifty artwork in the park nearby. The fort was very interesting, you take a self guided tour with a brochure, good view of the ship and downtown from the top battlements! Don't miss the dungeon! It was inexpensive,too. Great view of the surf from the grounds outside.</i></p>
	<p>El Yunque Rain Forest Tour (RCCL \$38 4 ½ hours) This tour of El Yunque Rain Forest includes a visit to a natural swimming pool, a walk along the Caminitillo trail, the Yohaku observation tower and Coca Waterfall. For guests taking this tour at the end of their cruise vacation, flight must be by 4:00pm or later and the tour will terminate at the airport. Popular side trip out of San Juan is to El Yunque Rain Forest. During the 1 ½ hour drive, you'll pass towns and rural communities en route to one of Puerto Rico's finest spots of natural beauty. El Yunque encompasses 28,000 acres and reaches an elevation of 3,526 feet, so it is pleasantly cool. The rain forest averages 200-inches of rainfall a year, making the tropical woodlands lush. Upon arrival at Bao Grande, a natural swimming pool, you will depart on a 25-minute walk on Caminitillo trail. Along the way you'll see the artificial nest of the Puerto Rican parrot, flora and fauna of the Palo Colorado forest, and other forest inhabitants. You will make a short stop at the interpretive station before re-boarding buses for a short ride to the Yohaku observation tower. You'll stop at Coca Waterfall, once believed to be the fountain of youth.</p> <p>Note to guests taking this tour at the end of their cruise vacation: Please verify your flight time prior to</p>

	booking. This tour is only available to guests with flights departing from San Juan at 4:00 pm or later. The tour will conclude at the airport. For IN-TRANSIT sailings to San Juan, this tour will return to the vessel. Swimming in El Yunque is not available during this tour
	Fuerto San Cristobal: see “ El Castillo de San Cristobal ”.
	Fuerte San Geronimo Calle Rosales, Puera de Tierra; built in 1788 to defend Condado Lagoon; next to and leased by the Caribe Hilton for events; open to the public
	Guanica’s Dry Forest has 10,000 acres of wilderness with 600 unusual plants and animals, 16 of them unique to Puerto Rico. Campers can enjoy one of five trails in Toro Negro Forest which boasts Puerto Rico’s highest peak. Meet the Guánica Dry Forest Reserve: 10,000 acres of dry land inhabited by over 600 uncommon types of plants and animals, including 48 endangered species and 16 that are unique to Puerto Rico! This United Nations Biosphere Reserve is especially alluring to hikers and cyclists, as they forage far into the Dry Forest through twelve trails of varying difficulty. You can also enjoy the uncommon scenery by car on the narrow road that hugs the border of this strikingly scenic, desert-like expanse. Puerto Rico is so ecologically diverse within such a small stretch of land that a visit to Guánica’s Dry Forest Reserve may well require bringing along both a bathing suit and good pair of walking shoes. One of the most beautiful beaches on the island is located right next to the Dry Forest, and nearby you will also find the attractive Copamarina Beach Resort. Go on a day-long tour, or stay a few more days in order to get the full flavor of Porta del Sol , the southwestern region. For tour information and reservations, contact ACAMPA, 787-706-0695 or visit http://www.acampapr.com/page.cgi?page=tours
	Hato Rey is a district of San Juan, Puerto Rico , in the northwest of the former municipality of Río Piedras , and southwest of Santurce . Hato Rey was a <i>barrio</i> of Río Piedras Because of its location, many Puerto Ricans travelling to Old San Juan must drive through Hato Rey. Hato Rey is a startling contrast between the barrio of the very poor and <i>La Milla de Oro</i> (The Golden Mile), a stretch that effectively covers only one mile but that is home to the headquarters of many large banks and is one of the most important centers of Puerto Rico ’s economy. Important buildings in Hato Rey include the Banco Popular headquarters, Plaza Las Americas , and the Roberto Clemente Coliseum . Puerto Rico’s FBI headquarters are also located in Hato Rey. Because of the area’s closeness to the airport , major airlines , such as Avianca and Iberia , have had their offices in Hato Rey. Hato Rey is also home to a series of boutiques and restaurants (mostly among Roosevelt avenue). The José Miguel Agrelot Coliseum and the Tren Urbano (Urban Train) are reshaping Hato Rey and bringing people into the area after hours. The train is also helping to ease traffic woes in the area by decongesting the roads. Fi Sigma Alfa Fraternity’s main headquarters are located in Mexico street, Chile corner. Hato Rey is the birthplace of Sila María Calderón , singer Ricky Martin , and jazz saxophonist David Sánchez
	<p>Iglesia de San Jose: in Plaza de San Jose on Calle Cristo; (and ½ block from Catedral de San Juan)</p>  <p>white stucco church is one of the oldest in the Western Hemisphere (near Museo Pablo Casals and Museo de Nuestra Raiz Africana); superb example of 16th century Spanish Gothic architecture; Built by Dominican friars as the monastery’s church, the San José Church was where Juan Ponce de León was buried for 300 years, until he was moved to the Catedral de San Juan in 1913. The renowned Puerto Rican painter José Campeche, who painted many of the interiors of the island’s churches, is buried here. Sunday’s mass takes place at midday. Mon-Sat 8:30-4pm; Sun mass at 12:15.</p>

	<p>Jardin Botanico (Botannical Garden) is just outside San Juan and holds one of the most extensive collections of tropical plants in the world. Administered by the University of Puerto Rico, Jardín Botánico is a lush tropical garden with some 200 species of vegetation. You can pack a picnic lunch and bring it here if you choose. The orchid garden is exceptional, and the palm garden is said to contain some 125 species. Footpaths blaze a trail through heavy forests opening onto a lotus lagoon. 6am to 6pm 787-763-4408</p>
	<p>La Casita off Plaza de la Darsena, near Pier #1 It is a must to begin a walking tour at La Casita, which houses an information center of the official Puerto Rico Tourism Company. Pick up a self-guided walking tour map and a copy of <i>Qué Pasa</i>, the official guide to Puerto Rico. The walking tour of Old Town requires about four hours, including time to enter sites. Better, stretch the tour to a full day, allowing time for morning coffee, lunch, and tea or wine in the late afternoon at a sidewalk cafe. This leaves ample time for browsing in the multitude of pleasant shops along the route and time to stroll in the many plazas and parks of the old town. Wear comfortable walking shoes. Most streets are paved with cobblestones. San Juan Arts and Crafts Market (<i>Mercado de Artesania</i>) in adjacent plaza and streets every Mon & Tues 11 to 9:30 pm Sat & Sunday 9:30am to 10pm. Arts and crafts are also sold along Paseo de la Princesa on weekends. There is also a stage here for “Romantic Sunsets” free concerts on Sundays at 5pm. “La Casita Festival” occurs on Saturdays at 6pm and includes music, dancing and arts and crafts. Public restrooms (\$.50!) are nearby at the start of Paseo de la Princesa. La Casita is open 8am to 8pm daily (the “bar” opens at 1pm but is closed Thursdays and Fridays). If closed, look for city information kiosks painted in dark green.</p>
	<p>Your Old San Juan adventure begins at La Casita (“The Little House”) the yellow building located in Plaza de la Dársena that houses the Puerto Rico Tourism Company Information Center. Open Mon. through Wed. from 8:30 AM to 8:00 PM; Thur. and Fri. until 5:30 PM; Sat. and Sun. from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM. There is an outdoor crafts market around the building that is open Sat. and Sun. from 9:30 AM to 10:00 PM and Mon. and Tues. from 11:00 AM to 9:30 PM. The crafts market schedule may vary according to cruise ship itineraries. (787) 722-1709. Look for the little Don Q “museum” for a brief history of rum-making by the Serralles family, and the Don Q rum brands. They also have a free tasting bar, so you can try the rum for yourself and see why it is Puerto Rico’s favorite rum--free pina coladas! Also, see the coast of Old San Juan by ferry or tour boat. Boats leave from Pier #2 near La Casita. The boat for the Bacardi Rum Facotry tour leaves from here and the horse-drawn carriage rides through OSJ originate from this area as well.</p>



La Fortaleza (or El Palacio de Santa Catalina) at the very western end of Calle Fortaleza just inside the city wall overlooking the Raices fountain and a block south of the San Juan Gate; also within a block or two from Plaza de Armas and Howard Johnson Inn; two blocks south of El Convento



Hotel; built in 1533 as a fortress which proved to be too small, La Fortaleza, (The Fortress) is the current official residence of the Governor of Puerto Rico. It was built between 1533 and 1540 to defend the harbor of San Juan. The structure is the oldest executive mansion in the New World. It was listed by UNESCO in 1983 as a World Heritage Site. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/266> During the 1640 reconstruction, the chapel of Santa Catalina, which originally existed outside of the walls, was demolished and was integrated to the walls of the structure. This would give rise to the name of Santa Catalina's Palace La Fortaleza was the first defensive fortification built for the city of San Juan, and the first of a





series of military structures built to protect the city which included the Fort San Felipe del Morro and the Fort San Cristóbal. The construction was authorized by Charles V as a defense against attacks from the European powers of the day and Carib Indians. Initially, the structure consisted of four walls enclosing an interior patio with a circular tower known as the Homage Tower. From the top of the tower, the governor, following military tradition, would take oaths of fidelity at critical moments to the Queen and the King of Spain. Later, a second tower named the Austral Tower was constructed. One of the best things to see in the mansion is a broken, old mahogany clock that stands in a corridor. Just before relinquishing the building (and the island), the last Spanish governor paused in front of this clock and struck its face



with his sword, stopping time to note the very last moment of Spanish rule in Puerto Rico. At present, the complex consists of a few attached buildings with formal living quarters in the second floor, and private quarters in the third. It overlooks the high city walls that front the bay, and within the north perimeter of the house are sheltered gardens and a swimming pool. Since the 16th century, La Fortaleza has acted as the residence of the Governor of Puerto Rico, making it the oldest executive mansion in continuous use in the Americas. On November 27, 1822 the tradition of executive mansion was officialized. The fortress underwent a massive reconstruction in 1846 to change its military appearance into a palatial façade. La Fortaleza has been the residence of over 170 governors of Puerto Rico and has hosted various dignitaries, including President John F. Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline Kennedy who stayed in La Fortaleza in 1961. Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, King Juan Carlos and his wife Queen Sofia of Spain are among the names of several heads of state who have stayed in La Fortaleza.



La Muralla – the city wall built of sandstone blocks between 1539 and 1641 and measures up to 20 feet in thickness (15 feet thick at the San Juan Gate) , the wall was completed in 1782 to surround the entire colonial city and guard it against enemy attack. Parts of the southern and eastern walls were

	removed for expansion of the city.
	<p>La Perla is a picturesque but rough neighborhood outside the northern historic city wall of Old San Juan and is best avoided; on the northernmost shore between El Morro and El Castillo de San Cristobal and somewhat near one of the last surviving San Juan gates and Iglesia De San Jose church. It is a slum neighborhood that stretches about 600 meters along the rocky Atlantic coast immediately east of the and very near the elaborate Santa Maria Magdalena de Pazzis Cemetery (San Juan Cemetery) and down the slope from (and north of) Calle Norzagaray (winding street in photo, view is from San Cristobal looking west to El Morro). La Perla was established in the late 19th century as the site of a slaughterhouse because the law required them - as well as cemeteries - to be established away from the main community center; in this case, outside the city walls; farmers and workers started living around the slaughterhouse and shortly established their houses there. In recent years, La Perla has become more known because of the high rate of illegal drug trafficking and crime.</p> <p>La Perla is a mix of brightly colored houses and shacks piled one atop the other. Most native Puerto Ricans avoid this high crime area where even police are reluctant to venture. Incidences of drug-related crimes like robbery, muggings, car jackings and even children with guns have been reported. While it is difficult to find access to this neighborhood and its streets are not listed on most maps of Old San Juan; its high level of crime can spill out into surrounding neighborhoods. Oscar Lewis' 1966 novel <i>La Vida</i> was written about the poverty and prostitution of La Perla and the HBO movie "Arturo Sandoval, for Love and Country" was filmed here. Also, avoid drug addicts hangouts such as the eastern end of Calle Norzagaray and other Puerto Rican neighborhoods such as Puerta de Tierra, Calle Loiza (Santurce) and Plaza del Mercado in Rio Piedras after dark. As with any other large cities in the world; use common sense and caution in protecting your personal safety.</p>
	<p>La Princesa (on Paseo de la Princesa); gray-and-white building which served for centuries as one of the most feared prisons in the Caribbean; today it houses the offices of the Puerto Rico Tourism Company and an exhibit of work by Puerto Rican artists. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday from 9am to noon and 1 to 4pm, and admission is free. In front of La Princesa stands a sculpture of one of the island's most beloved leaders, Doña Felisa Gautier, mayor of San Juan from 1946 to 1968. Through the courtyard, jail cells can still be visited!</p> 
	<p>La Rumba Party Cruise—The trouble with most nightlife venues in San Juan is that the real parties in conventional night clubs begin at hours so impossibly late that the average visitor will tend to be deep asleep by the time the first dancers begin to rock 'n' roll. So if you love to salsa and 27eringue, but if you maintain relatively conservative ideas about your bedtime, consider the La Rumba Party Cruise as a viable option. It all takes place aboard a neon-lit two-level mini-cruiser that's moored most of the time to a point near Old San Juan's cruise pier #1 (Plaza Darsenas) and the Sheraton Old San Juan Hotel. Schedules vary according to business, but tend to last 75 minutes each, and depart every Thursday at 9:30pm, every Friday and Saturday at 9:30pm, 11:30pm, and 1:30am; and every Sunday at</p>

	9:30pm and 11:30pm. And if you show up about an hour prior to a scheduled departure, you can fit in up to an extra hour's worth of shaking your booty to Latino music as the boat sits in port, music blaring, waiting for other clients. Cruises cost \$12 per person, with a cash bar on board selling beer for between \$4 and \$6 each, depending on the brand. There's a sightseeing benefit to the experience as well: en route, as it chugs out to sea, participants garner sea-fronting views of both of San Juan's 18 th -century forts and the coastline of Isla Verde. 787-375-5211.
	Las Cabezas de San Juan Nature Reserve is located on three promontories extending into the Atlantic Ocean on the extreme northeast corner of Puerto Rico and is one of the most beautiful natural areas on the island. The reserve is close to Fajardo, a major marina and diving resort, about one hour's drive from San Juan. The area offers pristine beaches ideal for snorkeling. The reserve contains seven different ecological systems including coral reefs, sandy beaches, lagoons, mangroves and dry forest. It is also home to several endangered species. Boardwalk trails provide easy access. El Faro is a restored 19 th century lighthouse and has an observation deck and information center. Reservations required 722-5882 weekday and 860-2560 weekends. \$5 adults \$2 children. A nature-lover's paradise, from the trails and boardwalks you can observe every major tropical habitat that exists on the island, except a rain forest. Trained guides, ample signs, demonstrations, and special programs and exhibits help visitors understand and appreciate this fragile ecology. To protect the sensitive eco-system, visitors are transported through the park and to the lighthouse on open trams. In addition to visiting the small nature center on the lower level of the Fajardo Lighthouse, be sure to climb the antique iron staircase to the observation deck. The view of the 316-acre preserve with El Yunque towering behind it is extraordinary. Even more breathtaking is the seeming endless expanse of sea, dotted with islets and far off islands. The Fajardo Lighthouse is usually open to the public Friday through Sunday. Reservations are required (787) 722-5882 or (787) 860-2560 on weekends.
	Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico 300 Av Jose de Diego, Santurce; 130,000 square foot museum features Puerto Rican artwork from the 17 th century to the present. There is a new east wing with a beautiful 5-story stained glass window looks over 5 acre garden with sculpture trail and pond and a 400-seat theater with a remarkable lace stage curtain dedicated to the late actor Raul Julia; Tues-Sat 10-5, Sun 11-6pm www.mapr.org
	Museo de Arte y Historia de San Juan: 150 Calle Norzagaray; art and history museum with concerts in huge interior courtyard; near Plaza de Quinto Centenario.
	Museo de las Americas: in Cuartel de Ballaja building across from El Morro on Calle Norzagaray and Calle Morro: former military barracks, this building was the largest edifice in the Americas created by Spanish engineers; museum on second floor; display of popular and folk art of Latin America; religious figures, costumes, musical instruments, basketwork, and farming implements; tues-Fri 10-4pm; weekends 11-5; www.museolasamericas.org
	Museo del Indio: on Calle Norzagaray and Calle Morro; tiny museum traces history of Taino culture with artifacts; video and replica of Taino home. Tues-Sat 10-4pm.
	Museum del Mar (Museum of the Sea) across from Pier #1; seafaring items: ship models, instruments and documents of the Spanish colonial period, a delight for visitors, friendly staff and cool.
	Museo del Ninos: 150 Calle Cristo: small children's museum with interactive displays, mock plaza with barber shop, padded playroom for toddlers; food group pyramid to climb, natural history exhibits including a top floor bug garden and rooftop petrified forest; learn about dental hygiene and pet care; playground; \$5 Tues-Thurs 9-3:30; Fri 9-5pm; weekends 12:30-5pm; www.museodelninopr.org
	Museo de Nuestra Raiz Africana: 101 Calle San Sebastian; two floors of African musical instruments; slave trade documents and the African influence on island culture; Tues – Sat 8:30-4:20PM; www.icp.gobierno.pr
	Museo de Pablo Casals 101 Calle San Sebastian; an 18 th century home that illustrates the life and

	some of the works of the Spanish Catalan cellist who lived in San Juan for almost 30 years from 1956 until his death in 1973. The museum is home to his cello, piano, photographs and other memorabilia. \$1 admission; Tues-Sat 9:30-5:30pm.
	Old & New San Juan City Tour (RCCL \$29 2 hours) Experience both modern and colonial San Juan. You will visit Fort San Cristobal, see historic landmarks such as the San Jose Church, the Governor's Mansion, the Cristo Chapel, El Convento Hotel, visit the Condado section of New San Juan. For guests taking this tour at the end of their cruise vacation, domestic flights must depart after 2:30pm and international flights after 3:30pm. Experience both modern and colonial San Juan during this excursion. You will visit Fort San Cristobal, a 17th-century military fortification, the largest ever built by the Spanish. The Spaniards built San Cristobal and the city walls to defend San Juan from attack. You'll have time to explore the tunnels and other ingenious defenses. You'll also see historic landmarks such as the San Jose Church, the Governor's Mansion, the Cristo Chapel, El Convento Hotel and other historical areas. You'll also visit the Condado section of New San Juan, with its rows of modern condominiums and luxury hotels. You have the option of ending the tour in the shopping area of Old San Juan and either returning to the ship independently or returning directly to the ship. Note: Guests taking this tour at the end of their cruise vacation, please verify your flight time prior to booking. This tour is only available to guests with domestic flights departing from San Juan at 2:30 PM or later, and guests with international flights departing from San Juan at 3:30 pm or later. The tour will conclude at the airport. For in-transit sailings to San Juan this tour will return to the vessel.
	Old San Juan Walking Tour (RCCL \$42 adult, \$30 child 2 ½ hours) Your walking tour includes a trip around San Juan Bay through San Juan Gate, a photo stop at la Rogativa Monument, a visit to San Felipe del Morro and its museum, Las Americas Museum, Quincentennial Square and San Jose Square. You'll also have the option to shop at la Fortalez and Cristos street. Accompanied by your tour guide, you will take a short bus ride from the pier to the entrance of San Felipe del Morro Castle, where you will start your walking tour by visiting the inside of this magnificent Castle, the San Felipe del Morro and its museum. Then you will enjoy an amazing view of San Juan Bay and continue walking through to the Ballaja Barracks Building. You'll also have a visit to Las Americas Museum, Quincentennial Square and San Jose Square. After exploring the great architecture of San Jose Church and its surroundings, you will go down to Cristo's Street through the narrow cobblestones streets and balconies onto San Juan Bautista Cathedral. There will be a photo stop at La Rogativa Monument before arriving at Cristo's Chapel. At the end of the walking tour guests have the option of enjoying the shopping at la Fortaleza and Cristo's Streets and then take a short walk back to the ship.
	<i>My husband and I decided to forgo any of the RCCL sponsored excursions, and we spent about 4 hours doing our own "walking" tour of Old San Juan. Our first stop was the "fort", which has been turned into a historical park. Entrance fee of about \$3 per person to walk around the inside and top of the historical fort, where we had great views of the ship and downtown Old San Juan. After 45 minutes at the fort, we walked to the "pigeon square" (I forget the official name of it) and through a few downtown jewelry shops (some bargains). We stopped in an outdoor café for some Puerto Rican rum punch and madurros (sweet plantains). We toured a historical Catholic Church, dating back to the 1600's. We walked through the Wyndham Resort's Casino and placed a quick roulette bet. We stopped in Senior Frog's – a Mexican restaurant that is known for its crazy bar scene and margaritas.</i>
	Parque de las Palomas: small shady park near Capilla del Cristo (just inside city walls) with nice bay view, refreshment vendors and children feeding lots of pigeons.
	Paseo de la Princesa is a picturesque waterfront boulevard that parallels San Juan's ancient walls and stretches approximately 400 yards (or ¼ mile) from Plaza de Hostos near Pier #1 to the San Juan Gate (after the gate, it becomes Paseo del Morro). Built in 1854 to honor Princess Asturias of Spain, this special walkway skirts outer walls of the old city and is worth repeat passage at various stages of sunlight, or nightfall when streetlamps and spotlights zero-in on significance. Decorative palm trees lining the initial stretch are stunted by fortress walls towering behind them. Beyond rows of shaded benches are small gardens with statues and local artwork clearly labeled with intent. On the western



end stands the impressive monument to the island's cultural heritage: *Monumento Raíces*—a magnificent fountain with a bronze sculpture by the Spanish sculptor Luis A. Sanguino Pascual (who also created “The Immigrants” in Battery Park, NYC) With breathtaking views of San Juan Bay on your left and La Fortaleza on your right, walk on to the San Juan Gate and pass through into Old San Juan. Houses along Caleta San Jaun here are 400 years old—look into houses with Morrish tile work and lovely open inner courtyards.

Plaza de Hostos is a secondary meeting place; left of cruise ship piers and abuzz with the curious frequenting La Casita, which houses a tourism information center. Leaving crowds behind, make your way left onto the Paseo de la Princesa and prepare for captivation.

La Princesa is the city's historic jail; an intriguing colonial structure now incarcerating the island's tourism headquarters. But most breeze right passed, drawn towards the spectacular la Fontana de las Raíces (photo) containing bronze sculptures depicting formations of local heritage. Spray from the waters is driven by winds coming off the harbor. Terraced decks contain fully-exposed benches and frequent lovers. Sunset romance is further catered to on Sundays from 5:30-7:30 with musical performances.


Rounding the corner, La Muralla imposes full attention for closer inspections of the historic sandstone walls. The myriad of perspectives are confounding, tightly pinned between power of presence and sultry scents from the bay. Structures and objects peeking over the top remind that you're an outsider all but voyaging back in time.

Garden alcoves spring forth from the wall's indentions suggesting this effort is something not to rush. The densest of shade provides comfort from the Caribbean sun, but the coolest effects come from the wall, with numerous places to stop and grope. Place your face against its soothing touch, even in the darkest of night, while personally serenaded by natural sounds of Old San Juan.





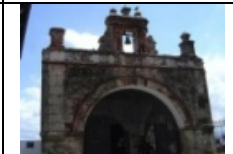

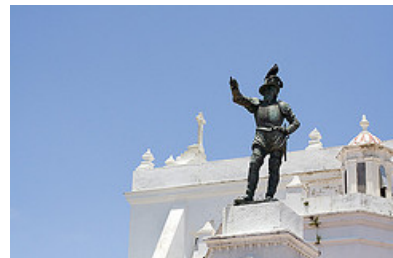

The halfway point of this Lovers' Lane is distinguished at the Puerta de San Juan; one of six original gated passageways into the city, and the only one remaining. Otherwise, the walkway continues onward; this portion open until 10:00 pm.




Paseo del Morro: Finally completed in the late '90s, second half of the paseo contrasts the refined subtleties earlier encountered and gets strictly down to the business of fortification. It is $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long. You can see the Bacardi Rum Factory “smokestacks” across the bay in Cataeno from here. There's nothing quaint about this except the almost 500-year purpose of warding off strangers. Even locals shy away from this stretch until sunset when joggers and speed walkers brave the course. Great photos are possible here but the walkway is hot with no shade (although there are water fountains along the way).

	<p>There are many many stray cats here but do not pet or feed them, they are taken care of by the PR “Gatos” Society and are fed, spayed and neutered. You must stay on the walkway as security guards monitor. Paseo del Morro is open from 6am to 10 pm daily.</p> <p>In-depth details on large information placards are placed almost as strategically along the walk as the massive ramparts and bulwarks which overshadow them. Fascination in words pales in comparison with abrupt proximity of El Morro, firmly fixed into the cliffs. Nothing's as impressive as the aerial views dominating postcards, but venturing to the point and wishing for vision-contained, wide-angle mode is a must. Signs say to keep off the rocks, but obedience hampers further viewings. There's a water fountain; my only encounter during this last jaunt made in high-noon heat. Best panoramas reveal themselves walking back towards la puerta. Enter the city, and bide your time until conquest awaits at dusk.</p>
	 <p>Parque de las Cavernas del Río Camuy (see also Río Camuy Caverns) contains the third-largest underground river in the world. It runs through a network of caves, canyons, and sinkholes that have been cut through the island's limestone base over the course of millions of years. Known to the pre-Columbian Taíno peoples, the caves came to the attention of speleologists in the 1950s; they were led to the site by local boys already familiar with some of the entrances to the system. The caves were opened to the public in 1986. Visitors should allow about 1½ hours for the total experience. Visitors first see a short film about the caves and then descend into the caverns in open-air trolleys. The trip takes you through a 200-foot deep sinkhole and a chasm where tropical trees, ferns, and flowers flourish, along with birds and butterflies. The trolley then goes to the entrance of Clara Cave of Epalme, one of 16 caves in the Camuy caves network, where visitors begin a 45-minute walk, viewing the majestic series of rooms rich in stalagmites, stalactites, and huge natural "sculptures" formed over the centuries. Tres Pueblos Sinkhole, located on the boundaries of the Camuy, Hatillo, and Lares municipalities, measures 65 feet in diameter, with a depth of 400 feet-- room enough to fit all of El Morro Fortress in San Juan. In Tres Pueblos, visitors can walk along two platforms--one on the Lares side, facing the town of Camuy, and the other on the Hatillo side, overlooking Tres Pueblos Cave and the Río Camuy. The caves are open Wednesday through Sunday from 8am to 3pm. Tickets cost \$10 for adults, \$7 for children 4 to 12, and \$5 for seniors. Parking is \$2. For more information, phone the park. (787-898-3100) Where to Dine--The closest place for food is the Casa Grande Mountain Retreat in Utuado, a little mountain town south of Arecibo.</p>
	<p>Pinones Natural Reserve –Just 20 minutes from San Juan, you will quickly reach the Piñones Natural Reserve with its boardwalk through the forest, wild stretches of beach with fine views of the San Juan skyline, a maze of stunning mangroves, a small bioluminescent bay, dramatic sand dunes, and exotic wildlife. Birdwatchers often record up to 46 species during visits to Piñones, and snorkelers can be sure of seeing many of the 36 species of fish that are found in its waters. If you continue east, you will reach Valcía Talega Beach and its strange landscape of twisted rocks dotted with palm trees, the perfect place to end your Piñones adventure.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Plazas (Old San Juan)</u> (see OSJ's main streets listed under “Shopping”)</p>	

	<p>Plaza de Armas (Army Square) located off Calle San Jose; the old city's main square; broad and open square bordered by Calle San Francisco and Calle Cruz; San Juan's most symmetrical and beautiful; features four statues representing the four seasons, each over 100 years old. It is centrally located and was carefully planned as the main city square and has served as a social meeting place for generations; 16th century main square and principal social gathering place; single young females would parade around the square hoping to catch the eye of available young men. On the north side is Alcaldia, the former city hall built between 1604 and 1789. On the west side is La Intendencia, once the Spanish Treasury building and now the PR State Department. There is a bandstand, Café 4 Estaciones (espresso or cold drinks in the square), Pueblo grocery store (201 Calle Cruz) with a Walgreen drugstore (all gingerbread and blue) next door on this square; nearby Howard Johnson Inn in a restored colonial building. Don't miss the Butterfly People restaurant with thousands of native butterflies decorating the walls and overlooking a courtyard or visit the nearby Butterfly Shop 152 Calle Fortaleza, 2nd floor!</p>
	<p>Plaza de Colón (Columbus Square) Originally called St. James Square, it was renamed in 1893 to honor Christopher Columbus on the 400th anniversary of his discovery of Puerto Rico. At the pedestal of his statue are bronze statues that record important dates in the life of the explorer. A number of dining establishments can be found near Plaza de Colon such as Café Berlin and the Parrot Club. On the north side of the plaza is a bus terminal for buses to and from greater San Juan.</p>
	<p>Plaza de la Darsenas: on the waterfront of San Juan Bay; across the street from Pier #1; contains La Casita (tourist information); nearby Plaza de Hostos and the start of Paseo de la Princesa promenade to the San Juan Gate.</p>
	<p>Plaza de Hostos small shady cobblestone square located in front of Plaza de la Darsena near the waterfront and Pier #1 on San Juan Bay (between the Banco Popular building and the waterfront) and near <i>La Casita</i> (where tourist information is available); it features artisan displays, snack stands and kiosks, and traditional piragüeros, who sell shaved ice topped with tropical fruit syrup; for locals, it is a secondary meeting place. It's huge banyan tree was nearly destroyed by Hurricane Georges in 1999 but now domino players enjoy its shade again.</p>
	<p>Plaza de la Marina (off easternmost edge of Paseo de la Princesa) sloping angled plaza banked by towering royal palms and paved with brick. Walk west on Paseo de la Princesa overlooking the sea to a large bronze fountain, <i>Raíces</i> (Roots), sculpted in 1992 by the Spanish artist Luís Sanguino, depicts the Amerindian, African, and Spanish origins of Puerto Rico as human figures with dolphins cavorting at their feet. On east side stand five allegorical pieces on the island's heritage sculpted by José Buscaglia in 1992. This work is said to symbolize the various epochs that Puerto Rico has undergone in the past 5 centuries -- from the coming of the Spanish conquistadores to the beginning of Puerto Rico's role as a U.S. protectorate. A gazebo serves light seafood dishes, salads, and the island's famed rich coffee. Outdoor tables with umbrellas allow parents to keep an eye on their children, who may be enjoying the playground nearby. More than 20 trees were planted to shade the tables. Criollo dishes are also available from food carts and vendors with colored awnings.</p>



	<p>Plazuela de la Rogativa (Plaza of the Procession) between Calle Sol (beautiful painted houses) and Calle San Sebastian (most popular bars) just a few blocks north of San Juan Gate and below El Morro (at the opposite end of the very short Del Morro Road); also about one block from El Convento Hotel and Ben & Jerry's on Calle Cristo. Commemorates the warding off of British attack ships by a procession of religious women in 1797. Blockaded and cut off by British forces seeking to gain control of the port, the mayor ordered a divine procession by the citizens to ask for the saints help. The women in the procession held lights and bells; that the British mistook for reinforcements. The Brits fled and Old San Juan was saved; monument of a bishop and three women was created in 1971 to commemorate the city's 450th anniversary.</p>	
	<p>Plaza de las Palomas (or Parque de las Palomas—Pigeon Park), a small park with trees and benches but overrun by pigeons -for which it is named. The park is built along the top of the city wall and is next to the historic Capilla del Cristo (photo) on the southern wall, dedicated to the Christ of Miracles (see also Capilla del Cristo).</p>	
	<p>Plaza del Quinto Centenario (Quincentennial Square) terraced plaza built in 1992 as the cornerstone of Puerto Rico's commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the New World. Showcases a 40-foot sculpture by Jaime Suarez, entitled "Totem Telunico" made of terracotta symbolizing the blend of island cultures, one of Puerto Rico's foremost artists; the fountain (see photo) is one that children love to play in; one of the most elaborate and formal piazzas in Puerto Rico.</p>	
<p>Plaza de San José – Spanish-style square; highest point in Old San Juan; a favorite meeting place for young and old alike; (adjacent to Plaza del Quinto Centenario at Calle San Sebastian); At its center stands the huge bronze statue of founder Ponce de León, made from a British cannons captured in during Sir Ralph Abercromby's attack 1797. The <i>Museo de Las Americas</i> is found on this Plaza; <i>Museo de Pablo Casals</i> dedicated to musician Pablo Casals. The world famous cellist died at his Old San Juan home at age 96. A music festival is held in his honor each year. The oldest place of Christian worship in the New World <i>Iglesia de San Jose</i> is also located on this square. Puerto Rican craft outlet is located next to church. El Boqueron and El Patio de Sam café's are here.</p>		
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	<p>Rio Camuy Caverns is a 248 acre park two hours southwest of San Juan (near Arecibo) and is the site of miles of spectacular subterranean caverns that were carved out of limestone by the Camuy River more than a million years ago. Only 7 miles of caves have been fully explored but 16 entrances have been discovered to what is believed to be the world's largest cave network. Well-maintained walking trails lead down 200 feet into a fern-filled ravine to explore the cathedral-like caverns. The Cathedral Cave has Native American drawings. Guided tours and trolley are available through one cave and two sinkholes where you will see stalactites, stalagmites and plenty of bats as well as a unique species of blind fish. Night time tours are now available. The park has picnic areas, walking trails, food outlets, an exhibition hall and a souvenir shop. The caves restrict the number of people attending each day so go in the morning to avoid being disappointed. Open Wed to Sunday 8am to 3pm Tickets cost \$10 for adults, \$7 for children 4 to 12, and \$5 for seniors. Parking is \$2.</p>	

	http://www.frommers.com/destinations/sanjuan/D40504.html
	San Juan Cathedral (see Catedral de San Juan)
	<p>San Juan Gate (Puerta de San Juan) from <i>outside</i> the city wall, it is at the end of Paseo de la Princesa, from <i>inside</i> the wall it is at the end of Caleta San Juan—this tiny street runs straight from the San Juan Gate up to the Catedral de San Juan (sailors often made the trip to give thanks for their safe arrival). Caleta San Juan passes 400 year old houses with Morrish tile work and lovely inner courtyards and then past the El Convento Hotel with its tiny triangular and very shady Nun’s Park—a great place for a drink and a rest. Several good restaurants and many shops surround this area on Calle Cristo (look under “Shopping” section for a detailed list of things to do on this street).</p> 
	<p>The “Puerta San Juan” is the oldest surviving gate (tunnel through the 15 foot thick wall of the fort) and the city’s first ceremonial entrance. The massive red wooden doors were closed each evening to protect the city from invaders. If you continue walking on the promenade past the gate entrance you will now be on Paseo del Morro and there are no further gates through the wall into the city of Old San Juan.</p>
	<p>San Juan National Historic Site (787-729-6960), which is open daily from 9am to 5pm, charging \$3 for adults, new \$2 million center is connected via two tunnels?? to El Morro and San Cristóbal (approximately one mile or 20 minute walk apart) and was created from a strategic military base used in World War II. (The National Park Service states that any tunnel between the two is a myth.) The site contains a small fort, San Juan de la Cruz (called El Cañuelo), which was constructed across the bay from El Morro to provide cross fire across the mouth of the bay and to prevent enemy landings on the western side of the harbor. The small fort of San Juan de la Cruz, better known today as El Cañuelo, was the smallest component of the harbor defense system, built on a tiny islet. El Cañuelo Fort is located at Isla de Cabras at the western end of the entrance to the San Juan Bay.</p> <p>The cannon at El Cañuelo helped El Morro block the harbor entrance with a deadly crossfire. This little square redoubt also watched the mouth of the Bayamón River, an important passageway for supplies from the interior of Puerto Rico. At one time, an enormous chain was kept ready to be stretched between El Cañuelo and El Morro in order to physically barricade the channel. First built of wood, El Cañuelo was in the thick of the fighting during the 1625 Dutch attack, and burned to ashes. A new stone fort was built by the Spaniards in the 1670's. Visitors view a 12-minute film about the fortifications. A photo exhibit, a gift shop, and other exhibits are of interest.</p> 
	<p>Snorkeling/Scuba: the eastern coast of Puerto Rico from Fajardo to Humacao including Vieques and Culebra are favorite snorkeling/suba spots. Shallow waters soft sand, elaborate patch reefs and sizzling reef fish make this region ideal for beginning divers. Call Caribe Aquatic Adventures 787-281-8858. For snorkeling, try Icacos, Palominos and Palominitos (a sandbar topped with palms and sea grapes.) Visibility ranges 20-60 feet with mild to non-existent currents. <i>Culebra</i> is great for shallow dives of 10-</p>

	<p>50 feet with visibility up to 60 feet and most dives are close to shore. Reefs here are wxtensive, healthy and extremely photogenic.with hawksbill turtles sharing the sea with tiny blue chromis. On the southern coast, the <i>Caja de Muertos</i> Island off Ponce has beautiful snorkeling, with nice corals and a visibility ranging between 30-60 feet. Guanica has a string of accessible cays including immensely popular <i>Gilligan's Island</i> and <i>La Perguera</i> with dozens of mangrove-topped cays and channels.</p> <p>Off the southwest coast near the village of La Paraguera, the continental shelf drops off forming La Parguera Wall which offers some of the most spectacular diving in the Caribbean. Beginning at 60 feet and dropping vertically to 130 feet before plunging thousands of feet to the sea floor, the wall is home to renches and valleys, immense gardens of staghorn and elkhorn coral, deep-water gorgonians, black coral and purple trumpetfish. With little current and thousands of rainbow-colored fish moving through azure blue waters with visibility exceeding 100 feet; this is an underwater photographer's heaven.</p> <p>Crash Boat Beach in the northwestern town of Aguadilla boasts the best known walk-in artificial underwater kingdom located in the pilings of the old dock which are coverd with sponges of every color imaginable dotted with seahorses, colorful bristle and feather duster worms, eels and schooling fish. Nearby <i>Bajura Beach</i> in Isabela faces a breathtaking ring of open underwater caverns offering sanctuary to tropical fish in cathedral like settings of light and shadow. Average depth is 30 feet with visibility of 30-60 feet. Do not enter caves without a local operator and when sea is not calm.</p> <p>Porta de Sol's sunset western coast beaches have patches of coral reef with the most impressive diving found at uninhabited Desecheo Island. This National Wildlife Refuge has nine miles with more than 24 dive sites scatted around a rocky bottom that slopes 120 feet with pristine astonishingly abundant marine life. Visibiity can reach 100 feet. <i>Mona Island</i> is 50 miles off the west coast and is a major nature reserve often refered to as the Galapagos of the Caribbean.</p>
	<p>Snuba in Puerto Rico (RCCL \$105 4 ½ hours) Snuba is a shallow water diving system that allows you to dive with no certification or prior experience. It allows you to experience the joy of breathing underwater. Snuba will take you to depths of 20 feet or less. The equipment floats on a raft at the surface and is monitored by our staff. You also have the option to Power Snorkel. Power Snorkeling is the same as snorkeling but instead of a snorkel you breathe through a regulator. Ideal for guests who have problems equalizing their ears. Snuba is a shallow water diving system that allows you to dive with no certification or prior experience. The Snuba system is a world wide and is safe for ages eight to eighty. It allows you to experience the joy of breathing underwater with only a fifteen minute orientation. Snuba will take you to depths of twenty feet or less. The equipment floats on a raft at the surface and is closely monitored by our professional staff. You also have the option to Power Snorkel. Power Snorkeling is the same as snorkeling but instead of a snorkel you breathe through the regulator.</p> <p>This is great for those who want to swim beneath the surface and also ideal for people who have problems equalizing their ears. The underwater tour is fully guided and takes place on a natural living reef just off the coast of neighboring Icaos Island, full of colorful tropical fish in warm 83 degree Caribbean waters. Once you arrive, you immediately see the natural beauty of the coral reefs below and all the vibrant underwater fish life. Snack bags, fresh fruits, water, and refreshments will be provided.</p>
	<p>Sunset Cruise (RCCL \$89 5 hours) Start by going to the most North Easterly point of the island. Pass the El Yunque National Rainforest, where there are more than one hundred species of flora and fauna and seven major waterfalls. See beaches, where they are famous for the endangered Leather Back Turtles. The tour takes you around a number of emerald islands just off the marina. Music from Calypso to Reggae sets the mood. The tour heads westerly until the sun dips below the horizon. All drinks and snacks are included. The tour begins with a bus ride departing from Old San Juan cruise terminal to the most North Easterly point of the island. Along the way you will pass the only Rainforest</p>

	in the United States, El Yunque National Rainforest, where there are more than one hundred species of flora and fauna and seven major waterfalls. You will also see beautiful beaches, where they are famous for the endangered Leather back Turtles. The excursion takes us around a number of emerald islands just off the marina. Music from Calypso to Reggae sets the mood. Go below deck to observe the ocean's life zone through the glass-bottom hull or lounge on the deck or trampoline. All drinks and snacks are included. The tour heads westerly until the sun dips below the horizon. At twilight, starry skies or moonlight glow. The east wind then returns to port and our professional photographer captures the moment on film CD
	The Fortresses Walking Tour (RCCL \$39 adult \$29 child; 3 ½ hours) Your walking tour includes visits to the Cristobal Fortress and the Castle of San Felipe del Morro. You will have a short break in the Quincentennial Square and the option to shop on Cristos Street. Accompanied by your tour guide, you will take a short bus ride from the pier to San Cristobal Fortress located at the northeast rim of Old San Juan. You will visit the inside of this military fortification built in the 17th century. You will then continue your walk through San Sebastian Street and Norzagaray Street where you will enjoy the panoramic view of the Atlantic Ocean and the influence of French and Spanish architecture of its private homes. You will walk by the Art and History Museum building with a short break at the Quincentennial Square. After enjoying this break you will continue on to the Castle of San Felipe del Morro for an inside visit of this amazing 5 acre fortification built during the 18th century. After visiting Fort San Felipe you will be escorted to Cristos Street where you can enjoy shopping or go back to the ship.
	The Original Canopy Tour (RCCL \$125 3 ½ hours) The Original Canopy Tour is located less than 30 minutes from the Port of San Juan inside the remarkable La Marquesa Forestry Reserve. The tour takes approximately an hour and a half to complete as you sail from tree to tree and platform to platform on a network of pulleys and double horizontal cables that are mounted between 10 and 70 feet above the forest floor. The tour consists of 8 traverses and 14 observation platforms, an assisted rappel and a series of suspended walkways. The Original Canopy Tour is located less than 30 minutes from the Port of San Juan inside the remarkable La Marquesa Forestry Reserve, which is owned by the Municipality of Guaynabo. The lush vegetation is a sanctuary for tropical flora and fauna and The Original Canopy Tour provides you with the opportunity to see this world from a unique perspective. The tour begins with a short walk up hill of about 10 minutes to the demonstration area. Once you have completed the training, and have put on your gloves and safety equipment. Our expert system operators will take you to the start of the tour. The tour takes approximately an hour and a half to complete from this point as you sail from tree to tree and platform to platform on a network of pulleys and double horizontal cables that are mounted between 10 and 70 feet above the forest floor. The tour consists of 8 traverses and 14 observation platforms, an assisted rappel and a series of suspended walkways and you will have our knowledgeable personnel to assist you every step of the way from the moment you leave the ground, until you get back down to the forest floor. Note: There are restroom facilities at the reception area and a small shop which sells souvenirs and water. We recommend bringing insect repellent, extra water and a camera. The minimum age to participate is 12 years. Maximum weight is 275 lbs.
	Teatro Tapia: Calle Fortaleza; on the south side of Plaza de Colon; ballet, operettas, plays, theater performances since 1832 (named after PR playwright Alejandro Tapia y Rivera).
	Tibes Indian Ceremonial Center is two miles north of Ponce is still being excavated and is one of the most important archaeological sites in the West Indies. It features an ancient cemetery, the remains of seven courts used by the Igneri (pre-Taino) people for a football-like game, two dance grounds and standing stones believed to have been used as an ancient astronomical observatory. The site contains a reconstructed Taino village, museum, exhibition hall and souvenir shop.
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Top Ten Things to Do (Someone Else's list!)	
	#10. Old San Juan was and remains, for the most part, a walled city. In the past, residents entered

through one of several doors, each door representing a certain social class or profession. Today, only one of the doors remain, and you can enter the old city by walking through it for an impressive view and to get a sense of Puerto Rico's history. Ask any local to point you to the Paseo de la Princesa, Old San Juan's waterfront path. About halfway along the path you will notice a pair of enormous wooden doors on your right. Enter through the doors, walk up the street, and take in your first sight of the pastel colored colonial houses that characterize the architecture of Old San Juan. At the top of the street you will find Old San Juan's Cathedral.

- #9. **Casa Blanca.** the house in which some of the descendants of explorer Ponce de Leon lived; gem of history is tucked away at the end of Calle San Sebastian. Skip the house itself if you must, but don't fail to visit the garden, even if you don't consider yourself the garden type. (To read an English-language article about Casa Blanca, visit

<http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2002/vol6n39/CasaBlanca-en.html>

- #8. **Piñones and Loiza.** a two-lane highway to these two destinations begins just beyond the airport. You'll come upon Piñones first, and you'll recognize it by two features: wooden food kiosks with wood fired stoves on the right side of the road and the ocean on your left; experience traditional Puerto Rican cuisine. Loiza will be a few miles beyond, just over a bridge that crosses a river that feeds into the Atlantic. Loiza may not look like much, but it has a fascinating history. Loiza became home to many freed slaves after abolition and remains a traditionally Afro-Puerto Rican community today. Curiously, though, its church—the oldest and arguably one of the simplest yet most beautiful in Puerto Rico—is named San Patricio, Saint Patrick. See if it's possible to get a trolley tour of the community (every town has a trolley intended to take tourists around on a guided visit; most, though, don't have regular schedules), and be sure to ask about the Cueva de Maria, a cave where Tainos allegedly lived before the arrival of Christopher Columbus. Ask around and see if it's possible to visit the home and art studio of Samuel Lind, a local artist who has achieved prominence for his multi-media work. <http://topuertorico.org/city/loiza.shtml>)

- #7. **The Museum of Art of Puerto Rico** has an impressive collection of seminal Puerto Rican work and contemporary pieces that will be particularly interesting to art lovers. For those with a generous budget, be sure to visit Pikayo Restaurant, located inside the museum. This is probably the most expensive meal you'll have in Puerto Rico, but it's also likely to be your best.


<http://www.mapr.org/>)



<http://www.wilobenet.com/restaurants/pikayo.htm>


- #6. **Noche de Bohemia and Canvas Restaurant,** Caguas. Puerto Rico is world-famous for its music and its dance, and a noche de bohemia is an event that's not to be missed for the tourist who is interested in either. Many cafes and restaurants have noches de bohemia—or romantic music nights—but one of the best I've come across in my 2.5 years in Puerto Rico is the Cafe Teatro in Caguas. Watch couples fall in love all over again as they sing and dance to Puerto Rican classics. When you've danced enough to work up an appetite, cross the street and indulge in a sumptuous dinner at the part art gallery, part restaurant on the corner. The owners will make you feel at home and you'll easily spend a couple of hours there, possibly taking up a microphone or some maracas yourself! www.caguas.gov

- #'s 5. & 4. **Las Cabezas de San Juan and Hacienda Buena Vista.** The Fideicomiso de Puerto Rico, translated roughly as the Nature Conservancy, is dedicated to preserving Puerto Rico's environmental heritage by acquiring historically important property, restoring it as needed, and opening it to the public for guided educational tours. In my opinion, a visit to Las Cabezas de San Juan—which boasts seven different ecosystems in the same park—and Hacienda Buena Vista, a coffee farm and, once a year, a mini chocolate factory; at present, the Fideicomiso's properties are open Wednesday-Sunday by appointment only. It can be difficult to reach anyone by phone, and even more difficult to have anyone <http://www.fideicomiso.org/enter.htm>

- #3. **Vieques.** one of Puerto Rico's "little sister islands"; fly there or take a ferry ride (the latter being far cheaper and more adventurous), but whatever you choose, do yourself a favor and stay over at least

	<p>one night. On this tiny island there are dozens of beaches you'll be likely to have to yourself...and, perhaps, an occasional wild horse. Ask around for Nestor Guishard, a bioluminescent bay kayak guide (see #2) and repository of historical knowledge about Vieques. (http://www.vieques-island.com/)</p> <p>#2. Bioluminescent Bay: There are only a handful of bioluminescent bays in the world. Puerto Rico has three of them: one in Fajardo, one in Vieques, and one in La Parguera. The best by far is in Vieques. Choose a kayak tour and experience the natural glow of the bay at night, caused by the density of microorganisms that congregate in shallow, warm bays. http://www.islavieques.com/biolinks.html</p> <p>#1. Paseo de la Princesa</p>
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BEACHES	
	All the beaches are public in Puerto Rico. Beaches in the San Juan metropolitan area face the Atlantic Ocean and front hotel resorts and residential districts. There are beaches at Condado and Isla Verde, a 10 minute taxi ride from the port (or a long hot walk from town).
	Avoid beaches at night when muggings have been known to occur even on posh stretches like Condado and Isla Verde. Don't wear a money belt or a waist pack, both of which identify you as a tourist. Like any other city, use caution and common sense.
	The <i>northern</i> coast tends to be rough and less safe for swimming, although it offers some good surfing spots. Here you will find every watersport including kite boarding, snorkeling and kayaking. The beaches on the <i>southern</i> coast face the Caribbean Sea and have calm water, particularly in winter. Mangrove forests, once found in abundance island-wide, remain common. The offshore islets with their coral reefs around Puerto Rico's coast offer some wonderful snorkeling opportunities, particularly Vieques and Culebra.
	Boqueron , a most popular "balneario" beach (public bathing beach with parking, lifeguards, clean changing room/restrooms and snack bars) for locals with Caribbean waters on a huge crescent beach and perfect white sand is one of island's most scenic beaches along the west coast. It contains a large and deeply recessed bay bordered by bird-rich lagoons.
	Coffin Island: Saturday and Sunday between 9-5pm, ferries carry visitors from the pier at La Guancha on the Ponce waterfront to <i>Coffin Island</i> , a tiny uninhabited island five miles south of the city where there are pristine beaches and a marked snorkeling trail. Visitors can also explore the 19 th century Caja de Muerto Lighthouse which has been restored and houses a museum.
	Dorado Beach Resort (Hyatt) at Dorado (800-233-1234) is 18 miles west of San Juan, this posh resort was carved out of a plantation and opens onto several miles of white sandy beaches at the mouth of the Río de la Plata.. Since the turn of the 20th century, Dorado, which means "golden," has attracted U.S. presidents and rich folks like the Rockefellers.
	El Escambron is a "balnearios" (public bathing beach with parking, lifeguards, clean changing room/restrooms and snack bars) good restaurant and is listed as a Blue Flag environmentally sound beach; \$6 per person from pier, Zone 4, 5-10 minutes; Bus: \$0.25 from Old San Juan, but need \$6 taxi anyway from Pier I believe
	Flamenco Beach is a spectacular Blue Flag beach on the island of Culebra and resembles a vast palette of turquoise sea, white sand, green hills and blue sky and allows overnight camping. 
	La Playeula is a half-moon undeveloped beach (take everything you need) on the southwestern tip of Puerto Rico down a dirt road past salt-mining pools and a mangrove preserve near the neoclassical Cabo Rojo Lighthouse set at the edge of 200-foot cliffs.
	Luquillo (pronounced Lew-key-joe) is a "balneario" and Blue Flag beach is 19 miles east of San Juan with a clear shallow lagoon with calm waters in a crescent-shaped bay edged with stately coconut palms and brown sand and coral reef-protected. Waves here are few and disappointing. It is the best known beach on the northeastern coast of Puerto Rico and is extremely popular. Rustic kiosks in front

	of the beach along Highway 2 serve up traditional Puerto Rican snacks. It is a lovely long stretch of sand with water sports. Discovery Channel includes it in the list of “prettiest stretches of sand” in the Eastern Caribbean. Luquillo public beach, is proud to provide wheel chair access at its Sea without Barriers facility. There is a small parking fee and a \$2 fee for private changing areas with lockers. (The free public changing rooms are not well kept.) Luquillo is also the home of many well-run stables that offer horseback riding thru the rain forest or along its beautiful sandy beaches. Some cruisers have reported riding paso fino horses along this beach. Unfortunately locals are terrible litterbugs and the beach can be quite messy at the end of the day. When asked the cause of the traffic jams back to San Juan, locals say “Everyone loves the beach!” http://www.elyunque.com/luquillo.html
	<p>Ocean Park/ Punta Las Marias Beach (east of Condado) best beach to visit in Puerto Rico if you want to see the hip crowd of beautiful people and have a great time. Ocean Park is a very beautiful beach - hundreds of young Puerto Ricans gather to have some beers, play racquetball and have some fun. If you want to find where the beautiful girls of Puerto Rico put on their G-strings and get wet, this is the place to go. It is located in the Condado area very close to hotels but it is located in a residential area. If you rented a car, you can park in the streets, but you have to arrive early if you want to find a parking. It gets really crowded. Don't park where you shouldn't or you'll get a parking ticket for sure.</p> <p>Pinky's (Ocean Park), will deliver fruit shakes, sandwiches and salads right to your beach spot. 787-727-3347.) Stay on the beach in Ocean Park at Numero Uno guest house: http://www.numero1guesthouse.com/ 866-726-5010 (12 guestrooms-see description under hotels)</p>
	Playa de Isla Verde (San Juan) beach seems to go on forever and hosts the toniest resorts on the island. There are no lifeguards and the white sand beach is surrounded by high-rise hotels but there are plenty of places to rent a beach chair, watersports and eat. Snorkel rentals from \$5-7. Taxi: \$16 per person from pier, Zone 7, 10-20 minutes
	Pinones , an undeveloped track of coastline set amid a mangrove forest, former coconut plantations, kiosks, restaurants and a 6-mile long bicycle boardwalk/path.
	Rincon a town which marks the division between the calm Caribbean Sea to the south and the rough Atlantic Ocean to the north. Most beaches in this region extend for miles and virtually every kind of water adventure from low-keyed beachcombing to world-class surfing is found. Most beachgoers head to <i>Crashboat Beach</i> in Aguadilla where colorful fishing boats line the shoreline set at the foot of limestone cliffs.
	<p>Vieques: The beaches east of <i>Sun Bay</i> (right photo) on Vieques are semi-deserted during the week and are as beautiful as Flamenco but on a much smaller scale. Take a ferry (left photo) to Vieques or Culebra.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
	Water Club: Tell the driver to take you to the Water Club Hotel. The hotel is at a big beach entrance. Walk to your right when facing the Atlantic Ocean. You will see condominiums and hotels.
Other noteworthy beaches:	
	<p>Southern beaches: Punta Guillarte near Arroyo Playa de Ponce with its long strip of startlingly-white sand.near PR's second largest city, Ponce</p>
	<p>Shacks in Isabela; Arecibo Lighthouse area;</p>

	<p>Las Criollas in Barceloneta; Los Tubos in Manati Sardinera in Dorado.</p>
	<p>Crash Boat beach</p> 
	<p style="text-align: center;">“A Better Way to the Beach in Puerto Rico!” By Bill Earls (a writer who lives in Middlefield, Connecticut) January 22, 1989</p> <p>THE best road to the best beach in Puerto Rico - and one of the best in the world - isn't the main one. The car rental agency in San Juan may tell you that Route 3 east from San Juan is the best way to reach Luquillo Beach - and they'd be half-right. Route 3 is two-lane highway, and if a bit more beat-up than the average Interstate, it's fast and direct. But the best route is 187, the man renting a car in front of us said. According to him, where Route 26, which leads to Route 3, curves south and right around the airport, 187 curves off to the left - and virtually disappears a few minutes later. As it passes the airport, Route 187 is well-maintained and wide. Within moments it shrinks. Just as the last modern building goes by on the left, older, borderline tumbledown huts and shacks appear. But so does the ocean. The Atlantic is to your left - as little as 50 yards away at times over the small sand ridge dotted with palm trees. If you want a photo of what a tropical beach should look like, just aim the camera.</p> <p>Close to the beach and blue water, cows graze under palm trees inland, goats and chickens run free, flowers bloom in profusion. There's wind in the branches, surf hitting the beach, birds in the trees, laughter of children from small houses on the side of the road.</p> <p>It's not always perfect. Frequently the road is potholed for 10 or so miles and some stretches can look as though they've been strafed by the Air National Guard A-7s that make their weekend passes overhead. To get past some potholes, it may be necessary to drive off the road - sometimes on the wrong side. In places you'll have to drive at two miles an hour. There are beer bottles along the road, the poverty can be saddening and a guidebook suggests not traveling the road at night, but during the day kids wave, birds sing and the sights and smell of the ocean make 187 a detour worth taking.</p> <p>If potholed, the road is likely to be good highway again near the town of Rio Grande. Traffic can be tricky - in-town streets can be narrow and the road signs are in Spanish - and you'll want to be careful driving through town to rejoin Route 3. Well out of San Juan on Route 3, the countryside is close to rural - pastures and green hills, homes more spread out. Your next turn should be a right onto Route 191, leading to El Yunque Recreation Area in the Caribbean National Forest, the only tropical rain forest in the National Forest System. Properly, El Yunque is a peak within the forest, but the name El Yunque is commonly used for the whole area - or experience.</p> <p>Route 191 is a mountain road, a solid hill of switchbacks and sharp curves, where you drop to five miles an hour because you can't see beyond the cliff you're circling.</p> <p>Green is everywhere in the 28,000-acre national forest: grasses and bushes, clumps of bamboo and tall palm trees, vines and lianas hanging from branches. Pink and white impatiens line the roadsides,</p>


	<p>climbing over cliffs and around the bases of trees, sprawling at the sides of small streams.</p> <p>Water is all around you as well. Small streams ripple their way down the side of the mountain, run in rivulets at the side of the road. Halfway up the hill, Coca Falls is a thin sheet of water that spills 100 feet down a rock face to lose itself in a jumble of broken rock.</p> <p>Rain and clouds come and go - some parts of the forest have had 240 inches of rain in a year. You can drive through a blinding storm for 30 seconds and emerge to bright, hot sunlight. Drizzle dots the windshield momentarily - and then the air is clear for 30 miles to the beaches and islands far below.</p> <p>There are turnouts and parking areas. The first good one is right above Coca Falls and a lot of visitors take it as their first photo opportunity. Above it are visitors' areas with roofed shelters, pictures of wildlife and maps with legends in two languages. The rangers are also bilingual, friendly and helpful. Trails lead out into the heart of the forest.</p> <p>The trails are not for the faint hearted. Most are rugged and long: three miles or so from the main visitor parking area to the top of El Yunque itself, about two miles to Mina Falls.</p> <p>For instance, the trail to Mina Falls - not as high as Coca, but with a larger volume - ranges from level and paved to rugged and rough. The trail crosses a few small streams and parallels a larger one that rushes over rocks and small falls. Bird song is everywhere and the sun lances through the branches to sparkle on damp leaves and pools of water.</p> <p>Dotted along the trail are picnic areas - not wooden tables as you'd find in drier climes, but concrete ones under tin-roofed shelters. Almost every one has a view of the rushing stream. If you plan to walk, bring shoes with nonskid soles for the damp rocks and steps. A change of clothes might be another good idea - chances are high that you'll be caught in a brief and sudden shower.</p> <p>The views are worth the occasional sprinkling and you'll want a camera - keep it in plastic against the rain - with a telephoto lens. Beaches and islands are green and white against the blue-green water; on a clear day, San Juan itself is visible, 35 miles to the west. But there are subjects for a standard and close-up lens. Gorges and waterfalls, wisps of clouds flitting across green jungle and sheen of water against rock; lizards and wildflowers filling a frame with color.</p> <p>Route 3 heads east again only a few miles to Luquillo Beach, which is very popular on weekends, virtually empty on a weekday. There's a big parking area, bathhouses and showers.</p> <p>About 50 yards past the bathhouse is the beach - and a visitor's first reaction is simply disbelief. Luquillo is so perfect - soft, warm sand that stretches out in a great sweeping curve in both directions, palm trees hanging over it, waves breaking against it - that it's almost a cliché. All clichés should be as pleasant.</p> <p>Surf breaks on an outer reef, but enough gets in to make swimming interesting. North Americans, used to colder water, find Luquillo warm enough to stay in for hours. But don't lose track of time: Puerto Rico's tropical sun beats almost straight down and can be very strong at any time of year.</p> <p>If you're hungry, the beach has a good snack bar. But most people head back on Route 3 to a line of about 30 open-air restaurants, serving everything from a quick snack to a full meal. You can, of course, stop at the first or second or ninth. But regulars say it's more fun to stroll, compare menus and prices</p>
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	<p>and try some chicken here, some sea food there.</p> <p>OR you can head into the town of Luquillo, another mile or so in the other direction, and try a local restaurant. We hit a small place just off Route 3 - The King's Seafood - almost totally by accident. We were looking for another spot, got somewhat confused in Luquillo's narrow streets and hooked into King's small parking lot because it was convenient. It was the kind of "clean, well-lighted place" Hemingway wrote of, and though it had done a brisk lunch business, was virtually empty at 2 in the afternoon.</p> <p>But the beer was, as most beer is in Puerto Rico, ice-cold and delicious. The squid and conch in the refrigerator had been swimming that morning off nearby Fajardo, a small port at the eastern end of the island. While we sipped beer and listened to Spanish music and Spanish chatter on the crackly radio, the owner - also chef and bartender that day - made us huge plates of squid and conch salad, answered our tourist questions with patience and didn't even wince at my broken Spanish. The total bill was \$12 - for one of the more delicious and memorable meals we've ever had.</p> <p>It was that kind of day. We had come to Puerto Rico to flee winter's cold, snow and grayness and we had done that: we were warm, content and gently sun-singed. But there was more. We had, without really thinking about it, also wanted to flee regimentation, sameness and the expected. We wanted to be away from noise, neon and people who looked and sounded like those we had left behind. And what we found or lucked into, on one back road after another, was a naturalness, a spontaneity and serendipity that was, because it was so unexpected and different, more memorable than anything we had planned on. It was something worth going back to look for again. Copyright 2006 The New York Time Company</p>
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Local Food & Drink	
	http://www.frommers.com/destinations/puertorico/0094020003.html
	<p>Known as the "Dining Capital of the Caribbean," Puerto Rico offers everything from traditional criolla and Puerto Rican fusion to international cuisine. Criolla cuisine, a blend of Taino, Spanish and African influences, gives diners the opportunity to experience the island's authentic ingredients and flavors. An island favorite, tostones or fried green plantains, is enjoyed alone or as a side dish with nearly every meal. Mofongo is another ubiquitous delicacy of mashed plantains and meat or seafood in a delicious garlic and tomato-based sauce. To satisfy every palate, restaurants run the gamut of international options from pizza to Caribbean/Asian fusion to fine French cuisine, many with a tinge of Puerto Rican flavors.</p>
	<p>Also try the food vendors in the Plaza de la Marina or along the promenade Paseo del la Princesa that connects the plaza to the harbor. Vendors sell fresh, non-alcoholic, <i>pinã coladas</i> made from coconut milk and pineapple juice, roasted kebabs, fresh fruit, and several varieties of tasty fried meat pies; sample the <i>heyados</i> that are sold on street corners throughout the city. <i>Heyados</i> are creamy, flavored ices available in coconut, <i>pinã colada</i>, and local juice flavors. Sold for a dollar they are a sweet and refreshing way to take the edge off the heat.</p>
	<p>Local cuisine: Vegetables dominate: plantains are served as tostones (fried green), amarillos (baked ripe) and as chips. Root vegetables such as yucca and yutia are served baked, fried, stuffed, boiled, mashed and whole. Sofrito (garlic, onion, sweet pepper, coriander and oregano) is a base for everything. Adobo (garlic oregano marinade) covers beef, chicken and fish. Morcilla is a black spicy sausage. Fritters are PR specialties served in snack bars and beach kiosks such as Empanadillas (stuffed fried turnovers), Sorullitos (cheese stuffed corn sticks), Alcapurrias (stuffed green banana croquettes) or Bacalaitos (cod fish fritters). Caribbean lobster (not as sweet as Maine variety) is found mainly at small coastal restaurants. Conch is prepared chilled in cerviche salad or stuffed inside fritters with tomato sauce. Pan de Agua is an excellent French-style bread best hot out of the oven or toasted as part</p>

	of Cubano sandwich (roast pork, ham, Swiss cheese, pickles and mustard.) For dessert, try Flan puddings and fruit pastes with native white cheese. Renowned locally-grown coffee is best served espresso black or con leche (with hot milk.)
	<i>Comidas criollas</i> means Caribbean creole meals. The government label “mason gastronomica” indicates restaurants that preserve authentic Puerto Rican culinary traditions (only 40 on the island)
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Restaurants / Hotels	
	http://www.puertoricowow.com/html/Restaurants_Entertain.asp
	Eat in <u>OLD</u> San Juan; most restaurants are grouped there; a few fantastic-don't-miss restaurants are <i>The Ostra Cosa</i> , <i>Parrot Club</i> , <i>Dragonfly</i> and <i>Tantra</i> (see summaries below). The majority of restaurants and bars are closed from Sunday to Tuesday.
	<p>Other noteworthy restaurants (see summaries for some below):</p> <p><i>Ajili Mojili</i> (Condado, classic PR dishes with upscale twist like mofongo—seafood casserole with mashed plantains or fried cheese and yuatia dumplings);</p> <p><i>Parrot Club</i> (Old San Juan, relaxed stylish hotspot serving Nuevo Latino Cuban and Puerto Rican cuisine including crabcakes, tamarind-BBQ ribs and blackened tuna in dark rum sauce) http://www.oofrestaurants.com/parrotclub/index.htm ;</p> <p><i>El Picoteo</i> (Old San Juan, hotel stylish tapas bar);</p> <p><i>La Fonda del Jibarito</i> (Old San Juan, excellent casual family run serving traditional PR fare like conch cerviche and chicken fricasse.);</p> <p><i>Amadeus</i> (Old San Juan) trendy and romantic with outside seating and serving nouvelle Caribbean appetizers and entrees—cerviche and great Mojitos too, crowded bar;</p> <p><i>La Ostra Cosa</i> (Old San Juan), city’s prettiest al fresco dining serving oysters to burgers but noted for their prawns in garlic butter);</p> <p><i>La Mallorquina</i> (Old San Juan, island’s oldest dates to 1848 with basic PR fare and great atmosphere);</p> <p><i>El Picoteo</i> (Old San Juan, chic Spanish tapas bar and entrees, stop for a cocktail);</p> <p><i>Yerba Buena</i> (Condado, uses original recipe for their Cuban Mojitos rum, lime, mint and sugar cane drink. outdoor tables on porch swings);</p> <p><i>La Vista & Ocean Terrace</i> (Condado, 24 hours in Marriott serving Latino dishes with an ocean view);</p> <p><i>Pikayo</i> (Santurce, French/Caribbean/California cuisine, plasma TV broadcasts kitchen action);</p> <p><i>Bebos Café</i> (Santurce, great cheap local cuisine and breakfast served);</p> <p><i>Tangerine</i> (Isla Verde, dining room terrace in a tiny but MTV-style hotel; faces the Atlantic serving Asian European fusion dishes);</p> <p><i>Café Puerto Rico</i> at Columbus Plaza (two blocks from Pier 4) has great seafood, chicken or beef monfongo (with mashed green plantains and garlic).</p> <p><i>Ropa Vieja</i> in Condado.</p> <p><i>Chef Marisoll</i> (Old San Juan) serves contemporary local food prepared by award-winning chef on a romantic patio.</p> <p><i>Mango’s Café</i> (Old San Juan) serving Jamaican, Caribbean and Creole food with drinks and music.</p> <p><i>Café Berlin</i> (Old San Juan) gourmet vegetarian cuisine with fresh pasta and great salad bar.</p>
Restaurants/Hotels (Alphabetical Listing)	
	<p>Ajili Mójili (1006 Av. Ashford, @ corner of Calle Joffre, Condado); Best local Puerto Rican/Creole cuisine; devoted exclusively to <i>la cucina criolla</i>, the starchy, down-home cuisine that developed on the island a century ago. Though the building housing it is quite modern, you can see artful replicas of the kind of crumbling brick walls you'd expect in Old San Juan and a bar that evokes Old Spain. The staff will willingly describe menu items in colloquial English. Locals come here for <i>mofongos</i> (green plantains stuffed with veal, chicken, shrimp, or pork), <i>arroz con pollo</i> (stewed chicken with saffron rice), <i>medallones de cerdo encebollado</i> (pork loin sautéed with onions), <i>carne mechada</i> (beef rib-eye stuffed with ham), and <i>lechón asado con maposteadó</i> (roast pork with rice and beans). M-F noon to 3pm M-Sat 6 to 11pm, Sun 12:30-4pm and 6-10pm; 787-725-9195</p>

	<p>Amadeus (106 Calle San Sebastian, OSJ) Caribbean cuisine; best late night dining; housed in a brick-and-stone building that was constructed in the 18th century by a wealthy merchant, Amadeus offers Caribbean ingredients with a nouvelle twist. The appetizers alone are worth the trip here, especially the Amadeus dumplings with guava sauce and arrowroot fritters. And try the smoked-salmon-and-caviar pizza. One zesty specialty is pork scaloppini with sweet-and-sour sauce; offers Caribbean ingredients deftly handled with a nouvelle twist. An attractive, trendy, generally young crowd arrives late to feast on the refined cuisine, enjoying such delights as Cajun-grilled mahimahi; Mon 6pm-midnight; T-Sun noon-1am; 787-722-8635</p> 
	<p>Aquaviva #364 Calle Fortaleza, OSJ-seafood; third and final addition to a trio of restaurants, each within a few steps of each other, and each dauntingly stylish; owned by the same investors. The location is at the bottom of Calle Fortaleza within a cool, turquoise-colored environment that's in welcome contrast to the saffron-and-fire-colored decor of the other members (Dragonfly and The Parrot Club,) a standout because of its beautiful ice-blue décor (including interesting jellyfish-shaped lights), its Latin-spiced seafood entrees, and its oyster and ceviche bar; Presiding above the sometimes frenetic bar action and dining room hubbub of this place are replicas of three <i>aquaviva</i> (jellyfish), quivering with illumination, each painstakingly manufactured from stained glass specifically for this site. Don't come here expecting calm or respite from the maddening crowds. Its owners spend a small fortune on publicity and promotion, making it one of the hottest restaurant tickets in Old San Juan. The result verges on the chaotic, albeit in the most stylish of ways. Oysters and stiff drinks are served at the bar. Flowing from the open-to-view kitchens come dishes whose ingredients derive from the watery turquoise world that inspired this restaurant's color scheme. The best examples include six different ceviches, including one made with mahimahi, mango juice, and lemons; and a different version from marlin and garlic; heaping tower composed of fried oysters, coco-flavored shrimp, fried octopus, and calamari. The best main courses include grilled fresh mahimahi with smoky shrimp, salsa, and coconut-poached yucca; seared medallions of halibut with a fondue of spinach and crabmeat; and a succulent version of paella garnished with seafood and pork sausage.open M-W 6-11pm Th – Sat 6-midnight; Sun 4-10pm 787-722-0665</p>
	<p>Augusto's Cuisine (Hotel Excelsior, #801 Av. Ponce de León, Miramar) on15th floor, offering a stunning and panoramic view of San Juan at night; serves one of the best French and international cuisines in the Caribbean, backed up by an extensive wine list. Best romantic dinner; 787/725-7700</p>
	<p>Barrachina's is much more than just a restaurant/bar. It is a jewelry store and a Bacardi rum outlet. There is also a gift shop and they sell perfume and cigars; other shopping nearby. Claims to inventing the pina colada and make the best mofongo (fried plantains and pork skins) on the island.</p>
	<p>Baru: 150 Calle San Sebastian; restaurant lounge in plush residence; blend of Mediterranean and Caribbean cuisine; popular and crowded; no lunch.</p>
	<p>Café Berlin: 407 Calle San Francisco near Plaza de Colon; popular with vegetarians; baked goods, fruit juices; tofu steaks!</p>
	<p>Carli Café Concierto Calle Recinto Sur (near waterfront) and Calle San Justo; located in Banco Popular building (which dominates OSJ skyline); intimate bistro with black marble tables; streetside patio or indoor dining room. Carli Munoz toured with Beach Boys and often plays with musicians who drop in.</p>
	<p>Divino Bocadito (252 Calle Cruz) between Calle Fortaleza and Tanca; one of the more modern tapas bars in Old San Juan, but has quickly captured the attention of both the local and the visiting crowds. It serves the famous, hearty Spanish appetizers in a exhilarating atmosphere. in a tavern-style setting with live guitar performances; in fact, there are daily Flamenco or Spanish guitar performances. The decor is traditional Spanish tavern-style and includes few illuminations. Energizing folkloric music is also performed here. Tapas choices include Serrano Ham, Iberian Chorizo, Manchego Cheese, and Ali-Oli Potatoes are some of the many choices featured here. There is also full bar service available, with excellent Spanish wines offered. The flamenco shows are Thursdays at 9PM and Saturdays at</p>

	<p>8PM. Reservations are required. Tables will be hand to none reserve guests at 7PM. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays. 787-977-0042 http://www.divinobocadito.com/</p>
	<p>Dragonfly (364 Calle Fortaleza, OSJ) Latin/Asian cuisine; one of San Juan's hottest restaurants, the decor has been compared to that of a bordello in Old San Francisco. You pass through the beaded curtains into a world of red ceilings, fringed lamps, and gilded mirrors. The restaurant lies right across the street from the Parrot Club, and these two dining enclaves have put the newly named SoFo district (south of Calle Fortaleza in Old Town) on the culinary map. In the bar, the preferred cigarette is Marlboro and the most popular drink, a lethal "Dragon Punch." Night after night Dragonfly is the fun party place in town. Tiny restaurant has 10 regular tables and a communal table that seats 14. Along with the latest gossip, you can enjoy live Latin jazz as background music. This new-generation San Juan restaurant offers sexy cookery, such as seafood ceviche scooped up with yucca, and plantain chips, <i>chicharrónes</i> (pork rinds), spicy crab cakes, and a host of other dishes, such as marinated grilled meats. We applaud the chefs for their use of root vegetables such as yucca. The red snapper and grouper are excellent, and we love the pumpkin and beans of every type. The barbecued lamb shanks are very hearty and filling. Ravioli, timbales, confits, cassoulets. M-W 6-11pm Thu-Sat 6pm to midnight; 787-977-3886</p>
	<div data-bbox="230 806 508 1016" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>El Convento Hotel (100 Calle del Cristo, OSJ) Puerto Rico's most famous hotel had came majestically back to life when it was restored and reopened in 1997, and it continues to offer some of the most charming and historic hotel experiences anywhere in the Caribbean. As one observer put it, El Convento "is an exquisitely wrought David on an island of otherwise glitzy Goliaths." Built in 1651 in the heart of the old city, it was the New World's first Carmelite convent, but over the years it played many roles, from a dance hall to a flophouse to a parking lot for garbage trucks. It first opened as a hotel in 1962. The midsize accommodations include Spanish-style furnishings, throw rugs, beamed ceilings, paneling, and Andalusian terra-cotta floor tiles. Rooms contain king, queen, two double or twin beds, fitted with fine linen. The small bathrooms, with tub-and-shower combinations, contain scales and second phones. For the ultimate in luxury, ask for Gloria Vanderbilt's restored suite (&1400) or ask for #508 (\$400), a corner room with panoramic views. Although the facilities here aren't as diverse as those of some resorts on the Condado or in Isla Verde, this hotel's sweeping charm and Old Town location usually compensate. A possible drawback for some is that El Convento is a 15-minute walk to the nearest beach. The lower two floors feature a collection of shops, bars, and restaurants. The so-called pool here is accessible via the 4th floor, and it measures only about 6dp x 10dp (1.8m x 3m) -- very small, but personalized, charming, and endearing because of its view over the facade of the nearby cathedral. There's a Jacuzzi immediately adjacent to the pool and a big sun terrace. 3 on-site restaurants; 3 on-site bars; Il Perugino, across the road from the hotel allows guests to charge meals to their room; nearby attractions:</p> <div data-bbox="932 963 1456 1356" data-label="Image"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cathedral of San Juan, which houses Ponce De Leon's remains (across the street) • San Jose Church (1 block) • La Casa Blanca, home of Ponce de Leon (1 block) • Museo del Niño (within walking distance) • Pablo Casals Museum (within walking distance) • El Morro Fortress (within walking distance) • Museo de Las Americas (within walking distance)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San Cristobal Fort (within walking distance) • Palacio Santa Catalina (La Forteleza) (within walking distance) • Museo de la Casa Blanca (within walking distance) • Condado Beach (3 miles) • San Juan Nautical Club (3.5 miles) • Isla Verde Beach (7 miles) • Luquillo Beach (30 miles) • El Yunque Rain Forest (25 miles) • Arecibo Observatory (50 miles) • Camuy Caves (50 miles)
	<p>Shopping near El Convento:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cristo Street • El Galpon • Fortaleza Street
	<p>El Picoteo (100 Calle del Cristo, OSJ) Spanish cuisine; In the courtyard of the historic El Convento Hotel, this is the best place in Old Town to go for tapas and for heaping platters of seafood-studded paella. You get real Spanish flavor here, in such dishes as garbanzo salad, sausages, and ceviche. Fresh octopus is also a delight as are the Spanish-style pizzas. Sanjuaneros along with visitors enjoy this informal place for lunch or a drink at the bar. Many spend the afternoon playing backgammon and sipping a pitcher of champagne-laced sangria. Dinner is festive, accompanied by salsa and lights in the courtyard. The menu has some 80 tapas from which to choose, the selection of imported Spanish cheeses is Old Town's finest, and the staff is politely charming. Tues-Sun noon-midnight; 787-723-9202</p>
	<p>Bars near El Convento:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al's Mar Azul -- A lively outdoor bar with a gregarious owner, who often buys shots of tequila for everyone at the bar. • Amapola Tavern -- Features salsa music, the island's biggest TV screen, and a bartender who creates exquisite tropical concoctions. • Andale (Isla Verde)-- An authentic Mexican tavern where there's always a soccer match on the television, and mariachis and musical trios perform at night. • Babylon (San Juan Hotel & Casino)-- Step out of the Caribbean and into the ancient Middle East at this exclusive club. • El Balcón del Zumbador -- Featuring the city's best Afro-Caribbean music. Past performers include salsa great Roberto Roena, master percussionist Cachete Maldonado, and the legendary Cuban group Los Van Van. • Karma -- Featuring a menu of Spanish and Puerto Rican tapas, and music of all kinds, from Rock en Español to hip-hop to Latin rhythms. • The Noise (203 Calle Tanca) -- A young crowd frequents this Old San Juan dance club to listen to hip-hop, reggae, and underground music. Open Thursday through Saturday. • Rumba (152 Calle San Sebastian) -- The air-conditioning blasts, works by local artists adorn the walls, and the crowd is hip. With a large dance floor and amazing Afro-Cuban bands, it's the best party in town. • Spybar -- A sleek and modern James Bond-inspired martini lounge where top local DJs spin discs. A menu of Puerto Rican-Asian fusion cuisine is available into the wee hours.
	<p>El Fonda del Jibarita (280 Calle Sol) not fancy but authentic Puerto Rican food; a favorite with locals; menu changes daily; dine indoors or out.</p>
	<p>El Patio de Sam (102 Calle San Sebastian) is a Puerto Rican institution frequented by all types of personalities, American expatriates and local celebrities. Popular late-night spot best known for its burgers, Creole cuisine, steaks and seafood; live entertainment Monday through Saturday; indoor</p>




	dining under a skylight. Creole specialties include asopao (heavy rice soup), rabbit, and seafood crepes
	La Barrachina (see "Barrachina")
	La Bombonera (259 Calle San Francisco) 100 year old bakery/café; great lunch and pastry shop, try their great and famous coffee, great prices very popular with the locals. Best café con leche and great ham and cheese <i>mallorcas</i> . Try the mallorcas at La Bombonera for breakfast Best <i>asopao</i> (the regular gumbo and soul food to Puerto Ricans) made in as many different ways as there are chefs on the island. Some versions are too thick to be called soup such as the seafood variety at La Bombonera; more like a stew. One popular version of asopao includes pigeon peas although the one with chicken is better known. 787-722-0658 http://www.frommers.com/destinations/sanjuan/D40504.html
	La Mallorquina 207 Calle Justo; may be oldest reataurant; standard Puerto Rican and Spanish fare.
	Lupi's Mexican Grill & Sports Cantina (313 Calle Recinto Sur) is clearly marketed to attract the tourist trade. The place is hopping with activity and music. When you're not listening to live entertainment here, no doubt you will want to tune into one of their many TV monitors to catch a game—college football, NBA, MLB, NHL, boxing and more. Food is Tex-Mex. A menu 'must' is 'Puerto Rican Fajitas' and the Sauza signature margaritas; soups, salads, sandwiches and steaks. Free local delivery is available. Daily Happy Hours are 4pm-7pm, with live music daily. Mon-Fri, kids under ten eat FREE until 5.30pm! Lupi's Isla Verde is a sister restaurant.
	Maria's (204 Calle Cristo) in Old San Juan, for the coolest and most original drinks in the city; on a hot day, there is no finer place to enjoy a mixed-fruit frappé; a banana, pineapple, or chocolate frost; or an orange, papaya, or the most famous lime freeze 787-721-1678
	Ostra Cosa (154 Calle del Cristo, Old San Juan) This is the most artfully promoted restaurant in San Juan, with a growing clientele who swear that the ambience here is one of the most sensual and romantic in Old San Juan. It was created by a former advertising executive, Alberto Nazario, a lifestyle guru who mingles New Age thinking with good culinary techniques to promote love, devotion, and a heightened sexuality. Couples dine beneath a massive quenepe tree -- waiters will tell you to hug the tree and make a wish -- in a colonial courtyard surrounded by a 16th-century building that was once the home of the colony's governor. The atmosphere, enhanced by domesticated quail and chirping tree frogs, will make you feel far removed from the cares of the city. Featured foods are high in phosphorus, zinc, and flavor, designed to promote an "eat-up, dress-down experience." The ceviche is superb, as are the grilled prawns. But it is the conch, known as Caribbean Viagra, that rates "Wow!!!" or "Ay Ay Ay!!!" Best Aphrodisiac cuisine -- Take someone special), for a night of romance. Even if you aren't in the mood, the owner promises that you will be after consuming his dishes, which are "chock-full of aphrodisiacs." All the food is guaranteed to enhance your performance in the bedroom. Right down the street from the El Convento hotel is another great restaurant called <i>Ostra Cosa</i> . "Aphrodesiac" inspired menu and the owner Alberto Nazario (his sister is Ednida Nazario, a famous pop recording artist) will sit at your table, take your menus away and order for you after he finds out what you like. Great place with romantic atmosphere - - outside patio. Daily noon to 10pm; 787/722-2672
	Palmera (Caribe Hilton, Calle Los Rosales) Best Sunday brunch; both locals and American visitors flock here for its delectable all-you-can-eat Sunday brunch. Good food, glamour, and live music are combined here. The freshly prepared seafood alone is worth the set price, which includes champagne 787-721-0303
	Pamelas at the Numero Uno guesthouse nice dinner right on the beach but more \$\$ but the best meal of the trip.
	Panorama Terrace (307 Calle Fortalez, OSJ) This Puerto Rican-style grill affords patrons one of the best views of the San Juan Bay available. This bar and grill is set atop the charming, European-style Hotel Milano. You'll find the clientele a mix of hotel guests, local business people and other visitors.

	The menu is predominantly Puerto Rican with several grilled beef specialties; good pick for a business lunch.
	Parrot Club (363 Calle Fortaleza, OSJ) is one of the most sought-after restaurants in Old San Juan. This bistro and bar serves Nuevo Latino cuisine that blends traditional Puerto Rican cookery with Spanish, Taíno, and African influences. Arguably the best mojitos on the island. It's set in a stately 1902 building that was originally a hair-tonic factory. Today you'll find a cheerful-looking dining room, where San Juan's mayor and the governor of Puerto Rico can sometimes be spotted, and a verdantly landscaped courtyard, where tables for at least 200 diners are scattered amid potted ferns, palms, and orchids. Live music, either Brazilian, salsa, or Latino jazz, is offered nightly as well as during the popular Sunday brunches. Menu items are updated interpretations of old Puerto Rican specialties. They include ceviche of halibut, salmon, tuna, and mahimahi; delicious crab cakes; criolla-style flank steak; and pan-seared tuna served with a sauce made from dark rum and essence of oranges. Everybody's favorite drink is a "Parrot Passion," made from lemon-flavored rum, triple sec, oranges, and passion fruit. Best Nuevo Latino cuisine wows taste buds with its modern interpretation of Puerto Rican specialties. Even San Juan's mayor and the governor have made it their favorite. Husband-and-wife team Emilio Figueroa and Gigi Zafero borrow from a repertoire of Puerto Rican and Spanish recipes, and they also use Taíno and African influences in their cuisine. Their ceviche is the best in town, and their Créole-style flank steak is worth the trek from Condado Beach. This hotspot is located in the trendy district of SoFo, meaning South Fortaleza Street; powerhouse offers some excellent Caribbean fare with a gourmet flair. One of the specialties is the deep-fried chicharrones over a bed of a fresh Caesar salad. The restaurant also offers a full bar service. The menu will change periodically. While a little bit on the pricey side, the uniqueness of the Parrot Club allows it to attract families and professionals as well as the tourists. Daily noon to 3pm and 6-11pm; closes two weeks in Sept; 787/725-7370
	Pikayo (299 Ave Jose Diego, Santurce and Ocean Park) This is an ideal place to go for the new generation of Puerto Rican cookery, with a touch of Cajun thrown in for spice and zest. Set within a starkly contemporary room within the postmodern premises of San Juan's Art Museum, it has the kind of neutrally hued decor that appears disarmingly simple until you begin to grasp the complexities of its infrastructure. Starkly minimalist, it has a lighting scheme whose tones change from reds to blues to yellow throughout the course of your dinner. And a large TV screen shows, through closed circuitry, the culinary rituals transpiring minute-by-minute within the restaurant's kitchen. This place not only keeps up with the latest culinary trends, but it often sets them, thanks to the inspired guidance of owner and celebrity chef Wilo Benet. Formal but not stuffy, and winner of more culinary awards than virtually any other restaurant in Puerto Rico, Pikayo is a specialist in the criolla cuisine of the colonial age, emphasizing the Spanish, Indian, and African elements in its unusual recipes. Appetizers include a dazzling array of taste explosions: Try shrimp spring rolls with peanut sofrito sauce; crab cake with aioli; or perhaps a ripe plantain, goat-cheese, and onion tart. Main course delights feature charred rare yellowfin tuna with onion escabeche and red-snapper filet with sweet-potato purée served with foie gras butter. Our favorite remains the grilled shrimp with polenta and barbecue sauce made with guav
	Pollo Tropical is a chain restaurant serving local cuisine.
	Ramiro's (1106 Av. Magdalena 787-721-9049). Best Spanish cuisine; the chefs take full advantage of fresh island produce to create an innovative cuisine. In fact, the style is New Creole, although its roots are firmly planted in Spain. Their fresh fish and chargrilled meats are succulent, and any dessert with the strawberry-and-guava sauce.
	Tamarind (317 Calle Recinto Sur, Old San Juan) "Latino Steakhouse and Seafood Bar " our hotel recommended it; it was new 787-723-1144
	Tantra : (356 Calle Fortaleza, OSJ) Indo-Latino cuisine; one of the most genuinely creative restaurants in San Juan, a one-of-a-kind luminary in a dining scene that sometimes relies merely on derivations of tried-and-true themes. Set in the heart of "restaurant row" on Calle Fortaleza, it has become famous for a sophisticated fusion of Latino with South Indian cuisine. Its chef and owner, Indian-born Ramesh

	<p>Pillai, overseas a blend of slow-cooked tandoori cuisine from South India with Puerto Rico-derived spices, flavors, and ingredients. All of this occurs within a warm, candlelit environment that focuses on Indian handicrafts, religious (i.e., Hindu and Buddhist) symbols, intricately embroidered banners and batiks, and a color scheme (terra-cotta and saffron) that you might have expected in Rhajasthan. One of the best martinis we've ever had (a version with cinnamon and cloves) is an appropriate way to begin a meal here. The best menu items include sesame masala-crusted sushi tuna with peanut sauce; fried coconut sesame jumbo shrimp with Indian noodles; chicken tikka masala with flat naan bread; rice and chicken rolls with passion fruit sauce; and an absolutely brilliant version of tandoori chicken, one of the establishment's best-sellers, that combines the traditional Indian recipe -- known to thousands of Indians worldwide -- with manchego and mozzarella cheese, guyaba fruit, guava-flavored dip, and <i>naan</i>. There are even curried versions of the most famous traditional dish in Puerto Rico -- <i>mofongos</i>. Dessert might be a cardamon-flavored flan. Even if you've already had dinner, don't overlook this place as a nightlife option. Sun-Th noon-11pm Fri-Sat noon-midnight; 787-977-8141</p>
	<p><u>Top 10 Restaurant List:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10) Blue Water Club / Tangerines - Isle Verde 9) El Hamburgo - Old San Juan (Old Town) 8) Lobby Lounge in Ritz Carlton - Isle Verde 7) Ajilli Mojilli - Condado 6) El Pulpo Loco - Pinones 5) BLT - Ritz-Carlton Hotel & Casino - Isle Verde 4) Bebo's - Condado 3) Levis Sports Center (Charasco is a must here) - Isle Verde 2) Cafe Puerto Rico - Old San Juan (Old Town) 1) DragonFly - Old San Juan (Old Town) <p>http://hubpages.com/hub/Top_10_Eats_in_Puerto_Rico</p>
	<p><u>Another Top 10 Restaurant List:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Divinos Bocaditos - Old San Juan; Spanish tapas bar featuring small tables, loud flamenco music and a long list of Rioja wines. But Divinos' greatest asset is its faith in its patrons. Customers can freely serve themselves from several trays of tapas laid out on the bar. When it comes time to pay, a waiter counts the toothpicks on your plate to determine how much you ate. Remember, the honor system is a blessed rarity, so no cheating. 9. Royal Siam - Isla Verde 787-726-1167; I am a sucker for spicy peanut chicken, and these guys serve it up with the best of them. The decor of the place is a cross between classic Oriental and classic Holiday Inn Tiki Bar Lounge. 8. Cherry Blossom - Condado 787- 723-7300 You need a sushi place in the mix, and although this might not be the cheapest place around, the prices are not offensive. No matter what you order, throw in an order of pepper tuna. And stay away from the teppanyaki side, where the bill can get astronomical faster than you can say "No egg in my rice!" 7. La Cueva del Chicken Inn - Hato Rey 787-753-1306 The specialty is pizza, not chicken. The restaurant originally belonged to the parents of Raul Julía, the Puerto Rican thespian who became most famous for playing Gomes in the Addams Family movies. Behind the bar there is still a mural depicting the 1960s bohemian artist scene that ruled the place when the young Julia spent his weekends reciting poetry for the patrons. Julia is one of the characters portrayed in the mural. 6. La Parrillada del Barriloché - Isla Verde 787-268-5305 One of the best steak houses, period. This Argentine grill features mismatched tables and chairs, lots of old wood and a kick-ass skirt steak. Order a bottle of red wine, 4. Tierra Santa - Hato Rey 787-754-6865 I have to throw in a Mediterranean place because hummus should be adopted by every culture, and because there is something pleasing about watching belly dancers balance sharp objects on their foreheads while you digest. On a Friday night things can get pretty festive when the dancers start picking patrons to dance with them.. 3. Dragonfly - Old San Juan (787) 977-3961 All right, this can get expensive but it's worth it. It is one

	<p>of the trendiest places in San Juan. It is claustrophobic, impeccably decorated, the waiters are good looking and the Asian-Caribbean food does not taste pretentious. I am including Dragonfly, not because they are reasonably priced, but because I don't mind paying their high prices.</p> <p>2. Arepas y Mucho Mas - Old San Juan 787-725-4639 This place started approximately five years ago as a small Venezuelan luncheon specializing in arepas -fried flour patties stuffed with whatever you want. The place has since upgraded to a bigger and better location but the prices remain reasonable.</p> <p>1. Chayote - Santurce 787-722-9385 Hands down, the best place to go for a good meal in San Juan. The food is great, the location interesting, and the art on the walls is good, what more can you ask for? Eating well starts with comfort, and this is where Chayote leaves everyone behind. These people are masters of understatement. The place is formal enough to wear a tie, and casual enough to relax with a polo shirt. The art on the walls features local artists along with world famous names like Jean Michel Basquiat. http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2003/vol7n39/PRSST0739-en.html</p>
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Nightlife/Hotels	
	<p>http://www.selectivetourspr.com/nightlife.htm (bar listings by type and location)</p> <p>http://escape.topuertorico.com/pr-bin/placesgo.cgi?categ=Night-life</p>
	<p>Barhopping--More than any other place in the Caribbean, San Juan has a nightlife that successfully combines New York hip with Latino zest and the music of the Spanish tropics. First, head for a pair of holes in the wall across the street from the El Convento Hotel. El Batey (101 Calle del Cristo) and Don Pablo (103 Calle del Cristo) are battered side-by-side hangouts with a clientele of locals, expatriates, and occasional visitors. In the 1980s, a Hollywood director selected these spots as the set for a Central American drug den, much to the amusement of the regular clientele. El Batey's music remains firmly grounded in the rock 'n' roll classics of the 1970s, with a scattering of Elvis Presley hits, Don Pablo prides itself on cutting-edge music that's continually analyzed by the counterculture aficionados who hang out here. El Batey is open daily from 2pm to 6am; Don Pablo, daily from 8pm to 4am. These bars, along with the dark and smoky Café Bohemia, just across the street, in the cellar of the El Convento Hotel (100 Calle del Cristo 787-723-9020), are hip hangouts for late-night dialogues. At this hideaway you can often hear live jazz while enjoying fruity cocktails, drinks, and light meals. Older locals mingle with hotel guests, the patronage mainly in the post-35 age group; Carli Café Concierto, (206 Calle Tetuán 206, off Plazoleta Rafael Carrión 787-725-4927) one of Old Town's best spots for drinking margaritas and watching the world go by. Owner Carli Muñoz earned fame as one of The Beach Boys and plays jazz and piano classics nightly, often with invited guests. There is no cover charge. Also recommended as a dining option, Tantra (356 Calle Fortaleza 787-977-8141), serves creative martinis to crowds of interesting clients till very late (between 4 and 5am) every Tuesday to Saturday. After the mainstream menu ends, a different menu that includes platters of fried prawns and pizzas is made available, along with one of the most intriguing selections of martinis in town. Priced at between \$8 and \$9 each, they include versions with mango, passion fruit, and a personal favorite, a version with cinnamon and clove. Live belly dancers amuse the crowd on Friday and Saturday nights, and any night of the week, you can rent, for \$20, a Mogul-style hookah pipe for every member of your dining table.</p>
	<p>NoNo's, a double-decker delight on Calle San Sebastian, with a bar and seating area on the first floor, and pool tables and entertainment on the second. Then head over to Nuyorican Café. Calle San Francisco to enjoy the live Latino music and dancing; atmosphere is called "Bohemian" and the concentration is on new music, with the café selling CDs of the artists who perform there. They also sponsor their own jazz festival. Café Tabac on SoFo; this café-bar doubles as an art gallery, and the atmosphere is sophisticated and lively. Or you can stop at The Gallery Café, known as one of the most successful clubs in Old San Juan with the younger crowd. The modern décor and lighting plus the contemporary music gives this dance club a great setting. Club Flow: If all you care about is dancing, visit Club Flow, the trendy disco on Avenue Ponce de Leon at the eastern end of Old San Juan. The music runs the gamut from pop to hip hop, rock and roll and funk. Local bands play every night.</p>

	<p>Another interesting night time happening is Noche de Galeria, an Old San Juan event held the first Tuesday of every month from 8 p.m. until early morning. The galleries along Calle de Cristo and Calle Fortaleza open their doors and people wander through the streets looking at the latest exhibitions, sipping wine offered by the galleries, and then hitting the bars</p>
<p align="center">Nightlife/Hotels (Alphabetical List)</p>	
	<p>Caribe Hilton (Calle Los Rosales, Puerta De Tierra) Thanks to rivers of money poured into its radical renovation, this deluxe hotel is one of the most up-to-date spa and convention hotels in San Juan. Because of an unusual configuration of natural barriers and legal maneuverings, the hotel has the only private beach on the island (and the only garden incorporating an antique naval installation: the semi-ruined colonial Fort San Gerónimo). Because this beachfront hotel was the first Hilton ever built outside the U.S. mainland (in 1949), the chain considers it its most historic property. The Caribe's size (17 acres/6.8 hectares of parks and gardens) and sprawling facilities often attract conventions and tour groups. Only the Condado Plaza and the El San Juan rival it for nonstop activity. Rooms have been radically upgraded. Variations in price are related to the views outside and the amenities within. Each room has a larger-than-expected bathroom with a tub/shower combo as well as comfortable, tropical-inspired furniture. In the Caribe Terrace Bar, you can order the bartender's celebrated piña colada, which was once enjoyed by movie legends Joan Crawford and Errol Flynn. An oceanfront spa and fitness center is the only beachside spa in Puerto Rico. It features such tantalizing delights as couples massages, body wraps, hydrotherapy tub treatments, and soothing cucumber sun therapies. The best place to stay here is in one of the 158 new luxury villas with more than 1,500 square feet (139 sq. m) of space, all part of the Condado Lagoon Villas. Up for grabs are studios or one- or two-bedroom luxury accommodations, each with spectacular views of the Condado Lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean. Each comes with a kitchen, private balcony, and a marble bathroom with Jacuzzi. Winter rates are \$335 in a studio for two, rising to \$445 in a one-bedroom suite, and topping at \$545 in a two-bedroom suite. Off-season rates are \$285 studio, \$395 one-bedroom suite, and \$495 two-bedroom suite.</p>
	<p>One of the most luxurious resorts in Puerto Rico, the Caribe Hilton is set on an exclusive peninsula, made up of 17 acres of lush tropical gardens, this resort is ideally situated between the historic old San Juan and the exciting Condado area, offering a secluded beach, lavish accommodations and amenities tailored to families, couples and business travelers alike. Just 15 minutes from Luis Muñoz International Airport in San Juan, the resort has 814 beautifully appointed guest rooms, suites and luxury villas featuring fabulous ocean or garden views for you to enjoy panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean or verdant tropical gardens.</p>
	<p>The property offers beautiful oceanfront swimming pools, whirlpools and hammocks next to the secluded beach for relaxation and privacy. The full-service Olas Spa offers a wide range of relaxing body treatments, and the resort is home to an extensive array of boutiques. There is even a peaceful bird sanctuary. Also overlooking Fort Geronimo (right photo). In addition the resort offers extensive meeting facilities.</p>

	 <p>For dining the options are plentiful, with the resort offering 9 restaurants and lounges. Palmeras Restaurant serves international cuisine for each meal of the day. Swimmers will love the Atlantico Pool Bar and Grill for a swim-up lunch or drink and Madrid-San Juan Restaurant and Tapas Bar serves authentic Spanish Tapas and traditional Puerto Rican specialties for lunch and dinner. Rotisserie Il Giardino offers authentic Italian fare and Morton's The Steakhouse, a premier steakhouse, is a guest favorite. The new Lemongrass Pan Asian Latino features creative Oriental cuisine and sushi. Don't miss the Oasis Bar, where the famed Piña Colada was born, featuring exotic drinks, dancing and nightly live music. Starbucks Coffee features the best high-quality whole bean coffees and Olas Café offers exquisite creative spa cuisine.</p> 
	<p>All the services of the Caribe Hilton's main hotel are provided to guests of the villas. 6 restaurants; 3 bars; outdoor pool; 3 tennis courts; health club; spa; playground; business center (6am-3am); 656 rooms; limited room service; babysitting; 787-721-0303 http://www.hiltoncaribbean.com/sanjuan/</p>
	<p>Club Lazer (251 Calle Cruz, OSJ) is the longest running night club in Old San Juan. Located near the cruise ship terminals, it offers three levels, each with its own unique atmosphere and style of music. This is a place to meet and greet singles. A state-of-the-art light show is a major attraction. International Cruise Ship Night is the theme on Monday evenings. Doors open at 8pm and close whenever the last person leaves. Sundays are reserved for private bookings and college parties.</p>
	<p>Condado Plaza Hotel (999 Ave Ashford, Condado) This is one of the busiest hotels in Puerto Rico, with enough facilities, restaurants, and distractions to keep visitors occupied for weeks. It is the most prominent of San Juan's hotels, set on a poor strip of beachfront on the Condado. It's a favorite of business travelers, tour groups, and conventions, but it also attracts independent travelers, especially families, because of its wide array of amenities. Of the three chain-related properties on the island, the Wyndham Condado Plaza has revolved into the most middle-brow. Stunning contemporary renovated rooms Skywalk to casino. They have two minor and rather unattractive swimming pools and lots of security-related tension between the sunbathing area around those two pools and the narrow sands of a beach that the hotel shares with members of the public. And it's not a great beach, but narrow and short in breadth. So the pools are small and overcrowded with hotel guests. Use of the facilities at one Wyndham can be charged to a room at the other. Only the Wyndham El San</p>   

	<p>Juan Hotel has a larger array of dining options. This place is known for its restaurants with culinary diversity that attract many local residents. The hotel's premier restaurant -- a hot ticket on San Juan's dining scene -- is Cobia, winner of several culinary awards; 6 restaurants; 2 bars; 3 outdoor pools; 2 tennis courts; health club and spa; 3 Jacuzzis; business center; watersports equipment; children's programs; salon; 24-hr. room service; casino www.condadoplaza.com</p>  <p>Cobia - Chef Phil Belshew proudly offers Caribbean creations at the award-winning Cobia, located in the Condado Plaza Hotel & Casino on Ashford Avenue. Cobia combines a gourmet blend of Caribbean flavors with a focus on fresh seafood. Enjoy the tapas bar, accompanied by a glass or bottle of wine from their vintage wine cellar. The restaurant has been honored with the 'Excellent Cuisine Award' from the local newspaper El Nuevo Día.</p> <p>La Fiesta Lounge This late night venue is conveniently located in the Condado Plaza Hotel & Casino on Ashford Avenue and features tropical and international musical entertainment. The '40 something' crowd are casual but elegantly dressed. Come in and join the party. There is a two-drink minimum and the bar offers wine by the glass, beer on tap, bottled local brews or imported, standard mixed drinks and of course tropical specialties. The bar itself has a very captivating, excellent view of the Atlantic Ocean.</p>
	<p>El San Juan Hotel: This hotel is no longer the dazzler it once was. The Ritz-Carlton has taken the truly elite business, and The Water Club is even more sophisticated. Nonetheless, El San Juan Hotel is still a good choice for (well-to-do) families, with lots of activities for children. The beachfront hotel is surrounded by 350 palms, century-old banyans, and gardens. Its 700-yard (640m) long sandy beach is the finest in the San Juan area. The hotel's river pool, with currents, cascades, and lagoons, evokes a jungle stream, and the lobby is the most opulent and memorable in the Caribbean. Entirely sheathed in red marble and hand-carved mahogany paneling, the public rooms stretch on almost endlessly. The large, well-decorated rooms have intriguing touches of high-tech; each contains three phones and a VCR. Bedrooms are imbued with honey-hued woods and rattans and king-size or double beds. Bathrooms have all the amenities and tub-and-shower combos; a few feature Jacuzzis. About 150 of the units, designed as comfortable bungalows, are in the outer reaches of the garden. Known as <i>casitas</i>, they include Roman tubs, atrium showers, and access to the fern-lined paths of a tropical jungle a few steps away. A 17-story, \$60 million wing with 120 suites, all oceanfront, was completed in 1998. The ultra-luxury tower features 103 one- or two-bedroom units, 8 garden suites, 5 governor's suites, and 4 presidential suites. No other hotel in the Caribbean offers such a rich diversity of dining options and such high-quality food. Japanese, Italian, Mexican, and 24-hour American/Caribbean restaurants are just a few of the options. Palm, La Piccola Fontana, Yamato and The Ranch. In recent years, readers have occasionally complained about maintenance in some of the bedrooms. If possible, ask to see your room before you check in. 8 restaurants; 15 bars; 2 outdoor pools; tennis court; health club; spa; sauna and steam room; business center; watersports equipment/rentals; children's programs; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility; casino. http://elsanjuanhotel.com/</p> <p>Babylon- Located at the Wyndham El San Juan Hotel & Casino, Babylon is a fixture in San Juan nightlife. Locals and tourists mingle with the island's celebs to shake their bon bons and taste la vida loca. Babylon is as elegant as its host hotel and enforces a very-strict, semi-formal dress code. Call the club to check on special parties and performers.</p> <p>The Ranch is a concept created by the Wyndham El San Juan Hotel & Casino on Isla Verde Avenue. This Western-type restaurant even has a mechanical 'bull'. Waiters are dressed like cowboys and western movies are played on TV monitors. Dishes are mostly American and Mexican classics such as ribs and steaks and steaming bowls of hearty chili. Definitely a great place to visit with the family</p>

	<p>and catch an awesome view of the Isla Verde district. The restaurant also sports a full bar</p> <p>Chico Bar Located on Isla Verde Avenue, this ultra-chic bar is situated within the Wyndham El San Juan Hotel & Casino. This is the 'in' place where merengue music thrives. Fantastic drink concoctions from the full bar are a delight to the senses. The dark, elegant décor creates an atmosphere that is tropical yet maintains a confident and cosmopolitan feel. Be sure that you dress to impress</p> <p>Tequila Bar and Grill This restaurant offers excellent Mexican cuisine with a view that simply has no rival in San Juan, from the 10th floor of the Wyndham El San Juan Hotel & Casino on Isla Verde Avenue. The ambiance is casual but elegant and the restaurant offers an excellent bar with creative drinks. Try traditional dishes such as quesadilla and tacos. You must taste the delicious Crepas de Cajetas dessert.</p>
	<p>(The) Gallery Inn (204-206 Calle Norazagray, OSJ) 300 year old inn is the only one overlooking the Atlantic Ocean atop the north wall of OSJ; enter a world of history and art; owner/artist Jan D'Esopo has filled the mansion with paintings, sculpture and birds; flower filled courtyard; 22 guest rooms; wine and cheese gatherings; music room. http://www.thegalleryinn.com/</p>
	<p>Guadalanex: We walked around and checked out shops and so on, found the coolest bar in the world; tiny but they handed out percussion instruments when we walked in. What a blast! Everyone was jamming along with Puerto Rican CDs, with everything from bongos to maracas to a grater with a spoon.</p>
	<p>Hard Rock Café - 253 Recinto Street, Old San Juan. Located in a beautiful two-story building built 300 years ago, seats 230 guests and offers great American food in a rock 'n' roll atmosphere. It features a new 500 sq. foot retail store selling Hard Rock's authentic merchandise including T-shirts and pins, a new semiprivate dining room that seats 40 people overlooking the main room and Hard Rock's world-famous memorabilia collection. Memorabilia highlighting Puerto Rico's rich musical past is featured throughout the cafe. A shirt worn by Ricky Martin during the 1991 Grammy Awards and a sequined pantsuit worn by Lourdes Roubles during a 1993 concert at the Performing Arts Center in San Juan are among the rare items on display. In addition, pieces representing some of rock's most influential artists like Bob Dylan and Aerosmith are also showcased</p> <p>www.hardrock.com/locations/cafes/cafes.aspx?lc=SANJ</p>
	<p>Hotel Milano – 307 Calle Fortaleza (near governor's mansion); 30 room budget hotel; rooftop restaurant with view of the cruise ships in harbor; small rooms</p> <p>www.hotelmilanopr.com</p>
	<p>Inter-Continental San Juan Hotel (5961 Av Isla Verde, Isla Verde) Thanks to an extensive \$15.2 million restoration, this resort on the beach now competes with Wyndham El San Juan Hotel next door, but it still doesn't overtake it. You'll get the sense of living in a sophisticated beach resort rather than a hotel where the sun rises and sets around the whims of high-rolling gamblers. Most of the comfortable, medium-size rooms have balconies and terraces and tasteful furnishings with a lot of pizzazz. Top-floor rooms are the most expensive, even though they lack balconies. Each bathroom has a power showerhead, a deep tub and a scale. The most desirable units are in the Plaza Club, a minihotel within the hotel that sports a private entrance, concierge service, complimentary food and beverage buffets and suite/spa and beach facilities. Dining within any of this hotel's six restaurants merits attention, although the choice is vaster at the neighboring Wyndham El San Juan Hotel. Even if you're not a guest, consider a visit to Ruth's Chris Steak House which serves the best steaks in San Juan. Momoyama is also worth a trek across town, and its sushi bar is the finest along the beachfront. However, we find the Market Cafe, with its made-to-order foods and snacks, overrated; 5 restaurants; 3 bars; the Caribbean's largest free-form pool; health club; whirlpool; sauna; scuba diving; limo service; business center; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility.</p> <p>Martini's Located at the Inter-Continental San Juan Resort & Casino, Martini's is a hopping sophisticated disco and lounge. Join the party for live music, dancing, mingling and lively drinks all</p>

	<p>week long. It all happens in a stunning elliptical room, evocative of a ship in the ocean, with colorful glass backlit walls to set the stage. You may be lucky enough to be on hand for one of Martini's fun themed parties, popular with both locals and visitors to Puerto Rico. Dance your heart out in the discotheque and then take a breather on the romantic balcony overlooking the Grand's pool area. Be sure to arrive early as lines can be awfully long here.</p>
	<p>Numero Uno Guesthouse 1 Santa Ana, Ocean Park: 3 story 1940's structure with 14 spare guest rooms right on the beach (some with ocean views); Pamela's restaurant serves a popular Caribbean lunch at tables on the sand, cocktails; stay in the main house (for socialization) or across the street in the condo (for isolation and private outdoor space); black tiled plunge pool in walled garden setting; in residential area; some abandoned buildings nearby http://www.numero1guesthouse.com/index.html</p>
	<p>Ritz Carlton This is one of the most spectacular deluxe hotels in the Caribbean. Set on 8 acres (3.2 hectares) of prime beachfront, within a 5-minute drive of the airport, it appeals to both business travelers and vacationers. The decor reflects Caribbean flavor and the Hispanic culture of the island, with artwork from prominent local artists. More visible, however, is an emphasis on continental elegance. Some of the most opulent public areas anywhere, these include wrought-iron balustrades and crystal chandeliers. Beautifully furnished guest rooms open onto ocean views or the gardens of nearby condos. Rooms are very large, with excellent furnishings and fine linen. The bathrooms are exceptionally plush, with tub-and-shower combos, scales, bathrobes, and deluxe toiletries. Some rooms are accessible for guests with disabilities. Preferred accommodations are in the ninth-floor Ritz-Carlton Club, which has a private lounge and personal concierge staff. The scope and diversity of dining here is second only to that at the Wyndham El San Juan, and for top-shelf dining venues, the Ritz-Carlton has no equal. The Vineyard Room is one of the finest restaurants in San Juan. The hotel has the Caribbean's largest casino; 3 restaurants; 5 bars; large pool; 2 tennis courts; spa; health club; children's program; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility; Caribbean's largest casino; nightclub http://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/SanJuan/Default.htm</p>
	<p>Rumba (152 Calle San Sebastian). really friendly locals who practically see it as a duty to show you a good time. Oh, and then throw-in a large helping of amazing music. DJ or live,. It has great latin music and a latin band that plays salsa. this is Latin on fire! Crowd is mixed and the dancing is awesome. People are friendly and courteous and the drinks are good and inexpensive; not a glamorous club its pretty much laid back. This club is small and cramped, but so photogenically hip that it was selected as the site for the filming of many of the crowd scenes within <i>Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights</i>. Set immediately adjacent to the also-recommended restaurant, Barú, with which it's not associated, it's known within San Juan's underground nightlife circuit as one of the places to hang. Expect beautiful people and a sense of cutting-edge Hispanic hip. Open Tuesday through Sunday 9pm to 4am. Thursday, \$10 at the door and an open bar until 1am</p>
	<p><i>Do not miss the Rumba Club....6 piece local salsa band and lots of locals doing the salsa the "right way" No cover charge - drinks a little high but strong and a very lively place.... we had a blast!</i></p>

San Juan Marriott (1309 Av Ashford, Condado) It's the tallest building on the Condado, a 21-story



landmark that Marriott spent staggering sums to renovate in a radically different format after a tragic fire gutted the premises in 1989. The current building packs in lots of postmodern style, and one of the best beaches on the Condado is right outside. Furnishings in the soaring lobby were inspired by Chippendale. If there's a flaw, it's the decor of the comfortable but bland bedrooms, with pastel colors that look washed out when compared to the rich mahoganies and jewel tones of the rooms in the rival Condado Plaza Hotel. They're generally spacious, with good views of the water, and each has a tiled bathroom with tub-and-shower combination. We

suggest having only one dinner in-house -- at **Ristorante Tuscany**; 2 restaurants; 2 bars; pool; 2 tennis courts; health club; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; tour desk; car-rental desk; business center; 24-hr. room service; 525 rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility; casino 800-228-9290 www.marriott.com




The Lobby Lounge Evenings come alive in this popular and sophisticated lounge. The fun starts at sunset and moves into the wee hours with some of the best salsa beats in town. As part of the San Juan Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino on Ashford Avenue, the lobby lounge offers first class atmosphere. The clientele is a mix of locals and visitors; aperitifs, after-dinners, cognacs, wines, and martinis. Non-alcoholic drinks include sodas, tea, and coffee.

Senor Frog's next to the Sheraton Hotel Old San Juan and just a few blocks from the cruise piers. Their philosophy is simple: have fun, let yourself go and throw caution to the wind. Do something daring. When you're at Senor Frog, you're gonna smile even if they have to hold you down and tickle you. Famous for its "yard glass" of beer, reggae, karaoke, spontaneous and interactive entertainment, conga lines, loud music, unique clothing line and Mexican/Caribbean finger food and entrees with a twist. If they're open, its happy hour! www.senorfrogs.com/puertorico/



Sheraton Old San Juan and Casino: (100 Brumbaugh St, OSJ—originally a Wyndham hotel until 2005) closest casino (and hotel) to the cruise pier (across from Pier #3) in historic Old San Juan and approximately 7 miles from Luis Munoz Marin International Airport (\$20 cab ride); nine-story with 240 guest rooms (some with private balconies); hotel is triangular and the inside rooms face each other; Chicago Burger Company casual waterfront restaurant where you can build your own burger; Fogata Latino Bar and Grill; tiny rooftop pool



		<p>and hottub with striking Bay views; Hertz rental desk; great OSJ restaurant Aquaviva behind hotel; only two elevators are crowded at check-out time; luggage can be stored and a freshen-up area is available; preferred guest rooms on 8th floor; great Sweet Sleeper beds; small casino; valet parking for \$18 per day; walk to Coldstone Creamery, Hard Rock Café and Senor Frogs; walk to many historic sites and great restaurants in Old San Juan</p> <p>http://www.sheratonoldsanjuan.com/ 866-653-7577</p>
	<p>Stargate (1 Calle Roberto H Todd, Santurce) This nightclub, formerly known as Egipto, offers some of the hottest DJs and rave nights you can find in town. Dance the night away on one of its many dancefloors. It is one of the most impressive clubs on the San Juan party scene with its lavish décor and outrageous patrons. There are many private and special activities scheduled here throughout the year that feature some of the best dance and techno performers.</p>	
	<p>Wind Chimes Inn (1750 McLeary Ave, Condado) restored colonial Spanish villa; one block from beach; intimate boutique hotel, pool, gourmet food and drinks; some kitchenettes.</p> <p>http://www.atwindchimesinn.com/</p>	
	<p>The Water Club Hotel (2 Calle Jose M Tartak, Isla Verde): A refreshing change from the megachain resorts of San Juan, this ultrachic hotel is hip and contemporary. It's the city's only boutique hotel on a beach. We find much to praise at this small and exclusive hotel because of its highly personalized and well-trained staff. Although avant-garde, the design is not daringly provocative. Behind glass are "waterfalls," even on the elevators, and inventive theatrical-style lighting is used to bring the outdoors inside. The one-of-a-kind glass art doors are from Murano, the fabled center of glassmaking outside Venice. The hotel overlooks Isla Verde's best beach area, and all the bedrooms are spacious, opening onto views of the water and containing custom-designed beds positioned to face the ocean. Bathrooms are tiled and elegant, with tub-and-shower combinations. Unique features are the open-air 11th-floor exotic Wet Bar, with the Caribbean's only rooftop fireplace. The pool is a level above; it's like swimming in an ocean in the sky; restaurant; 2 bars; outdoor rooftop pool; fitness center; Jacuzzi; 84 rooms; 18-hr. room service; Liquid Bar in the Water Club Hotel (Isla Verde) glass walls with undulating water, pale seashell shaped seating, wild drinks and pounding music or go up on the Wet penthouse bar for romantic setting and drinks. 888-265-6699 787-253-0100</p> <p>http://www.waterbeachclubhotel.com/main.php http://www.waterbeachclubhotel.com</p>	
	<p>Some other suggestions for nightlife around metropolitan San Juan:</p> <p>Isla Ver/Punta las Marias: Blue Dolphin (music/oceanfront bar), Shot's Sports Bar (pub), Lupi's (restaurant/bar, dj/band), Oyster Bar (restaurant/bar live music)</p>	
	<p>Tasca de Pepin (bar,appetizers, young professional crowd) Brava (dance club at San Juan Hotel) Wet & Liquid (lounge djs at Water Club Hotel) Chic's Bar (located at San Juan Hotel, live music) Delirium -Ceviche Bar 360 ° Grados (lounge) Monaco (bar/dj) Tiguey (bar) Club Brava (inside of El San Juan Hotel & Casino)</p> <p>*Casinos: San Juan Hotel, Ritz Carlton, Marriott Isla Verde,Embassy Suites</p>	

	<p><u>Piñones</u></p> <p>Reef (bar.) Soleil (bar/rest.)</p> <p><u>Condado</u></p> <p>The Lounge (at the Normandie Hotel, dj lounge) Olas (at the Caribe Hilton , live music,lounge) Kali Lounge Ventana del Mar bar (located at Ventana del Mar, oceanfront bar) Barlovento (oceanfront bar in front of Ajili Mojili Restaurant) Waikiki (oceanfront bar & restaurant) Atlantic Beach Hotel Bar (oceanfront gay bar, sunday shows) Cafe San Telmo (bar,cafe) Mariachi (former Urdin) Divas (gentlemen private club) Ego at Joshuas Bar & Grill (dj's/dance/bar) Casinos: Condado Plaza, Marriott SJ, Ambassador Plaza</p> <p><u>Viejo San Juan (Old San Juan)</u></p> <p>Calle San Sebastuan (various bars located on this street) Dragonfly Two (lounge bar) Maria's (bar) Amadeus Bistro Bar Cafe Berlin Cafe Bohemio (at El Convento Hotel, bar/lounge) Carli's Cafe Concierto Club Lazer (multi level dance club) Dragonfly (restaurant with bar) El Picoteo (at El Convento Hotel, outdoor bar) Lava Fratelli (bar) Verbena (lounge/dj) located in Puerta de Tierra, Torre de la Reina Kudeta Lounge -no longer under this name?? (lounge, after hours dance club) Nuyorican Café (live music bar) Ole Lounge Parrot Club (restaurant and bar) Señor Frog (pub) Rumba (music club)</p>
	<p><u>Santurce</u></p> <p>Plaza del Mercado (various bars, music on the street, popular on Fridays) Buyé (dj, terrace,club bar) Starz (multi-level gay dance club) Havana Club (salsa music/pub) Cups (gay/lesbian dancebar) El Teatro/ Asylum (reggaeton and others dance club) Juniors 1 & 2 (gay private club/ bar) Eros (gay-mixed dance club) Luxor (reggaetón and others dance club) Nuestro Ambiente (gay dance club, live salsa music)</p>

	<p>Karma Drama theaters and Performing Arts Center "Bellas Artes"</p>
	<p><u>Rio Piedras</u> Shanans (pub, live music) Checkers (college pub) Cantares (live music, pub/restaurant)</p> <p><u>Hato Rey</u> Boccacio (gay dance club, salsa music) Coaches Sports Bar & Grill (pub) Bacarrat Lounge Coco Agua Diego (bar/pub) Stilos (gay-mixed bar) SoHo (former Roosevelt 229) Summers Pub The Wine Club (pub, Tuesday gay night) Bukamarango's (bar/pub.dj) The Bar (gay bar) Arredó (bar, live music) Plaza del Coliseo de PR (Thursday night live music under the night sky) Coliseo de Puerto Rico (modern state of the art coliseum presenting weekly concerts, Also do not miss the nightlife outside the metro area, explore Ponce, Caguas and many places around the country of Puerto Rico.</p>
	<p><u>Suggested itinerary:</u> Tuesday Go bar hopping at Calle San Sebastian; Parrot Club can be fun or the new Dragon Fly Two. End at the Bohemian cafe bar Nuyorican Cafe with live music and Puerto Rican nueva trova/spanish patriotic reggae like Cultura Profetica wanna-be bands. Wednesday 'Its Pub night' -- Start at Mango's, a packed place with live music; then keep the party up when you reach Shanans, another Wednesday packed place with music, and if you <i>still</i> want to party and have energy drop, by at Coaches located in Hato Rey Thursday Start the night of at Picoteo Bar at Convento Hotel; play some pool at Hijos de Borinquen at Calle San Sebastian. Then late at night, the party starts at one of the hottest places in town, Kudetá: a multi level lounge with beautiful and hip people. Friday Don't miss the Plaza del Mercado street party every Friday starting at 5pm. Roll to Buyé; it's Buyé's hot night, then chill out at the cool Lounge at Normadie Hotel or Waterclub's Liquid lounge. Saturday Start your evening at oceanfront Ventana del Mar's 'Di Parma' (also check also if there is a hot concert in town), then walk to the See and Be Seen at Moorings outdoor bar. End your night at Brava, San Juan's premier dance club and dance until the sun comes up. Sunday Relax at the oceanfront Waikiki bar or Barlovento Bar in Condado. Start your evening early at the Starz' tea dance after beach party; it's the hottest new multilevel (dance club, pool bars, lounge) gay-mix dance club in San Juan with the best djs. End the night at cool afterhours lounge Kali. From www.tripadvisor.com</p>
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Shopping	
	Shops in Old San Juan generally stay open after 5pm if there are 4 cruise ships in port. Stores that have a contract with the cruise lines are open.
	www.islaonline.com (Puerto Rican and Caribbean products for sale) http://myborinquen.com (Puerto Rican goods web store) http://antojitos.com (Puerto Rican crafts, food, beverages for sale)
	Coffee was introduced in Puerto Rico in 1736 and quickly became the preferred favorite of European royalty. Best consumed as espresso. Look for PR's black gold coffees (world premium coffee-- next to Jamaica Blue Mountain and Hawaiian Kona) by brand: Look for <i>Alto Grande</i> , Café Rico, Coqui, Yaucono and Rioja. Arabica beans (delicate, rich and 1/2 the caffeine) are cultivated in volcanic-based soil at altitudes over 3,000 feet and stay on the bush two months longer. Throughout the world, the highest classification grade for coffee is "café superpremium" and just three possess this ultimate grade. One is <i>Alto Grande</i> , grown in the mountains of Lares for over 150 years. <i>Café Yauco Selecto</i> is ranked among the world's top ten coffees by Wine Spectator Magazine.
	San Juan is noted for its colorful carnival masks, wooden carvings of saints (santos) and collections of Latin American art. Local popular rum is Don Q and for aficionados: Ron Barrillito.
	There's a little piece of heaven in Old San Juan for those who love to shop, and it's called Calle del Cristo, or the Cristo. Along this magical street you'll find an abundance of outlet stores from such high-end retailers as Dooney & Bourke, Coach, Polo Ralph Lauren, and Speedo. In addition there is Chopard Boutique for decorative art and jewelry and Galeria Fossil Arte with exhibits of real fossils represented in paintings, sculptures and lithographs by artist Radames Rivera. Don't miss Boveda, a creative boutique with unique fine jewelry, artwork and clothing. For tastes of the Caribbean to take home, visit Spicy Caribbee for hot sauces, coffees, candles and rum cakes. The Centro Nacional De Artes Populares y Artesanias showcases the best of local arts and crafts from Puerto Rican artists and craftsmen. Although San Juan is not a duty-free port, you still see some savings because there is no sales tax assessed.
	The heart of the Old Town shopping district lies along <i>Calle Fortaleza</i> , <i>Calle Cristo</i> (for factory outlet stores) and <i>Calle San Francisco</i> in Old San Juan. Start at the top of Christo Street and weave your way south and east through this historic district. On weekends, artisans sell their wares on <i>El Paseo de la Princesa</i> , a street leading away from the cruise piers toward the city walls. <i>Matahari</i> sells unusual men and women's clothing, jewelry and trinkets collected from around the world. For one of kind handicrafts, head for <i>Puerto Rican Arts & Crafts</i> on Calle Fortaleza and check out pottery made by the Taino Indians.

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Old San Juan Streets (Calle)

Calle del Cristo: runs north to south (*one way*) from Plaza San Jose and Parque del Quinto Centenario (close to the park entrance of El Morro) and straight downhill to the port near the Parque de las Palomas and the governor's mansion (La Fortaleza). Note: The only streets that run north from the port in Old San Juan are Tanca and Cruz Streets. These one way **NARROW** and steep streets make driving in Old San Juan best left to local cab drivers!



Back in 1521 when San Juan was a settlement of about 300 and got its name, Del Cristo Street was already there, beaming as the first paved road in front of the local church, surrounded by about 80 wood-and-thatch houses, along with these other fine first pathways: West Recinto, Caleta San Juan and Caleta Las Monjas. Make it a point to stroll through the Cristo, and while you are at it, don't forget to bring your camera. The panoramic views are breathtaking, especially the intersection of Calle Cristo and Calle de San Sebastián.

This street is host to several monuments of San Juan, such as the *Iglesia San Jose*, and the *Capilla de Cristo*, not to mention its excellent selection of world-class restaurants, such as *Il Perugino*. It's definitely one of the most important walks in the old city. **Coach Outlet Store** -- Situated in the heart of Old San Juan, this stand-alone outlet store has hundreds of purses, briefcases, wallets, belts, and other quality leather goods--all at steep discounts. The store also stocks discontinued Coach items and seconds for even greater savings; 150 Calle Cristo, Old San Juan, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901; 787 722-6830. **Polo Ralph Lauren Outlet Store**--popular store offers discounts of up to 80% off of Ralph Lauren mens' and women's clothes, housewares, and children's clothes; open Monday through Saturday from 930am to 7pm and on Sunday from 11am to 5pm. 201 Calle Cristo; 787 722 2136. Other outlet stores along Old San Juan's Calle Cristo include **Guess** at #213, **Dooney & Burke** at #200, Speedo at #65, **Gant** and **Reebok**.

Atlas Art Gallery 208 Calle Cristo, 787- 723-9987. <http://www.atlasgalleries.com/> well-established gallery is one of the most recognized art houses in the Old City, with a huge selection of exquisite work ranging from period painting to modern pieces. Both local and international artists are represented here. Atlas Art carries contemporary paintings and prints as well as sculptures in glass and bronze. The tremendous amount of variety is the real drawing card at Atlas Art.



So start from the *Quincentennial Plaza*, (take a cab to the top of the hill to the *Church*) and work your way down. Check out **Manolo Diaz** at 99 Calle Cristo- an artisan who works in his shop on crafts using recycled objects like old mirrors, wooden shutters, antique windows and even pocket-sized religious icons. Prices start at \$15 for one-of-a-kind pieces. **Cafe 51** #51 is a coffee house-style establishment that also serves pastries and sandwiches. Coming down the slope, the real strip begins with **Ben & Jerry's** #61, owned by mother-and-daughter duo Celi and Michelle. You'll see lots of Michelle Campi's photos of her former gymnast life, amid groovy Punky Brewster décor, a heady smell of freshly made waffle cones and people from all walks of life enjoying

their yummy ice cream; t-shirts designed by locals.

On the same side, on the next corner, **Magia** offers some very bold, colorful local art, complete with virgins, dragons and unique shelving. **Cafe Bohemio** #100 (adjacent to the Hotel El Convento); lounge on the outdoor patio, linger at the bar or collect at the tables in this cafe. Part of the fabled El Convento, the menu is varied, containing a little bit of a lot of different cuisines from sushi to ceviche. The drinks are storied and the clientele is as likely to come for drinks and the live music served up after 11pm every Tuesday through Friday. serves “Yuquita Envuelta” fried cassava in bacon and tamarind sauce and the “Rolleno de Apio” (cod stuffed fritters). **El Picoteo** #100 (in El Convento Hotel courtyard) The paella, bursting with fresh seafood, is legendary Further down you can see the legendary **El Batey** #101 (across the street from El Convento) one of the oldest dive bars around, a deep and dank place; a dive bar decorated with graffiti and an old wooden bar that looks like it has seen better days, with its jukebox playing non-stop tunes from original 45s of the '60s and '70s. Join locals and cruise ship crews, down cold beer and rum drinks, shoot pool and groove to the tunes; find a spot to leave your name on the wall with a Sharpie. Another dive bar is next door **Don Pablo. El Buren Pizza Restaurant** #103 has gourmet pizzas **Il Perugino** #105 Franco Seccarelli has cooked for multitudes since he opened his acclaimed restaurant in 1989. Patrons from Pavarotti to Jacques Pepin to a host of local and international dignitaries have eaten from an impressive spread of Umbrian cuisine. Traditional preparations combine with local ingredients in creations such as the pasta e gandules: a take on pasta e fagioli but using the very popular homegrown beans. Seasonal white truffles are used in a variety of preparations such as the melt-in-your-mouth spinach ravioli. On the left side you'll find **Mi Pequeño San Juan** #107 selling all sort of ceramic goodies. They specialize in lively reproductions of Old San Juan buildings, especially tiny reproductions of Cristo Street facades, and sell all sorts of religious and not so reverent crafts from local artisans (the matches are particularly cool.)

www.ducart.net

Pass the *San Jose Cathedral* on your left, and the celebrated *El Convento Hotel* and the triangular *Puerta de San Juan plaza* on your right, and the heavy duty shopping spree begins:

Museo del Nino #150 kids can tour the human heart or talk on a short wave radio! **Patchouli** #152 lies on the right side, right after the guy selling bucolic Puerto Rican paintings on the street. This is a small Mom and Pop shop in the wall offering unique local jewelry, stunning silk and cotton dresses, incense, dissected butterflies and funky chimes, as well as miniature saints and unique arts and crafts that "lift your spirit." then further down you'll reel from all the inexpensive but pretty jewelry in all the different shop windows. You'll also see the new **Custo Barcelona** #152 store, which sells some expensive shirts within a minimalist ambiance. <http://www.custo-barcelona.com/> **Spicy Caribbee** at 154 Calle Cristo is an offshoot of the Tortola classic and features hot sauces and coffees made from Puerto Rican recipes, along with crafts; www.spicycaribbee.com across the hall from El Galapon. **El Galpón** #154 selling first-rate cigars, several bona fide *guayabera* shirts for your friends back home, and one or two gorgeous *vegigante* masks from the top maskmakers on the island. **Mark Stuart Fine Art Galeria** #156. **Coach Outlet** #158 www.coach.com Look to the other side, past the **Polo Ralph Lauren** outlet store and you'll hit **Turán**, a new store that sells neat stuff for the home and lots of inexpensive art by local talent. Rummage through the many canvases and find your favorite reproduction or an anonymous painting that fits your style. **Galería Fossil Arte** #200 (corner of Calle San Francisco) owner Radamés Rivera focuses on present-day Latin American art—from Puerto Rico to Brazil—and has something for everybody, "from the masters to up-and-comers. exhibits that include the beauty of anthropology. Real fossils taken from the soil of the island are used as raw material by artist and archeologist Radames Rivera. In doing so, he creates pieces of spellbinding rugged beauty in which the natural beauty hidden in nature is brought out by the artist's imagination. Paintings, sculptures, etchings, silk-screens, lithographs and many other types of art fill

the rooms. Other local and international artists exhibit their work here as well. **Galeria Exodo #200B** (corner of Calle San Francisco) art, sculpture, etchings, hand-printed posters, books and videos <http://www.galeriaexodo.com/> **Maria's Mexican #204** (near Calle San Francisco) great spot for clever and delicious iced drinks, fabulous margaritas and best Puerto Rican bar food; tacky decorations; a favorite local hangout; Mexican food and sangria. The atmosphere is fun, and the tropical drinks include piña coladas and frosts made of banana, orange, strawberry and (most famous) lemon frost as well as ice-cold Puerto Rican beer Medalla; Stallone, Kurt Russell, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bush twins, Cher are just a few of the famous pictures on the wall; open 10:30 to 3AM! **Galería Palomas #207** For an eclectic collection, on the right side of the street, with its down-to-earth environs in keeping with the Old San Juan residential style. **Botello Art Gallery #208**, The gorgeous Galería Botello displays the works of the late Angel Botelli, who as far back as 1943 was hailed as the "Caribbean Gauguin." His work, which often uses the bright colors of the tropics, usually depicts island scenes. His work hangs in the Museo de Arts de Puerto Rico. where you'll find art from top artists like Botello himself, ceramic queen Roxanna Jordán, antique santos de palo and much more. an alcove dedicated to Santos, or hand-carved miniatures of Catholic saints that are a centuries-old artistic and spiritual tradition on the island. One of the participants of Gallery Nights is the Botello Gallery on Cristo Street, whose owner—son to famous sculptor Angel Botello (he of the eye-catching metal pieces that grace different spots throughout San Juan)—is proud to work with contemporary artists and catapult them into the international arena as part of the gallery's mission to foster their growth; housed in a 300-year-old building, the gallery is something of an eclectic sanctuary; on a hot day, you'll feel instantly cooled and refreshed when you make your way into its arched halls to admire the work within. For a few moments of pure serenity, step into the lovely, calming oasis of a patio where, to the melody of a gurgling fountain, you can admire some of the artwork and sculptures that are meticulously arranged around you. This is a place of quiet reflection as much as it is an opportunity to appreciate artistic beauty and power. <http://www.botello.com/> . **Bóveda #209** sells everything from kitschy postcards to stunning jade and coral necklaces from India to Japanese paper lanterns. This store has been consistently rated as the best for gift shopping in the area. <http://www.boveda.info/>

The last bunch of stores gives you, you guessed, it more outlets. But cross Fortaleza Street, toward the Cristo Chapel, and on your right, just before the Parque de las Palomas, you'll hit **Amazonia #252**, a smorgasborg of leather goods and Panama hats at very reasonable prices. Owner Luis Conrado will help you pick out the perfect souvenir. **Casa Del Libro #255** a restored 18th century museum with over 5,000 manuscripts and texts that date back 2,000 years; some documents signed by Ferdinand and Isabela.

And last is one of my favorite shops in the whole world, a magical shopping biosphere where merchandise lays with ease and aplomb, never in rank and file. At **Flowers & Gallery #259** the little corner shop that you almost miss, right next to the *Cristo Chapel*, you'll find unframed art from emerging artists, a moody bunny, parakeets galore, a cable-munching cockatiel, exotic flower arrangements, Majolica balls and oddball crystal vases, along with Indian and Thai furniture, mannequins and even more antiques. Here you can get your hands on the whimsical creations of Susana, mermaids with wings, butterflies, coquettish dragonflies with cute faces made out of clay, made to hang and make you smile. These little characters are simply precious, albeit a expensive starting at \$35.

Galeria las Americas #104 Calle Fortaleza corner of Calle Cristo); near Parque las Palomas; The largest privately owned art gallery in Puerto Rico features Caribbean and Latin American art, from paintings and ceramics to the much sought-after santos.

After all that shopping, go back up the street and let yourself be swept off your feet with aphrodisiac

	<p>fare at <i>La Ostra Cosa</i>, #154 (next door to Spicy Caribbee selling famous PR coffees, spices, postcards, famous cheap vanilla, gifts etc.) where they'll treat you like royalty. Even if you have to wait for their out-of-this-world oysters and prawns, their lemonade will soothe your spirit while you take in the loveliness of a 16th century Old San Juan patio. Happy shopping!</p> <p>The peninsula stretching below the Capillo de Cristo chapel is known as La Puntilla and houses a few official buildings and a modern condominium complex.</p>
	<p><u>Calle Fortaleza</u> runs west to east (<i>one way</i>) about mid-Old San Juan from the governor's house (La Fortaleza) right past Plaza des Armas to Plaza de Colon (and <i>Café Berlin</i>) in the east and parallel to Calle San Francisco (running one way east to west). The eastern end (walk AWAY from El Morro) known as "SoFo" is most notable for its many trendy bars and restaurants (near the Milano Hotel); the week before Christmas and the week of Father's Day in June the street is closed to traffic and tables are set up on the street for a culinary street fair.</p> <p>Galeria Sanchez #320 contemporary fine art gallery; http://www.galeriasanchez.com/</p> <p>Milano Hotel #307 hotel with small rooms; Panorama rooftop restaurant with nice view http://www.hotelmilanopr.com/</p> <p>311 Trois Cent Onze #311 experience Casablanca, Paris and Provence via Puerto Rico. upon entering the heavy wooden doors that conceal this former cinema warehouse from the bustle of SoFo. Limoges china and crystal hold the chef's creations which are steeped in fine French tradition with touches of the island; escargot and sole meuniere in addition to spicy sausage and salmon carpaccio with citrus</p> <p>Cudeta #314 Fortaleza; pan-Asian cuisine, feels like something out of Bangkok; order the paella valenciana risotto or the shrimp curry.</p> <p>Marmalade #317 Fortaleza; offers a U.S.-inspired menu that ranges from malpeque oysters, Hudson Valley foie gras and Virginia lamb; roasted baby chick with almond fries and foie gras is out of this world.</p> <p>Tantra #256 South India meets Puerto Rico via the silky slip of a Rose Martini and the effusive combinations of Latin and Pan-Asian spices. Sensual fusion cuisine pairs traditional Indian preparations with Caribbean and Latin spices in curried mofongos and tropical fruit dips and sauces paired with tandoori meats. Late night sees Tantra turn into an Arabian lounge with a belly dancer wending her way among diners who munch on lighter fare such as the tandoori chicken pizza.</p> <p>The Parrot Club #363 Fortaleza is the restaurant that inspired San Juan's gourmet revolution and while it's a bit more passe these days, it's one of the few in the trendy SoFo (south of Fortaleza restaurant district) to open for lunch; known for its Nuevo Latino cuisine.</p> <p>Aquaviva #364 Fortaleza Street; trendy new place; serves seafood; whimsical octopus-like chandeliers.</p> <p>Dragonfly #364 Fortaleza; fabulous Latino-Asian restaurant, offers "Dragonfries," which are french fries dusted with cinnamon and ginger; a pretentious "no reservations, no shorts" door policy; a crazy Chinese-Latin fusion vibe is offered with a noodle bar and seating at cabaret-style tables; Asian-fusion dining meets Greenwich Village NYC attitude and settles in Old San Juan. From the front door, which is guarded by a beautiful hostess, to the dark red, ultra chic, dimly lit interior complete with fabulous drapes and lamps, this is one of the places to be seen in Old San Juan. If you dare, try the drink of the house called "Dragon Punch." Bar snacks include the unexpected surprise of root vegetable chips and the seafood ceviche. Crab cakes, grilled meats and a heavy emphasis on yucca, pumpkin, squash and other indigenous vegetables are a hallmark of the menu. opens 6pm.</p>

	Barrachine Fortaleza; (near Calle San Jose) bar where pina colada was supposedly invented.
	<p><u>Calle Marina</u> (opposite the cruise piers; Pier 1 and 3)</p> <p>Plazoleta del Puerto: collection of local island art, sculpture and craft shops selling festival masks, hand-embroidered linens, copper jewelry, handbags, hammocks, baskets, ceramics and items made from mahogany.</p>
	<p><u>Calle Norzagaray</u> runs from west to east across the northern edge of OSJ facing Atlantic Ocean) from El Morro in the west to San Cristobal Historic Site in the east (then merging and curving south to meet Calle Fortaleza near the Parrot Club) Since this street skirts the picturesque but dangerous slum of La Perla, it is best to avoid the eastern end of this street at all times of the day. The Gallery Inn, #204-206; a quirky, unusual hotel that occupies a collection of small 300-year old homes on the highest point in Old San Juan with sweeping rooftop views of El Morro and OSJ. Houses Galeria San Juan art gallery; The 22 guest rooms scattered throughout the site are furnished with antiques, Tempur-Pedic mattresses, and a wealth of artwork created by the hotel owner Jan D'Esopo. Some rooms have views to the sea and some are very small, and you need to specify if you must have a window in your room because not all have them. There is no sign--the place is a bit hard to find, so look for the busts over the front door. www.thegalleryinn.com</p>
	<p><u>Calle Recinto Sur</u></p> <p>Canvas Art Gallery Recinto Sur, manager Jamie Lugo confirms the recent bloom of native talent. Canvas does not just feature native talent, but international artists as well—from Colombia, Italy, Spain, Cuba and beyond</p>
	<p><u>Calle Cruz</u> runs north/south from Paseo de la Princesa to past Plaza des Armas; Obra Galeria #304 (at Recinto Sur) art exhibitions http://www.obragaleria.com/ .</p>
	<p><u>Calle San Francisco</u> runs east to west (<i>one way</i>) about mid-Old San Juan from the Plaza de Colon (and Café Berlin) in the east right past Plaza Des Armas to the governor's mansion (La Fortaleza) in the west; runs one block north of and parallel to Calle Fortaleza (which is one way west to east).</p> <p>La Bombonera #259 Calle San Francisco; freshly squeezed glass of orange juice or a classic Cubano sandwich for lunch. The circa-1903 bakery-lunch joint is open from 7:30 a.m. - 8:15 p.m. Tapas are big here This place offers exceptional value in its homemade pastries, well-stuffed sandwiches, and endless cups of coffee -- and it has done so since 1902. Its atmosphere evokes turn-of-the-20th-century Castille transplanted to the New World. The food is authentically Puerto Rican, homemade, and inexpensive, with regional dishes such as rice with squid, roast leg of pork, and seafood asopao. For dessert, you might select an apple, pineapple, or prune pie, or one of many types of flan. Service is polite, if a bit rushed, and the place fills up quickly at lunchtime. La Mallorca #300; breakfast and lunch; superlative coffee. Café Berlin #407; look out over Plaza Colón through large arched windows; enjoy either vegetarian or non-vegetarian dishes at this truly versatile café that also features a muesli energy bar; creative salads, sandwiches, pastries, freshly squeezed juices, and organic coffees; eggplant tofu or veggie pizza topped off with frozen margaritas; live street musicians stroll in to entertain from time to time. Features great outdoor covered seating as well.</p>
	<p><u>Calle San Jose:</u> runs north to south (<i>one way</i>) parallel to Calle del Cristo only 1 block east.</p> <p>Museo del Indio #119 Calle San Jose; small museum of indigineous people of Puerto Rico; 1 block east of Catedral de San Juan #153 Calle Cristo (near El Convento Hotel). Arte & Mascaras #222 fierce hand-crafted masks; Howard Johnson #202 in restored colonial</p>

	house; stylish lounge, free wifi; often windowless rooms.
	<u>Calle San Justo La Mallorquina</u> #207 Puerto Rico's oldest restaurant since 1848; Carli's Café Concierto on the corner of San Justo and Recinto Sur, live jazz nightly in Banco Popular building with indoor and outdoor terrace overlooking cruise piers, owner Carli played with the Beach Boys, purchase CD's on the website www.carlicafeconcierto.com open 3:30 to 11pm except Sundays, 787-725-4927
	<u>Calle de San Sebastian</u> runs east/west across the northern border of Old San Juan from El Morro to San Cristobal (parallel to and one block south of Calle Norzagaray.) Located in the northern sector, this is one of Old San Juan's most famous boulevards. It is the major venue for local celebrations, including the annual January festival, the Puerto Rican equivalent of Mardi Gras. This is a classical colonial street with the spacious Plaza San Jose drawing hundreds of partiers on warm weekend evenings. Calle San Sebastian is crowded with many bars and museums (including Dominican Convent's San Juan Museum of History and Art, Museo Pablo Casals, Museum of Santos, Museo del Indio) and Iglesias de San Jose.. It is a must-see for visitors and the thoroughfare where one can find the famous Hijos de Borinquen bar and the well-known El Patio de Sam #102 Great burgers, cold beer and rocking tunes put El Patio on the map for over 50 years. Located across from the Plaza Colon, there is live entertainment every night of the week except Sunday; Amadeus Café #106. Galeria Candela #110; Rumba #152 Dirty Dancing and Havana Nights were filmed here; Baires on Plaza del Mercado 9, off San Sebastian Street, an Argentinean-themed restaurant has live music some nights and delicious fare from grilled sweetbreads to steaks to pasta; open noon - 2:30 p.m., from 6 p.m. Baru #150 Pretty people and portraits by Botero; massive mahogany bar; Mahi ceviches; horseradish mashed potatoes; tangy chicken kabobs in green curry. Portions are lavishly spread out on oversized plates.
Art	
	<p>Noche de Galeria (Gallery Night) 20 galleries and museums stay open from 6-9pm on the first Tuesday of the month. Some serve free wine and the surrounding streets (mostly in Old San Juan mostly near Calle Cristo and Calle San Sebastian) are crowded with partiers. Below is a list of art galleries in Puerto Rico (though not all may participate in Gallery Night.)</p> <p>Galería Viota features paintings and silkscreens by master Augusto Marín and large-format abstract expressionist works by the Paris-based Ricardo Ramírez 739 av San Patricio, SJ</p> <p>Arsenal de La Puntilla is a nest for struggling artists outside walls; colonial building on edge of San Juan Bay.</p> <p>Galeria Sin Titulo on Calle Luna. This gallery has become a breeding ground for upcoming artists. Located on the second floor of a building that falls directly on the shadow of the back entrance to the San Juan City Hall, Sin Titulo has some of that New York something-great-tucked-in-a-corner feel. Exhibits here change every month, so the gallery is always cooking something up.</p> <p>Further up the hill from Sin Titulo, you can wander into the Liga de Arte building, which overlooks the Plaza del Quinto Centenario (Quincentennial Square). The Liga de Arte is an art educational center where children and adults can sign up for classes in painting, sculpting and photography. Once the hub of new art in Puerto Rico, nowadays exhibits range from new artists to some established ones.</p> <p>For some one-stop viewing, just across the street from Liga de Arte is the Museum of the Americas. The Museum of the Americas has several exhibit halls where artists from all over the hemisphere showcase their works. The large courtyard in the middle of the building make this a great place for big exhibits with a lot of free wine and cheese, the obligatory diet of art critics.</p>

And just before you start feeling the effects of some chronic museum fatigue (you know you have it when every painting starts looking the same) head a little further up to the **School of Plastic Arts**.

The school has become the quintessential art school in Puerto Rico, a title that used to belong to the University of Puerto Rico's Visual Arts Department. The artists exhibiting here are students, so on most occasions you get to witness some interesting dressing in the audience, good music and some very conceptual pieces. The school might not have the best art at display on Gallery Nights, but they always have the best art show. And for travelers, this is the place to get a real dose of San Juan's bohemian art scene. By this time, the bars and restaurants on San Sebastian Street, only two blocks away from the school, are bustling with people. The galleries are closing, and there is nothing left to do but stay up late in the Old City.

Puerto Rico Museum of Art

Avenida De Diego

787-977-6277

Galeria Petrus 726 Hoare St SJ

Galeria Raices 314 Av jose de diego Half a block from the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, Galería Raíces is dedicated to showing work by such emerging Puerto Rican artists as Nayda Collazo Llorens, whose cerebral and sensitive multimedia installations examine connections and patterns in games, codes, and human memory. Raíces also displays the work of sculptors Annex Burgos and Julio Suárez.

Obra Galería Alegría

301 Cruz St.

Galería W. Labiosa

200 Tetuán St.

Galería L'Enfant

107 San José St.

Galería Coabey

101 San José St.

Galería Carlos Irizarry

110 San Sebastián St.

Galería Mora

54 San José St.

Canvas Art Gallery

305 Recinto Sur St.

Galería DMR

204 Luna St.

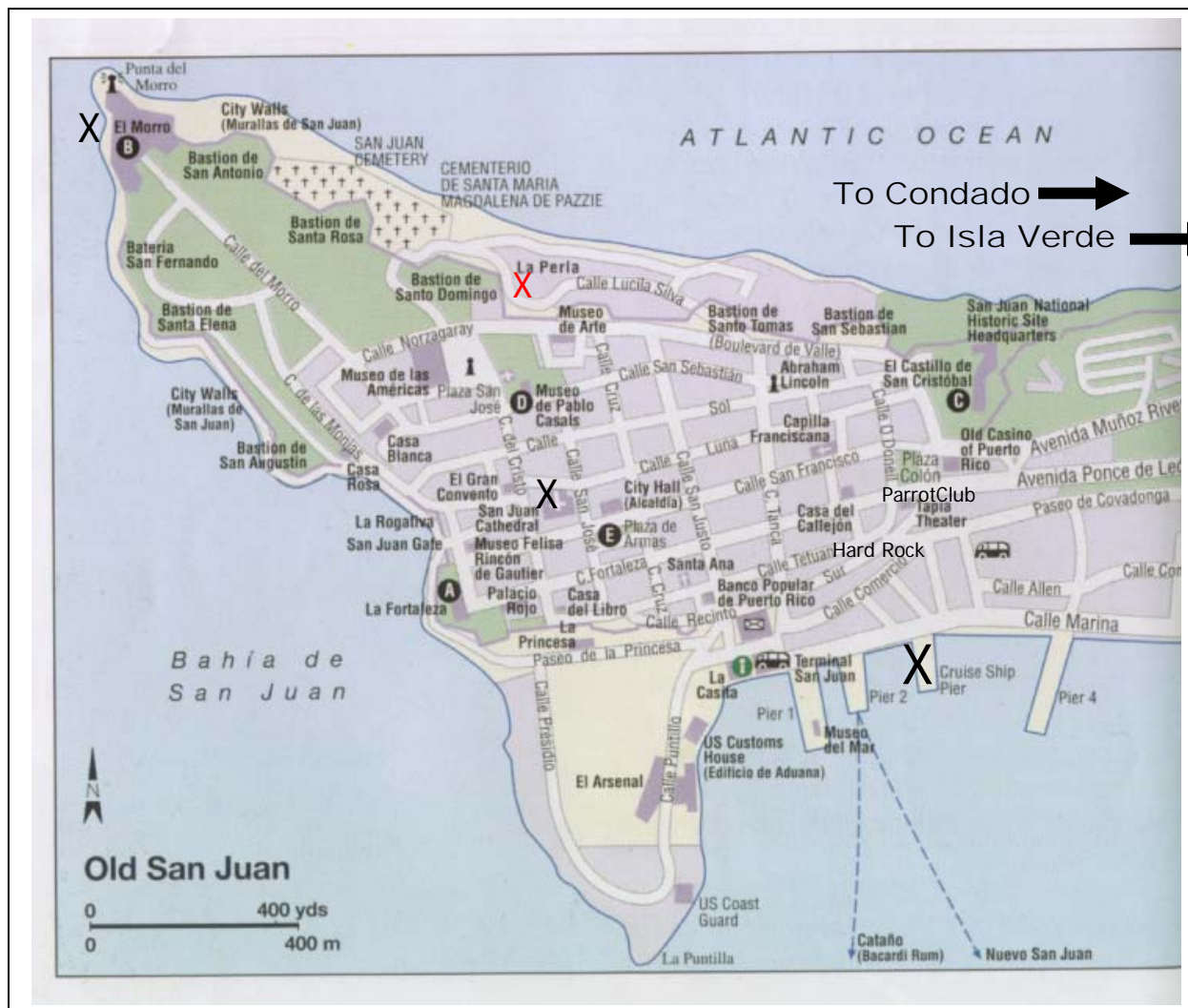
Galería Sin Título

157 Luna St.

Siena Art Gallery

	<p>253 San Francisco St.</p> <p>Estudio Cajigas 205 San Justo</p> <p>Galería San Juan 204-206 Norzagaray St.</p> <p>For more info please visit: www.ExperiencePuertoRico.com</p>
	<p>Avenida Condado (Condado) is a good bet for souvenirs as well as art and upscale jewelry and togs. <i>David Antonio</i> sells updated versions of the men's classic guayabera shirt (Cuban or Mexican wedding shirt) and joyful creations for women from his small but surprising shop in 69 Ave Condado Condado 787-725-0600. Only one garment is made in each size.</p>
	<p>Puerto Rican Handmade Crafts and Masks Center (1035 Av Ashford, Condado) This store offers a variety of Puerto Rican specialties -- masks, carvings, musical instruments, jewelry, etc. All is of high quality, and in my opinion, it is better and more fairly priced than that which is seen in Old San Juan</p>
	<p>Spicy Caribbee (154 Calle Cristo): right next door to <i>Ostra Cosa</i>; this shop has the best selection of Puerto Rican coffee, which is gaining an increasingly good reputation among aficionados. Alto Grande is the grandest brand. Other favorite brands of Puerto Rican coffee are Café Crema, Café Rico, Rioja, and Yaucono -- in that order. The shop also has Old Town's best array of hot spicy sauces of the Caribbean, candles, postcards etc.</p>
	<p>Puerto Rico Arts and Crafts (204 Calle Fortaleza, OSJ) set in a 200-year-old colonial building, this unique store is one of the premier outlets on the island for authentic artifacts. Of particular interest are papier-mâché carnival masks from Ponce, whose grotesque and colorful features were originally conceived to chase away evil spirits. Taíno designs inspired by ancient petroglyphs are incorporated into most of the sterling silver jewelry sold here. There's an art gallery in back, with silk-screened serigraphs by local artists. The outlet has a gourmet Puerto Rican food section with items like coffee, rum, and hot sauces for sale. A related specialty of this well-respected store involves the exhibition and sale of modern replicas of the Spanish colonial tradition of santos, which are carved and sometimes polychromed representations of the Catholic saints and the infant Jesus. Priced from \$50 to \$1,100 each, and laboriously carved by artisans in private studios around the island, they're easy to pack in a suitcase because the largest one measures only 12 inches from halo to toe.</p>
	<p>Ole (105 Fortaleza, OSJ) browsing this store is a learning experience. Even the standard Panama hat takes on new dimensions. Woven from fine-textured <i>paja</i> grass and priced from \$20 to \$1,000, depending on the density of the weave, the hats are all created the same size, then blocked -- by an employee on-site -- to fit the shape of your head. Dig into this store's diverse inventory to discover a wealth of treasures -- hand-beaten Chilean silver, Peruvian Christmas ornaments, Puerto Rican santos - - almost all from Puerto Rico or Latin America.</p>
	<p>Butterfly People (152 Calle Fortaleza- 2nd floor) gallery and cafe; you may never see butterflies so beautifully displayed as you will see them in this eclectic gallery. Here they specialize in exquisite creations that capture butterflies in a kaleidoscope of colors. And they do it so well that the lovely creatures seem to be still on the wing, frozen in a freeze frame. Every bit as intriguing is the restored mansion in which the butterfly gallery and the eclectic display of other gift items are displayed; café serves simple international fare offers a nook. Malula Antiques specializes in Saharan tribal art in same building. (or 257 Calle de la Cruz????)</p>
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Watersports	
	<p>For scuba diving in Puerto Rico try: http://www.osdivers.com/ (Ocean Sports) http://www.pargueradivers.com/ (best wall diving)</p>

	http://www.culebradivers.com/ (dive store and vacations) Or email paradisescubapr@yahoo.com Or phone 1-800-739-DIVE (Guanica)
	Best bet for watersports is <i>San Juan Water Fun</i> in the Windham El San Juan Hotel & Casino, Isla Verde 787-643-4510 Among many other sports, rent a windsurfer for \$25 hour including a lesson. http://waterfun-pr.com/
	At <i>Laguna del Condado</i> , kayaks rent from \$25-35.
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