

BARAHONA

Dominican Republic
Has it all



Welcome to Barahona

Bio-diverse Barahona is one of the best kept secrets of Dominican Republic. Often referred to as “La Perla del Sur” (The Pearl of the South) and “Maravilla Natural” (Miracle of Nature), Barahona is located in the southwest of the country and remains one of the last frontiers for tourism. Made up of amazing natural beaches, unspoiled waterfalls, and rugged ranges of mountain pine, the area offers eco-friendly expansions that preserve the rare biosphere, specifically the Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo Biosphere Reserve, which was added to UNESCO’s World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2002.

Barahona was founded in 1802 and gained recognition as a fishing and agricultural town, famous for its large plantations and vast collection of coffee and sugar fields. The area is home to some of the top coffee plantations in the country, which originated from the Spanish colonists who brought the plant to Hispaniola in the 18th century. Barahona coffee has been internationally recognized as “Denominación de Origen Café de Barahona,” an esteemed honor that endorses the unique characteristics and quality of coffee from this region.

The pristine nature and flawless union between the beautiful unspoiled beaches and the majestic mountains of Barahona encourage eco and adventure tourism. The area boasts the largest saltwater lake in the Caribbean, a spectacular panoramic highway with a vista-lined coast and a dry forest of plants that lay near the green land cultivated with the best fruits. The area’s boutique and family-friendly hotels integrate the natural elements of the area. Both offer unique ecological experiences throughout the lush surroundings and incorporate local goods into their restaurants and eco-friendly spas.

The following guide to Barahona includes descriptions of its biodiversity, immaculate beaches, and more unique attractions in the nerby Province of Pedernales that await you!

Cover Photo: San Rafael

Cabo Rojo, Pedernales



Bahía de Las Aguilas, Pedernales

Facts

Dominican Republic occupies the eastern two-thirds of the large island of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Republic of Haiti, and is the second largest country in the Caribbean, comprising an area of 19,279 square miles (48,442 square kilometers). The country has a population of more than 9.5 million and enjoys sunny tropical weather all year. The average year-round temperatures are 78° to 88° F (25° to 31° C). The cooler season is November through April, while it is warmest from May through October

TIME: The local time zone is eastern Caribbean Time (GMT -0400). Dominican Republic does not observe daylight savings time.

CAPITAL CITY: Dominican Republic's historic and sophisticated capital city, Santo Domingo, is the oldest city of the New World and was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1990.

LANGUAGE: Spanish is the official language; however, you'll be surprised by the fact that the majority of employees in hotels and tourist destinations speak relatively good English, French, German and Italian.

CURRENCY: The Dominican peso (RD\$) is the official currency.

GETTING HERE: Dominican Republic currently has eight international airports throughout the country. The closest airport for those traveling to Barahona is Las Americas International Airport (SQD) in Santo Domingo. Other airports include Maria Montez International Airport (BRX) in Barahona (currently for local flights), El Catey International Airport (AZS) in Samaná, Punta Cana International Airport (PUJ), La Romana International Airport (LRM) and Gregorio Luperon International Airport (POP) in Puerto Plata, El Cibao International Airport (STI) in Santiago. Maritime ports that regularly receive cruise ships include: Santo Domingo Port (Don Diego and Sans Souci terminals), Casa de Campo Port in La Romana and Samaná Bay facilities.

DOCUMENTATION: For most visitors, a valid passport along with a US\$10 Tourist Card (available at the airport) is required to enter the country. Any person, no matter their nationality, can enter with a Tourist Card if they are legal resident or if they have one of the following valid visas in their passport: United States, Canada, United Kingdom or Schengen. For more information: www.dgii.gov.do/tarjetaturistica/en

ELECTRICITY: Operates at 110 Volts/60 Hertz, the same as North America.

TAXES: Dominican hotels and restaurants collect 28 % of their published prices (18 % sales tax + 10 % service charge).

MEDICAL PRECAUTIONS: Travelers visiting the country are advised to drink only bottled water. Also, because of the strength of the Caribbean sun, it is recommended that vacationers drink water throughout the day to avoid dehydration.

DRINKING AGE: The legal drinking age in the country is 18-years old.

HOTELS: For information about Dominican Republic hotels and accommodations in the Barahona region, visit the Association of Hotels and Tourism at www.Asonahores.com, www.GoBarahona.com and www.GoPedernales.Travel

GASTRONOMY: Barahona boasts innovative gastronomy cultivated by the local community. Local restaurants support agro-tourism, gathering locally grown vegetables, fruits and spices for their dishes. They also catch fresh entrée items like seafood in the Caribbean Sea, specifically mackerel, Dorado, lobster and more. Many dishes are from a cornstarch base like chacá and chenchén and are garnished with shredded coconut, while soups are made with pork and goat meat. Fried plantains are a popular side dish and sweets made from milk and tropical fruits are typically served for dessert. For more information: www.GoBarahona.com.



Rancho Platón



Casa Bonita

Laguna de Oviedo, Pedernales



Hoyo de Pelempito, Pedernales



Laguna Cabral

Attractions in and around Barahona

LAGUNA DE OVIEDO – The saltwater lake, located in the Jaragua National Park, is one of the Caribbean's most important ecological reserves and is the second largest body of water in Dominican Republic after Lake Enriquillo. There are mangrove swamps and 24 keys in the center of the lagoon, which visitors can see during a three-hour boat tour. Here, colonies of Ricord and Rhinoceros iguanas live and migratory and endemic birds nest, including the royal and Blue Heron, gulls, Spoonbill Pelicans, parrots and flamingos.

CACHOTE – Located one hour from Paraiso in Parque Nacional Sierra de Bahoruco, this hilltop hamlet and its winding paths offer a great ecotourism attraction. Visitors can observe a variety of tropical flora including bromeliads and wild orchids. And, as it is located at a higher altitude in a cloudy forest, it is also a paradise for bird watchers with more than 20 endemic species being reported.

LAGUNA CABRAL OR RINCÓN – The Laguna de Rincón is the country's largest freshwater lagoon, reaching 18 square miles (46.8 square kilometers). The lagoon is home to a variety of fauna and wildlife including fresh water turtles, iguanas and more than 50 species of bird such as flamingos, pelican, heron and Florida duck.

HOYO DE PELEMPITO – An impressive geological depression on the Parque Nacional Sierra de Bahoruco, Hoyo de Pelempito is nestled between high mountains and considered one of the wonders of the Caribbean. The temperature ranges from 77 degrees Fahrenheit (25 degrees Celsius) during the day to 32 degrees Fahrenheit (0 degrees Celsius) at night. The park's facilities include an information center and several mountain trails that allow visitors to see the area's diverse flora and fauna.

Las Caritas



Bahía de Las Aguilas, Pedernales



Larimar

LAS CARITAS – Las Caritas is an archaeological site and natural rock center on the north side of Enriquillo Lake. The site boasts the area's largest variety of petroglyphs, providing evidence of the Taino Indians' inhabitation.

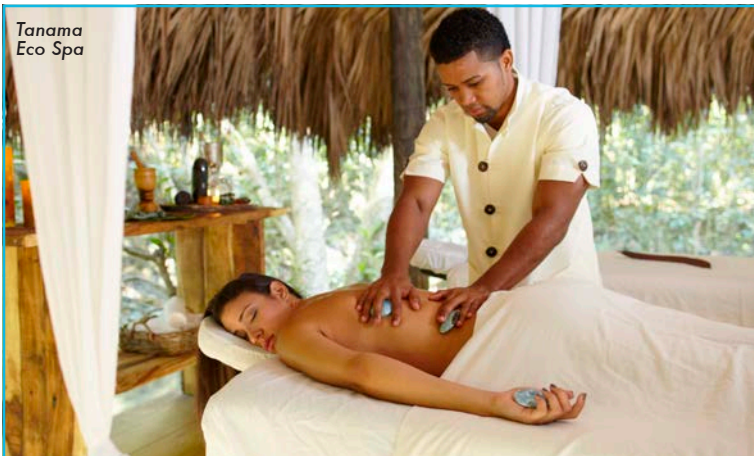
POLO – Polo is a municipality known for its high mountains and organic coffee production. Every year Polo hosts Festicafé, an organic coffee festival that promotes the environment's preservation and coffee production. Visitors also come for the area's nature, which surprises visitors with its optical illusion, Polo Magnético, an unusual phenomenon where bottles and cars roll uphill instead of down. Drive up to the bottom of the hill where the road begins to incline, put the car in neutral and the vehicle will begin to roll backwards, seemingly uphill. One of only 29 of these known "gravity hills" exist on the planet.

CABO ROJO – Known for its white-sanded beach, Cabo Rojo earned its name from the presence of bauxite around the area. It remains one of the region's most popular beaches, winning visitors over with its captivating views. The waters are home to some of the best preserved coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea and a breeding ground for the Antillean Manatee and the Juvenile Hawksbill. With refreshing waters and no waves, it is a popular beach for the locals and a home for pelicans who lounge on the buoys. Visitors can also enjoy Dominican cuisine and refreshments at the restaurant in the front of the beach. Boat rides to Bahía de las Aguilas are offered every day from Cabo Rojo.

BAHÍA DE LAS AGUILAS – The protected beach of Bahía de las Aguilas dazzles visitors with its white sand, crystal-clear waters and high rocky bordering coastline. Part of the Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo Biosphere Reserve, which was added to UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2002, the waters are home to coral reefs, manatees, marine turtles, lobsters and a colorful array of fish. To access the beach, visitors can rent a boat 15 minutes away at Cabo Rojo or take a 4-wheel SUV vehicle.

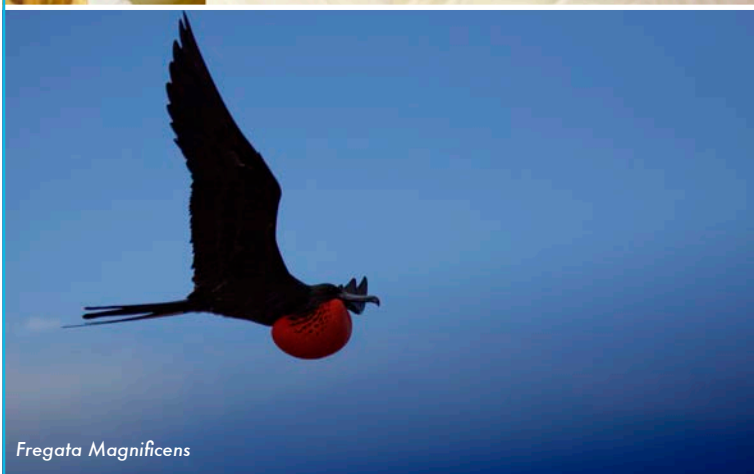
LARIMAR MINES – The Larimar mines of Bahoruco are a popular destination for the adventurous and the only place in the world where Larimar can be found. Local miners spend eight to nine hour days mining this rare, semi-precious blue stone at 700 feet (213 meters) deep in the mountains. Visitors can explore the mines with local tour operators or visit the local workshops where they can select a piece of Larimar and witness the cutting and polishing process.

Tanama
Eco Spa



CANOPY TOUR – The tropical jungle surrounding Casa Bonita offers the perfect playground for visitors. Here, guests zipline 3,300 feet (1,000 meters) on cables beneath the trees and glide along the pristine rivers and stunning vegetation. www.CasaBonitaDR.com

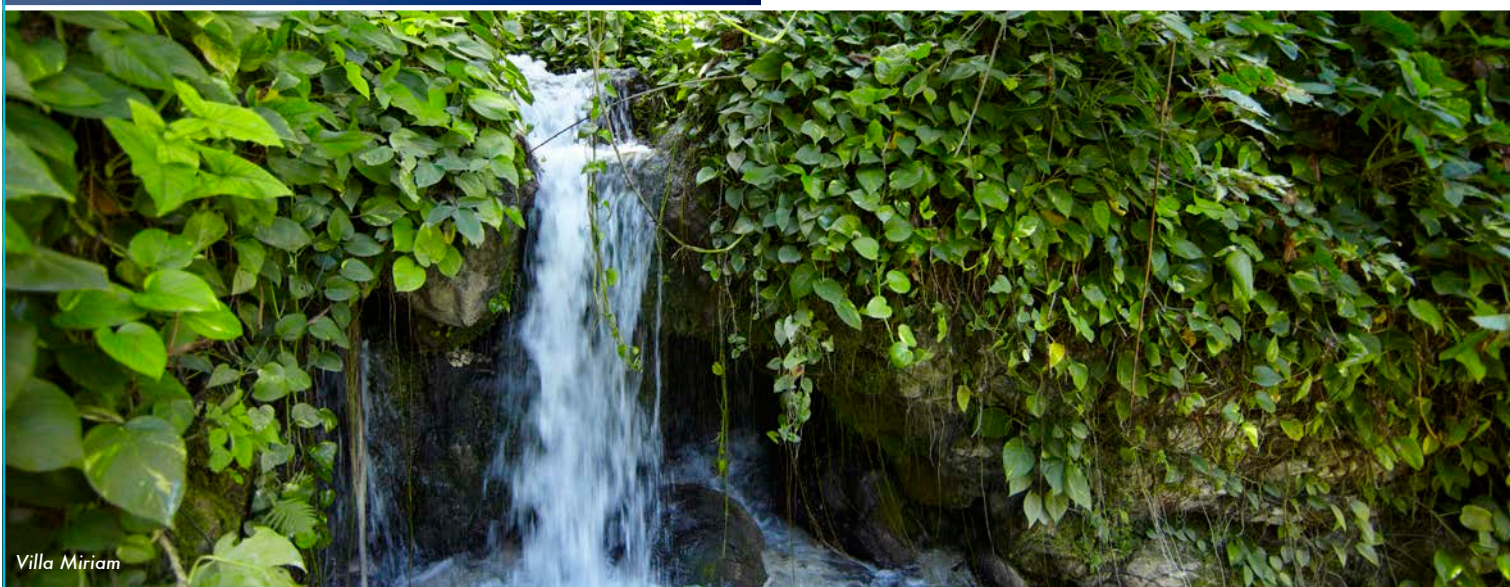
TANAMA ECO SPA – Casa Bonita's eco spa is strategically located in the middle of nature's wonders and allows spa goers to receive luxurious pampering amidst tranquil rivers and flora. Treatments infuse natural native elements from Dominican Republic, including coffee, chocolate, coconut, bamboo, mango, noni, basil and pineapple to provide for an unforgettable experience. www.CasaBonitaDR.com



Fregata Magnificens

PARQUE EÓLICO – The only wind farm in the country, Parque Eólico Los Cocos, generates enough power to keep one million light bulbs lit. The one-hour informational tour is the latest tourism attraction in the region and provides insight as to how the wind farm operates. Capitalizing on the wind farm, the local community creates souvenirs with wind farm motifs, including wooden models of the windmills. loscocos.egehaina.com

BIRD WATCHING – Barahona is home to numerous species of endemic birds not found elsewhere. Oviedo Lagoon is a popular place in the area for observing species such as the Royal Heron, Blue Heron, Spoonbill, seagulls, the White-Crowned Pigeon, flamingos and more. www.TodyTours.com



Villa Miriam





Events



Parque Eólico Los Cocos



CARNIVAL – The town of Cabral is famous for its cachúas (costumed devils) that appear between midnight on Holy Saturday and noon on Easter Monday. Celebrated in March, the Carnival festivities bring out the cachúas, who dress in colored overalls and bat wings in representation of slave hunters at a time of rebellion. On Holy Saturday the cachúas start to seek civilians (those unmasked, but holding a whip) or other cachúas, and in the afternoon the country's oldest parade takes place. The festivities end on Monday when the cachúas tour the neighborhoods and burn Judas in the cemetery. The Pintaos, known for their magic, are another popular character iconic to Barahona's Carnival celebration. Gaga is a religious ritual with music and dance, and highlights important events and dates during the Christian Holy Year. The music is very spiritual and its origins come from plantation workers. Aside from music and dance, voodoo is often part of the procession as a way to unite communities across cultural divides.

MOUNTAIN BIKE JUANCHO-LOS COCOS – The Electricity Generating Company Haina (EGE Haina) and the Dominican Federation of Cycling (FEDOCI) hold a mountain bike competition every April on the grounds of the country's only wind farm, Parque Eólico Los Cocos, at Juancho, Pedernales. The event is recognized for supporting growth of the sport as well as development of the Barahona region. loscocos.egehaina.com

NEIBA GRAPE FAIR – Held the last weekend in August in Neiba, Dominican Republic's leading grape cultivation region, the Grape Fair brings together grape growers who exhibit, market and exchange their experiences of grape production. The fair includes courses, lectures, and cultural and artistic activities for attendees.

FESTIVAL DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL ROSARIO – The popular religious festival is held the first week in October to honor the official patron of Barahona. The event includes church processions, parades, marching bands and festivals. Additionally, the region's dance, Carabine, is performed and includes the accordion, balse, guira and pander.

ORGANIC COFFEE FESTIVAL –The Batoruco Mountain Range has some of the country's top coffee plantations, which creates the famous rich and robust coffee flavor. Known locally as "Festicafé", the festival is held in Polo during October and celebrates the region's coffee production and promotion of the preservation of the local environment with cultural events, musical performances, food tastings and more. The festival is organized by the Permanent Committee on Culture of Polo (SCLC), coffee-producing cooperatives and more than 30 regional and national organizations.

For an updated list of events in the country visit:
www.GoDominicanRepublic.com/en/events

The seashores of Barahona offer astounding coastal scenery with white pebble beaches and stunning waters that are different shades of blue. Many of the beaches are ideal for surfing due to the wave and wind conditions, and the area's lush landscapes immerse beach goers into the magnificent natural environment.

PLAYA QUEMAITO – This popular pebble beach gets its name from the warm waters, sand and gravel, and beckons swimmers of all levels. While it has been underdeveloped, restaurants and food stalls line the surrounding area, adding to the picturesque setting of the green mountainous landscape.

PLAYA BAHORUCO – Just 10 miles (15 kilometers) south of Barahona is Playa Bahoruco, a surfer's paradise with ideal winds and waves. The striking stretch of virgin beach that goes on for miles with unobstructed views, warm Caribbean waters and the dense vegetation of the Sierra de Bahoruco give visitors the opportunity to meet the mouth of a nearby stream.

PLAYA LA CIÉNAGA – Encircled by small reefs, La Cienaga's stunning pebble beach offers a delightful coastal landscape.

PLAYA SAN RAFAEL – A local favorite, San Rafael is a combination of the ocean waves of the Caribbean Sea and a natural swimming pool created at the mouth of the San Rafael River. The pebble and gravel beach is popular for surfing, and on the weekends beachgoers can dance to the Dominican music played by local restaurants. Swimming is not recommended in the area due to the strong waves.

PLAYA PARAISO – The pebble beach is set among striking scenery and boasts waters various shades of blue and turquoise. The waves in this area are known to be stronger and therefore swimming is not advised.

PLAYA LOS PATOS – This beach is made up of shells and rocks, and crystal clear waters that make for a spectacular view and quiet getaway. Los Patos is also a popular beach for surfing due to its deep waters and high waves. Here, one of the shortest rivers in the world flows into the beach to form a natural pool. Small local restaurants and gift shops are located along the sides of the river.

PLAYA CASITA BLANCA – Casita Blanca Beach is a popular beach for relaxing due to its fine white sand and soft waves. The beach is surrounded by the Sierra Martin Garcia and the foothills of the Sierra de Bahoruco.

PLAYAZUL – Hotel Playazul rests atop a cliff facing the Caribbean Sea, surrounded by the area's magnificent biodiversity. Beachgoers can enjoy a swim at the private sandy beach or in the pool, and delight in the Dominican or international cuisine offered at the restaurant. Massages are also available in the middle of the pristine nature or overlooking the stunning scenery. Playazulbarahona@hotmail.com



Bahoruco

Beaches and Rivers



Los Patos

VILLA MIRIAM – Villa Miriam is a private home that charges visitors a small admission fee to enjoy its pools set amidst river cascades and lush vegetation between the San Rafael and Paraiso Rivers. The chilling water is said to sooth souls and is surrounded by tropical flowers and nature. The stress-free environment makes its visitors feel completely at ease. The property is open from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. and people are welcome to bring their own refreshments.

Lago Enriquillo



National Parks in the Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo Biosphere Reserve



Sierra de Bahoruco

PARQUE NACIONAL JARAGUA – Jaragua National Park, Dominican Republic's largest national park and one of its natural treasures, is located in the nearby Province of Pedernales and covers many diverse types of terrain. Well known for its various types of cacti, the park generally has warm weather and low precipitation levels. Guides take visitors through the area to witness native Taino cave art, flamingos, verdant foliage and much more. The national park includes natural resources of great ecological and historical value, including Bahia de Aguilas (Bay of Eagles), which is the area's most popular beach tourist attraction, and Laguna de Oviedo.

PARQUE NACIONAL SIERRA DE BAHORUCO – The biodiversity hotspot of the Sierra de Bahoruco contains scenic local savannas and valleys, and forms one of the three core zones in the UNESCO Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo Biosphere Reserve, which supports more than 50 globally threatened species. 52 percent of the orchid species found in Dominican Republic are in the Sierra de Bahoruco, totaling 166 species, 10 percent of which are endemic to Sierra de Bahoruco. The mountain peaks in this area range from between 3,000 and 5,000 feet (914 and 1,524 kilometers) tall and the range spans a little over 15 miles (24 kilometers) along the waterfront. Further north lays the Sierra de Neiba and Sierra Martin Garcia ranges, two smaller sections of hills, separated from Bahoruco by the Rio Yaque del Sur.

PARQUE NACIONAL LAGO ENRIQUILLO/ISLA CABRITOS Part of Lake Enriquillo National Park, Lake Enriquillo is the Caribbean's largest saltwater lake, and at 131.2 feet (40 meters) below sea level, it's also the Caribbean's lowest point. It serves as a sanctuary for flocks of bright pink flamingos and its high salt content is ideal for its resident American crocodiles. Three islands are set within Lake Enriquillo; the largest called Isla Cabritos, which means "little goat's island." It's scattered with cacti, red-eyed Riccordi Iguanas and massive Rhinoceros Iguanas that are easily tempted with food. When visiting the park, it's recommended to do so with a tour operator.

Local Transportation

As the second largest country in the Caribbean, Dominican Republic offers a wide range of activities that can be a short or long distance away from one another. Many options exist for traveling on well-maintained highways to nearby attractions and also to more distantly located excursions.

BUS COMPANIES – Caribe Tours offers daily service between Barahona (Tel: 809.524.4952) and Santo Domingo (Tel: 809.221.4422), as well as to other regions.

AIRPORT – Maria Montez International Airport (BRX) caters to Barahona and receives local flights. www.AERODOM.com

BY PLANE – Charter flights to Maria Montez International Airport are available from several companies. www.AirCentury.com, www.Aerodomca.com, www.DominicanShuttles.com.

GROUND TRANSPORTATION – Taxis are available at most hotels and tour operators are more than willing to provide additional options for getting around. Visitors should also check with their hotel for any recommendations.

TABLE OF DISTANCES BY LAND:

Barahona to other regions:

Santo Domingo	3 hours
Santiago	5 hours
Jarabacoa	5 hours
La Romana	5 hours
Samaná	5 hours and 30 minutes
Punta Cana	5 hours and 30 minutes
Puerto Plata	6 hours and 30 minutes

Barahona to (within the region):

Playa El Quemaito	10 minutes
Playa Batoruco	20 minutes
Villa Miriam	25 minutes
Laguna Cabral o Rincón	20 minutes
Playa San Rafael	30 minutes
Playa Paraíso	35 minutes
Playa Los Patos	45 minutes
Polo	1 hour
Cachote	1 hour and 30 minutes
Laguna de Oviedo	1 hour and 40 minutes
Pedernales	2 hours and 20 minutes
Cabo Rojo	2 hours and 20 minutes
Bahía de Las Águilas	
By boat from Cabo Rojo	15 minutes
Hoyo de Pelempito	3 hours

**Times may vary according to traffic conditions*



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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Av. Cayetano Germosén,
esquina Av. Gral Gregorio Luperón,
Santo Domingo, República Dominicana
Phone: 809-221-4660
info@godominicanrepublic.com

TOURIST OFFICES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA:

NEW YORK

Phone: 212-588-1012/ 14
Toll Free: 1-888-374-6361
newyork@godominicanrepublic.com

MIAMI

Phone: 305-358-2899
Toll Free: 1-888-358-9594
miami@godominicanrepublic.com

CHICAGO

Phone: 312-981-0325
chicago@godominicanrepublic.com

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

Phone: 787-722-0881
puertorico@godominicanrepublic.com

CANADA

MONTREAL, QUEBEC

Phone: 514-499-1918
Toll Free: 1-800-563-1611
montreal@godominicanrepublic.com

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Phone: 416-361-2126/ 27
Toll Free: 1-888-494-5050
toronto@godominicanrepublic.com

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