



Last Updated: July 2010

PLEASE NOTE: This guidebook is intended to be a general guide to prepare students and their visitors for their experience in the Dominican Republic, but does not reflect Creighton University's endorsement.

Staying at ILAC

A Lodging Request form must be electronically submitted to reserve space at ILAC. This form can be acquired at <http://www2.creighton.edu/fileadmin/user/miniistry/ILAC/docs/ILACRESERVATIONFORM.doc> and it should be emailed to the ILAC office in Omaha at ilac@creighton.edu. Confirmation of reservations are best done when students are already in the D.R. and they can check with Zunilda or Miguelina in the ILAC office in the D.R. a few weeks after the reservation has been submitted. The cost is a donation of \$30 (or 1,100 RDS) per night (includes three meals a day) and payment must be made in cash when checking out. See section "Hotels in Santiago," for recommended lodging should there not be space available.

Featured sections:



First Time in the D.R.	2-3
From the Eyes of the Student	3
Santiago	4-5
Traveling the Country	6-7
The North Coast & Samaná	8-9
Visiting Service Sites & the Campo	10
Trip Itinerary Examples & Thank You Family & Friends!	11-12

Visitor's Guide

About the Guidebook

This guidebook brings relevant information about visiting the Dominican Republic as either a family member or friend of a student in the Encuentro Dominicano program. You are going to have a different experience than the average tourist in a variety of ways: 1) You will have your own "personal tour guide" (the student that you will be visiting), but with this comes cautions that will be explained in the section "From the Eyes of the Student." 2) You will see sites not traditionally visited by tourists. 3) You will become familiar with social justice issues within the Dominican Republic context.

The purpose of this Visitor's Guide is to serve as a point of reference for you as you plan your trip in order to provide you with some in-

sight into what you can expect during your stay. The hope is that it helps to relieve any stress that may come along with traveling to a different country where Spanish is the main language and also to facilitate an enjoyable experience.

Within this guidebook you will find information on staying at the Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC) center, traveling within the country, suggestions on how to maximize your time, and possible places of interest. There are also sections dedicated to health and safety, cultural sensitivity, and understanding the student's perspective.

Many of the places of interest that are highlighted in this guidebook were suggested by past Encuentro Dominicano students. Please

remember that information listed is subject to change. You should always confirm your plans in advance. It is recommended that you view other travel books and websites that can further educate you before your arrival.

It is important that you communicate your ideas about the type of trip that you would like to have with the student. The Dominican Republic is a very diverse country. You will see that there is something for everyone!



Ideal Visiting Times

Fall and Spring breaks seem like ideal visiting times, but even better are Thanksgiving and Easter breaks. The Fall and Spring breaks come early in the semester and usually students are still becoming familiar with the country and culture as well as learning the language at this point. In the past, students seem to feel more comfortable when visitors come later in the semester because they have higher confidence in

their Spanish skills and in traveling around the country.

Visitors cannot come when students are on the campo immersion. The immersion is a time for the students to be in solidarity with the Dominican community and dedicate time to the service project.

Visitors are welcome at all other times during the semester as it is important for students to be able to share such a powerful experience with their loved ones.

Travel Insurance For Family & Friends

It is recommended that travelers attain insurance. Family and friends of Creighton students can purchase iNext travel insurance from the same company that the students have their travel insurance. Please contact Creighton's Office of International Programs or see the company's website for more information about the policy. www.inext.com

SUS* Dollars to Pesos *RDS

Dollars can be exchanged for pesos at the airport or at the money exchange center near ILAC. Exchanging dollars in a bank requires an original passport whereas money exchange centers do not. There are ATM machines at the airport and all over Santiago. Therefore, pesos can be taken out with a Debit card, but additional bank fees may apply. Avoid using ATM machines that are not located within a bank as that can draw unwanted attention. Travelers checks are not recommended. The current exchange rate is around \$US 1 = 36 RDS.



ILAC's Courtyard

Forget something?

There is no need to worry if you have forgotten or lost something replaceable. Students have been able to buy things such as prescription contact lenses, laptop batteries and sinus infection antibiotics. Many of one's daily necessities can be bought at the corner store, "el colmado" in Spanish, or at La Sirena, La Nacional or Plaza Internacional.

**First Time in the D.R.****¡Bienvenidos a la Republica Dominicana!**

Before passing through immigration to claim luggage, one must first pay a tourist fee of \$10 cash. If arriving in Santiago, the fee station is at the foot of the escalator. There will be airport assistants guiding travelers through immigration. It is not uncommon for check-in luggage to not arrive with your flight. Therefore, it is advisable to pack significant personal items in carry-on bags. Do not leave the airport without reporting lost luggage and keep baggage claim tickets. If staying at ILAC, provide the following contact

information so that luggage can be delivered to ILAC, which is usually within a few days.

La Misión ILAC

Km 7.5 Carretera Duarte

Licey al Medio, Santiago

Phone: (809) 736-0774

Taxi drivers are available outside the airport. However, they charge more than if transportation is arranged

either with ILAC (free if drivers are available) or with Kenny Taxi, the recommended taxi company.

Most taxi drivers will accept either dollars or pesos. Rates with Kenny Taxi vary depending on the time of day and if the taxi driver has to wait for passengers. The average, one-way rate to the airport from ILAC is 350 pesos, which increases during late-night or early-morning trips. It is important to agree on a rate with the taxi driver beforehand.

ILAC Accommodations

Once you arrive at ILAC, you must pass by the front office to receive the key to your casita. Casitas are small houses with two to three beds and a bathroom. All linens are provided.

Three meals are included in the \$30 per day cash donation, which can be paid at the end of your stay in the ILAC office. Breakfast is served at 8 a.m. Lunch is at 12:30 p.m. and dinner is at 6 p.m. The ILAC cook staff appreciate if you let them know if you will not be eating a meal so that they can plan accordingly. Typical breakfasts may include fresh bread with jam, ham, cheese, scrambled eggs, yogurt, cereal and coffee with

milk. Lunch is usually Dominican style rice and beans, chicken, beef or pork, and a salad. For dinner, one can expect more American style meals ranging from fried chicken and French fries to pasta and potatoes.

ILAC has a computer lab with Internet, running track, basketball court, laundry room, and chapel. A Spanish Mass is said every Sunday at 11 a.m. by Jesuit, Fr. Bill Johnson who collaborates with the Encuentro Dominicano program and leads the students in reflections.

The gift shop consists of arts and crafts made by Dominicans who live in the

countryside communities that ILAC works in and all income from the products goes back to those communities. Purchases can be made with ILAC staff members Liliana or Miguelina. Cash only (dollars or pesos are accepted).

International calls can be made from a public phone located in the main hallway. Phone cards needed to make international calls can be purchased at a store located near ILAC. A 100 pesos calling card from the company, Claro, will give you about 15 minutes if calling the U.S. You will also have computer access if you would like to use your Skype account.

Transportation to Santiago

A van, known in Spanish as "gua gua," is the public form of transportation into Santiago. These "gua guas" are normally very crowded and cost 20 pesos one-way. Students quickly become

comfortable using public transportation as it is how they get to their service sites. Students usually look forward to sharing the public transportation experience with their visitors and it is something

that many end up missing upon their return home. The average travel time from ILAC to Santiago is about 20 minutes. As a safety precaution, a taxi from Kenny Taxi should be used after 8 p.m.

First Time in the D.R.

From the Eyes of the Student

Students greatly appreciate the opportunity to give their family and friends a glimpse of what their semester long experience is like in the D.R. Words and pictures can only capture so much when communicating with people back home. Therefore, students try to take advantage of their time with visitors by showing them as much as possible. While trying to maximize time, visitors should also respect that students have a rigorous academic schedule. Visitors are more than welcome to explore the gardens

and use the facilities at ILAC should the student need to be in class or study.

It is not unusual for students to feel stressed about having visitors because they feel as if they have to show many things in little time. Many students have commented at the end of their vacation that they are more tired after their visitors have left than before vacation started. Therefore, it is important to do as much as possible while still allowing plenty of time for rest. If

visiting during the student's vacation, please consider that it should be a stress-free time of rest and relaxation.

In the past, many students have shown their visitors a combination of what daily life is like on the island and what tourists experience. They have done this by taking their visitors to their service sites and the campos as well as to the beach resorts. There is a dramatic difference between these activities and visitors have left receiving an impactful, educational message.

Cultural Sensitivity

Learning about a different culture goes beyond food tasting and listening to the country's popular musicians. Interpersonal communication, restaurant mannerisms, riding public transportation, school discipline, and every other aspect of daily life in the D.R. has its unique cultural norms. Understanding these norms is a learning process for the students and a big part of being successful at their service sites and in the campos.

Students really enjoy sharing Dominican culture with their visitors. Visitors may be shocked at first to see the student greet someone with a kiss on the cheek or yell at the bus driver to drop them off, both of which are part of Dominican culture. Visitors are cautioned not to mistake the student following cultural norms for personality change. It is easy to get frustrated by cultural differences, but having an open mind is the rec-

ommended way to approach stepping into a different culture.

In general, Dominicans are warm and caring people who enjoy conversing with Americans. Dominicans are very hospitable and want visitors to have a good impression of their homeland. They love to tell stories and are patient with non-Spanish speakers. Remember that smiling can say more than words.

Making Plans

The following sections are dedicated to ideas that can be used in planning out the trip. Booking plane tickets and reserving space at ILAC should be done as soon as possible. Even if plans may include staying overnight somewhere other than ILAC, it is best to send in your reservation and then later the student can let ILAC staff know

of any changes. Depending on the season, reservations at hotels or resorts usually do not need to be made more than a few weeks in advance. The week before Easter is the busiest time of year for hotels near the ocean because it is a popular vacation week for foreigners and it is a tradition for Dominicans to spend time at the beach with their family

and friends during holy week, which is known as "Semana Santa."

Most of the places and activities that are highlighted in this guidebook are what past students have done with their visitors. It is important to take into account who is visiting, how many people, and for how long the trip is before deciding on plans.



Typical Dominican Art

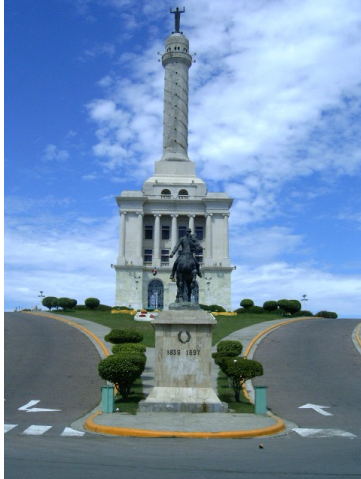
Sundays and Lunch Hour in the D.R.

Visitors should not plan Sundays as a day for shopping in the city as most stores do not open on this day of the week or close by noon. It is not uncommon for stores or offices to close between noon and 2 p.m. Dominicans take seriously the time to let their food settle and rest during the hottest part of the day before beginning the afternoon.



Cell Phones

If you plan on using your cell phone in the D.R., check with your company to see if it will work in the D.R. because most phones will not without a global plan.



El Monumento a los Héroes de la Restauración

Popular Dominican Souvenirs

-Larimar: Blue stone found only in the southern part of the D.R. Commonly bought as jewelry.

-Amber: The D.R.'s national gemstone. Also commonly bought as jewelry or in pieces that contain insects or plants.

-Mamajuana: Bottles of medicinal barks, leaves, and roots to be filled with either rum and honey or wine. It is drunk as a shot and said to help clear cold symptoms. A small amount of alcohol should be put in the bottle before taking it home, or it will not pass through customs.

-Muñecas sin rostro: These dolls without a face represent the cultural mixing of the indigenous, Spanish and African peoples.

-Carnival masks: These masks, replicas of the ones used during the festivities that celebrate Dominican independence, make great wall decorations.



Carnival Mask

The City of Santiago

Cultural Activities

Monumento a los Héroes de

la Restauración

-Famous landmark in downtown Santiago that is dedicated to the heroes of the Wars of Independence

-230-foot staircase that one can climb and see over the city

-Popular hang out place for Dominicans

-Horse-drawn carriage rides around the city with a price around 200 \$RD

-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 250 \$RD

Centro Leon & Cigar Factory

-Dominican art and anthropology museum

-Cigar factory

-Gift shop

-Café with wireless internet

-English speaking guides are available for an extra cost.

-Open everyday, except Monday, from 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

-70 \$RD per person, free on Tuesdays

-Check website for more information on featured activities such as movies and live music
www.centroleon.org.do

-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 200 RD\$

El Gran Teatro del Cibao

-Santiago's main performing arts theater just east of the Monumento a los Héroes de la Restauración

-Shows include plays, comedians and operas

-Prices vary

-Call for more information: (809) 583-1150

-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Museo Folklórico Don Tomás Morel

-Collection of Carnival masks and other cultural pieces relating to Dominican folklore.

-Everyday from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. & 3 p.m.-6 p.m.

-Donations are appreciated.

-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Parque Duarte

-Surrounded by significant historical buildings dating back to the late 1800s including:

-Catedral de Santiago Apóstol, Catholic cathedral with the tomb of Ulises Heureaux, country's dictator in 1882-1899.

-Palacio Consistorial, former town hall from 1897.

-Centro de Recreo, a private social club. Enter to see an antique shoe shining chair that belonged to the country's cruelest dictator, Trujillo.

-Gobernación, the municipal town hall. Enter to see paintings by top artists.

-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Calle del Sol

-Santiago's main commercial street

-Street vendors sell everything from flowers, to fruits and vegetables, to CDs and DVDs.

-Most stores are open everyday, except Sunday, from 9 a.m.-8 p.m.

-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Mercado Modelo

-Located on Calle del Sol

-Souvenirs, jewelry and art are sold at this market.

-Monday-Saturday from 8 a.m.-6 p.m.

-Bargain for best price

-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Carnival

-Parade down the street, Las Carreras

-Celebrates the Independence of the D.R.

-Every weekend afternoon in February

-Free

-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Plaza de la Cultura

-Located on Calle del Sol

-Art exhibitions

-Open every day from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

-Call for more information on exhibits.

-Telephone: 809-971-203/809-971-2025

Santiago continued

Restaurants

Breakfast

Many Dominicans buy their breakfast from street vendors including items such as salami, spaghetti, plantains, eggs, bread, coffee and hot chocolate. Buying street food is not recommended for sanitary reasons. Eating breakfast in sit-down restaurants is not very common as most people will eat out for lunch or dinner. The following places are a few recommended restaurants that do serve Dominican and American style breakfast.

El Encanto (2nd floor)

- Located on Restauración
- Traditional breakfast items
- 9-11 a.m.
- 150 RD\$ & up per plate
- Taxi from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Hotel Aloha Sol

- Located on la Calle del Sol
- Breakfast buffet
- 6:30-11 a.m.
- 263 RD\$
- Taxi from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Hotel Hodelpa Centro Plaza

- Located on la Calle del Sol
- Breakfast buffet
- 6:30-10:30 a.m.
- 435 RD\$
- Taxi from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Lunch & Dinner

La Campana

- Located on La Carretera Duarte near Plaza Internacional
- Sandwichs, salads and pasta
- 200 RD\$ & up per plate
- 8 a.m.-12 a.m. (1 a.m. Fri-Sat.)
- Taxi from ILAC: 200 RD\$

Pez Dorado

- Located on Calle del Sol
- One of the oldest restaurants in Santiago
- Seafood is the specialty
- 11:30 a.m.-11:30 p.m.
- 300 RD\$ & up per plate
- Taxi from ILAC: 250 RD\$

La Parrillita

- Located on Duarte in front of Plaza Internacional
- Grilled items, Mofongo (mashed, fried, green plantains with fried pieces of pork, a Dominican delicacy) is one of the specialties.
- 11 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
- 200 RD\$ & up per plate
- Taxi one-way from ILAC: 200 RD\$

Marisco Centro

- Located near the Monument
- Seafood is the specialty
- 11 a.m.-12 a.m.
- 300 RD\$ per plate
- Taxi from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Tippling in Restaurants

A 10% service charge is added to the bill besides the government tax, but it is customary to leave an extra 10% in gratuity.

Lunch & Dinner continued

Kukara Macara

- Located near the Monument
- Country western style themed.
- Dominican & American style food (Breakfast also served).
- 9 a.m.-1 a.m.
- 250 RD\$ & up per plate
- Taxi from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Montezuma

- Located near the Monument
- Dominican & American style food (Breakfast also served).
- 9 a.m.-1 a.m.
- 250 RD\$ & up per plate
- Taxi from ILAC: 250 RD\$

La Brasa

- Located near the Monument
- Dominican style food. Great place to order, "La Bandera," white rice and beans with chicken or beef and plantains.
- 11 p.m.-1 a.m.
- 200 RD\$ & up per plate
- Taxi from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Puerta del Sol

- Located near the Monument
- Dominican & American style food
- 11 a.m.-1 a.m.
- 250 RD\$ & up per plate
- Taxi from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Hotels in Santiago

Hotel Colonial

- Located on 30 de Marzo
- Standard room: \$15-22 per night for two people. Does not include breakfast.
- Call to make reservations.
- Telephone: 809-247-3122

Aloha Sol

- Located on Calle del Sol
- Standard room: \$73.50 per night for two people. Includes breakfast.
- Telephone: 809-581-9203
- Make reservations online at www.alohasol.com

Hodelpa Centro Plaza

- Located on Calle del Sol
- Standard room: \$100-120 per night for two people. Includes breakfast.
- Telephone: 809-581-7000
- Make reservations online at http://www.hodelpa.com/es/hotel_hcp.php

Taxi Service in Santiago

Within downtown Santiago, the average price for a one-way taxi ride is 120-150 RD\$. It is not necessary to leave a tip. Always agree on a price before you get into the taxi by letting the driver know where you are going and asking how much it will cost to get there. Try to have exact change if possible. Most drivers will not allow more than 4 passengers or the price will go up. As a safety precaution, always sit in the back, make sure the doors are locked and keep the windows at least half way rolled up if there is not an air conditioner.



Caribe and Metro Tours Prices

From Santiago in \$RD:

	Caribe	Metro
Santo Domingo	260	280
Sosua	130	160
Puerto Plata	100	130

Rent-a-Car From Airport

Nelly

Economic car rental
\$24 & up per day
<http://www.nellyrac.com/en/>

Adventure

SUV rental
\$53 & up per day
<http://www.adventurerentcar.com/>



Students in fortress
in Santo Domingo

Traveling in Santo Domingo

After arriving at the bus station in Santo Domingo, it is recommended to take a taxi to your next destination and when traveling around the city as most students are not familiar with the public transportation system in the capital city. Depending on how far you are traveling within the city limits, an average one-way taxi ride is between 200-250 \$RD.

Traveling the Country

Caribe and Metro Tours

The most comfortable, safe and economical way of traveling the country is by either of the two tour bus companies, Caribe and Metro Tours. Both bus stops in Santiago are located within walking distance from each other. Caribe Tours is located on 27 de Febrero and Metro Tours is off of Duarte. If taking public transportation from Licey into Santiago to one of the two bus stops, it is best to leave at least 40 minutes before the bus departure time. In a taxi, 30 minutes should be sufficient.

The Caribe Tours bus schedule can be found at the following website:

www.caribetours.com.do

By clicking on the interactive map ("mapa interactivo") and entering in the departure city in "salida" and the destination city in "destino," the departure times will appear.



The Metro Tours bus schedule can be found at the following website:

www.metroserVICESTURISTICOS.com/rutas_horarios.html

The abbreviations used in this schedule include:

SDQ-Santo Domingo

STGO-Santiago

POP-Puerto Plata

SOS-Sosua

The departure stations are highlighted in red. Churchill is the bus station in Santo Domingo.

Getting to Cabarete and Samaná

From Santiago, the Caribe or Metro Tours bus will not take you all the way to Cabarete. Below describes how to arrive after the Caribe or Metro Tours bus takes you to the last stop. Caribe and Metro Tours does not have a route to Samaná, however, you can still get their on public transportation.

To Cabarete

Once you arrive in Puerto Plata, stay on the Metro or Caribe bus. It will continue on to Sosua, the last stop on the route to Cabarete. After arriving in Sosua, cross the main street in front of the bus stop to catch public transportation (a van or car) that will go into Cabarete for 20 RD\$ per person. Let the driver know which hotel you will be staying at and he will drop you off as close as possible. A second option is a taxi, which will cost approximately 500 RD\$ and may be a better option if traveling with more than three people, a lot of luggage or at night.

To Samaná

The Samaná bus station in Santiago is on Pedro Francisco Bono Street. To get there using public transportation, get off on San Luis and turn on the first street to the right. The station will be on the left-hand side. Recommended leaving time from ILAC is at least 45 minutes before the scheduled departure time. If taking a taxi, one can leave ILAC 35 minutes before and it will cost 250 RD\$. The cost from Santiago to Samaná is 250 RD\$. Buses leave in the morning at 7:15, 8:15, 9:30, and 10:30. They leave in the afternoon at 1:15, 2:30, 3:45, and 4:45. You can only purchase one-way tickets and you will pay when you are on the bus, normally after having stopped at a rest area about half-way there.

To get to Las Galeras, public transportation, either a van or truck, will cost 80 RD\$ from Samaná. Once getting off the bus from Santiago, wait at the stop for transportation to Las Galeras.

Motorcycles

Motorcycles are a main form of transportation for many people in the D.R., especially in countryside communities. Public hospitals will concur that the majority of patients seen daily due to automobile accidents usually include motorcycles. As a safety precaution, Encuentro Dominicano students are prohibited from riding motorcycles and this includes during vacation. The consequence for riding a motorcycle is removal from the program.

Traveling plans including transportation should be carefully thought out to avoid getting into situations where public transportation or a taxi is not readily available. Taxi companies will have their cars stationed at all bus stops. Therefore, it is recommended to take a business card from one or two of the taxi drivers before leaving the bus stop, even if you think that you will not be needing it. Better to be safe than sorry!

Traveling the Country continued

Having a Safe Visit

The following guidelines are important for having a safe visit. They are not meant to cause fear or anxiety, but only to help prevent potentially dangerous situations and avoid having things get stolen. Overall, the Dominican Republic is generally a safe, developing country, but the desperate situations in which much of the population lives is a main reason why tourists, who are viewed as being wealthy, need to be extra careful.

At ILAC

While ILAC has 24/7 security, the center often hosts various large groups and medical teams use the facilities to provide rooms for patients. It is safe to leave passports and extra currency in rooms. However, it is important for visitors to lock their rooms and to not leave belongings outside.

Proper Attire in the D.R.

Dominicans take great pride in personal appearance. In the D.R., taking care of personal hygiene and dressing neatly is a way of showing respect to those around you. Acting on this cultural value will help you to fit in during your stay and Dominicans will appreciate the effort.

There are various places that do not accept certain kinds of dress. For example, in church, one should dress conservatively and not wear tank tops, shorts, or flip flops. Most bars in Santiago require men to be wearing dress shoes and collared shirts, not t-shirts sandals or tennis

When Using Public Transportation

- Have money in hand to pay for the ride.
- Do not keep wallets in back pockets.
- Windows should be half-way shut.
- Avoid opening bags or purses.

Walking Around the City

- If you do not need a purse, do not bring it with you.
- If you need your purse, put it on the shoulder farthest away from the street.
- Do not talk on cell phones on or near the street.
- Do not stop walking if someone pulls up next to you to seemingly want to ask you a question.
- Do not have your passport.

shoes. Most tourist towns like Cabarete are heavily populated with foreigners so dress is usually more relaxed. Although it is not an out of the ordinary sight to see people walking in the streets in their bathing suits or men without their shirts on in beach towns, those that do are almost always foreigners and it is not well-accepted by local Dominicans.

Even during the hottest months of the year, July-September, many people will wear pants when out in public. Most professionals will be seen in pants with a long-sleeved shirt and jacket.

--
-Be aware of who is walking around you.

-Get in the nearest store or taxi right away if you feel that you are being followed.

-Put money in more than one pocket and never take with you all of the money that you brought to the D.R.

-If you have more than one credit card, bring only one with you and your ID.

-Have a small list of D.R. contact numbers with you.

At Hotels and Resorts

-Be cautious with safes in hotel rooms. Check online to see if previous visitors have anything to say about the safes in the hotel before making reservations.

-Never leave your belongings out of sight at the pool or beach.

It is recommended that females bring more pants with them than shorts, skirts or Capri pants in order to avoid getting mosquito-bitten. Mosquitoes are attracted to dark colored clothes. Therefore, white and pastel-colored clothes are suggested and bug spray is a must.

If visiting during November-March, bringing a couple long-sleeved shirts and a light jacket is not a bad idea. Light-weight clothes are a good choice at any time of the year.

As a safety precaution, expensive looking jewelry should not be worn outside of ILAC.



Above is a "gua-gua," one of the forms of public transportation in the D.R.

Hospitals & Clinics

These hospitals are considered the top hospitals in the country and have excellent doctors, many English-speaking. Although, medical insurance from outside the country is usually not accepted at the time of payment in the hospital, many companies will reimburse the patient with a receipt upon return to the U.S. It is recommended to check with your insurance company about coverage before leaving for your trip.

Santiago

Hospital Metropolitano de Santiago (HOMS)
Autopista Duarte Km 2.8
829-947-2222

Santo Domingo

Clínica Abreu
Calle Beller
42 Esquina Independencia
809-688-4411

Cabarete

Consultorio Médico
Carretera Principal
809-571-0851

Servimed Consultorio Médico

Carretera Cabarete 6
809-571-0413

Puerto Plata

Centro Médico Bournigal
Calle Antera Mota
809-586-2342

Ambulance Service

Movimed
In Santo Domingo, call 809-532-0000
From anywhere else in the country, call 809-200-0911
Air Ambulance
809-567-1101



Medical Concerns

Visitors should speak with their doctor about medical concerns and recommended vaccinations when traveling to the D.R. Most doctors will be able to inform you about the certain preventative measures you should take health wise as well as provide you with any prescriptions for medicine you may need on the trip. See the U.S. State Department website to register your travel plans and for a list of recommended vaccinations.

<http://travel.state.gov/>

Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic



Kiteboarding in Cabarete

Cabarete is the Caribbean capital for windsurfing and kiteboarding. Every year in June, the Kiteboarding World Cup is held in Cabarete.



Kiteboarding

Excursions on the North Coast

Iguana Mama

Cabarete
Eco & Adventure Tours
www.iguanamama.com
(809) 571-0908

Dominican Fisherman

Cabarete
Fishing and boat tours
www.dominicanfisherman.com
(809) 571-0919 / 713-5064

27 Charcos

Imbert, on route to Puerto Plata
Waterfall hiking
www.27charcos.com

The North Coast

Why the North Coast?

The North Coast is the most common place for students and their families and friends to visit. It is within 2 hours from Santiago, is easy to get there and it is a beautiful part of the country. The three most frequented cities are Puerto Plata, Sosua and Cabarete, which are all close in proximity making it easy to visit all three places in one trip.

According to what many former Encuentro Students have done in the past, Sosua is the best place if planning a

day trip to the beach. If planning to stay more than one day and are looking for an all-inclusive resort, Puerto Plata is the place to go. Cabarete has various wonderful restaurants and bars all along the beach. Therefore, the all-inclusive resort option is not as popular in Cabarete in order to try out these restaurants. Of the three cities, Cabarete has the most active night life including restaurants that stay open late and bars that play as much American music as merengue and bachata.

Beware, the Dominican Republic is well-known for its sex-tourism. This is especially visible in the North Coast. It is common to see old, foreign men with young, Dominican girls. This is a way of life and harsh reality for many Dominicans and their families. Though not to cause alarm, men should not go off alone to avoid being approached by women offering their services.

Below are some of the resorts and hotels that previous students have stayed at and recommend.

Hotels & Resorts in Puerto Plata, Sosua & Cabarete

**All prices listed are per person, per night for a standard room unless otherwise stated. Prices will vary depending on the season.*

Puerto Plata Village

-Located in [Puerto Plata](#)
-All-inclusive resort
-\$50 & up
www.puertoplatavillage.com
Tel: (809) 320-4012

Lifestyles Resorts

-Located in [Puerto Plata](#)
-All-inclusive resort
-\$80 & up
www.hacienda-resorts.com
Tel: (809) 586-1227

Barceló

-Located in [Puerto Plata](#)
-All-inclusive resort
-\$100 & up
http://www.barcelo.com/
Tel: (809) 320-5084

Sosua by the Sea

-Located in [Sosua](#)
-Resort, all-inclusive option
-Prices for a studio room are from \$45 & up per person per night, includes breakfast. For the all-inclusive option, add \$20 per person per night.
-ILAC discount: \$60 per person per night, all-inclusive
www.sosuabythesea.com
Tel: (809) 571-3222.

Casa Marina

-Located in [Sosua](#)
-All-inclusive resort
-\$40 & up
www.casamarinabeachhotel.com
Tel: (809) 571-3535.



Hotel Alegria

-Located in [Cabarete](#)
-Hotel only
-\$30 & up per room
-Large studio with kitchen available for 3 people or more, \$17 & up per person.
www.hotel-alegria.com
Tel: (809) 571-0455

Hotel Kaoba

-Located in [Cabarete](#)
-Hotel only
-\$35 & up per room
www.kaoba.com
Tel: (809) 571-0300

Tropical Clubs-Casa Laguna

-Located in [Cabarete](#)
-All-inclusive resort
-\$50 & up
www.tropicalclubs.com
Tel: (809) 571-0725

The Samaná Peninsula

Why Samaná?

The Samaná Peninsula is widely considered one of the most naturally beautiful and unexploited parts of the country. Tourism is in its infant stages of development, but it is growing rapidly. The principal town of Samaná is where all public transportation is stationed, but most tourists are lured to the surrounding coastal zones Las Galeras and Las Terrenas.

Las Galeras, the furthest point on the peninsula, is a quiet fishing village with transportation available either by taxi or boat to the tucked away, pristine beaches called Playa Rincón and la Playita. This is the ideal place for those who want a calm and

tranquil beach vacation. If you take a taxi to Playa Rincón, ask the driver to stop on the way at "El Iguanario," a community-based, eco-tourism project managed by the Ecological Society of Los Tocones. El Iguanario is a conservation site for the Rhinoceros Iguana, an endemic, endangered species. The site is cared for by many local youth who sell their arts and crafts and enjoy interacting with visitors.

Las Terrenas, located to the north, is a largely European populated town with many unique gift shops and delicious bakeries to enjoy. To arrive in Las Terrenas, get on public transportation to El

Limón from the bus station in Samaná. After arriving in El Limón, you will then get in a truck that will take you into Las Terrenas.

El Limón, an inland community on the route to Las Terrenas, has a famous waterfall that visitors can tour on horseback from 400 RD\$ & up. A typical, Dominican lunch can be included at an extra price. From the bus station in Samaná, take a van to El Limón. Upon boarding the van, tell the driver that you want to go to "El Salto de Limón." Bring your bathing suit because you can bathe in the pool at the foot of the waterfall. Walking tours are also available.



Playa Rincón

Hotels in the Samaná Peninsula

**All prices listed are per room, per night for a standard room unless otherwise stated. Prices will vary depending on the season.*

Casa Lotus

-Located in [Las Galeras](#)
-\$40 & up with kitchen
Tel: (809) 538-0119
www.samana.net/casalotus/

Plaza Lusitania

-Located in [Las Galeras](#)
-\$50 & up
Tel: (809) 538-0093
www.plazalusitania.com

Hotel Villa Serena

-Located in [Las Galeras](#)
-\$100 & up, includes breakfast
Tel: (809) 538-0000
www.villaserena.com

Casa Marina

-Located in [Las Galeras](#)
-All-inclusive
-40 & up per person
Tel: (809) 538-0020
www.amhsamarina.com

Hotel Docia

-Located in [Samaná](#)
-500 RD\$ per person
Tel: (809) 538-2041
www.samana.net/Samana_city/hotel_docia-en.html

Gran Bahía Príncipe Cayacoa Resort

-Located in [Samaná](#)
-All-inclusive
-\$70 & up per person
Tel: (809) 538-3131
www.bahia-principe.com

Hotel Palococo

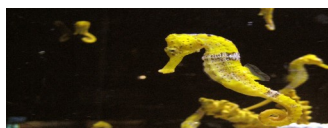
-Located in [Las Terrenas](#)
-\$40 & up, includes breakfast
Tel: (809) 240-6151
www.palococo.com

Hotel La Tortuga

-Located in [Las Terrenas](#)
-\$50 & up, includes breakfast
Tel: (809) 240-6566
www.hotel-la-tortuga.com/

Oasis Hotel

-Located in [Las Terrenas](#)
-\$50 & up
Tel: (809) 240-5420
www.oasis-hotel.net/



Whale Watching in Samaná

The Samaná Bay is where the Humpback whale mates and gives birth every year from January 15-March 15. From Samaná, many tour operators provide whale-watching. One of the highest recommended tours is given by Canadian Marine Biologist, Kim Beddall. There are two trips daily, 9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and cost \$40 per person. See the website for more information.

www.whalesamana.com



Humpback Whale

Excursions in Samaná

Check with your hotel for information about tour operators that offer organized excursions. Los Haitises, a national park with Taino caves, and Cayo Levantado, a lovely island off the coast of Samaná that is great for relaxing and swimming, make for two great, picturesque excursions.

Visiting Service Sites

Students spend two mornings a week at their chosen service site. Many students become very attached to the people that they serve and wonderful bonds are made. Students will almost certainly take family and friends to their service site as all sites are located in or around Santiago.

Sites include a school in a low-income, urban neighborhood, a feeding program for disadvantaged children, a nursing home, an orphanage for handicapped children, a school in a Haitian community, and a tutoring center.

Family and friends are welcome to engage themselves and interact at the service sites as the people at the sites are used to having visitors and love to receive attention and affection.

Visiting the Campo

For many students, taking their families and friends to the communities where they spent ten days working on a service project and living with a Dominican family is one of the most special parts of the trip. Former students have expressed both excitement and anxiety about this visit for different reasons.

Students are normally excited to go back to the campo because they will be returning to a place where they had an amazing experience and look forward to introducing their family and friends to the community. Some students are nervous about the language and cultural barriers and mostly about how their loved ones are going to respond meeting their Dominican "family." Students have said that their family members have made comments about feeling replaced by the student's new, Dominican host family. It is important for family members to realize that students addressing their host parents as "mamá" and "papá" is a way of

trying to immerse into the situation, but does not mean that students consider them as replacements for their real parents.

Upon returning from the ten-day campo immersion, many students spend much time explaining to their family and friends back home about their experience with their host family. Likewise, one of the most common conversation topics that students discuss with their host families is the student's family in the United States. Therefore, host families welcome the opportunity to meet the student's family.

Students like to make the campo visit with their family and friends an educational experience since the immersion is one of the most impactful events of the semester. Family and friends that visit the campo will have an easier time relating to and understanding the student's new perspective on life.

Students will usually plan day trips to the campo as they are usually not further than 2-3

hours from ILAC. Transportation arrangements can be made through Kenny Taxi or public transportation can be used, if possible.

Most host families will prepare food for visitors. Cooked and peeled food is safe to eat. Visitors may want to bring their own water bottle filled with purified water from ILAC. Students should ask if any juice offered is made with purified water before drinking it. It is okay to not eat something if you are not comfortable as students will have learned how to properly turn down food without being offensive. However, you will be quite pleased with the home-cooked, Dominican meals that you do try.

Some families may want to give a gift of appreciation to host families. Appropriate gift ideas include candy, pictures, and other small American souvenirs. Avoid giving money or obvious expensive items as they will appreciate sentimental gifts more than anything else.

Tips to Family and Friends Visiting the Campo

1. Be open-minded.
2. Smile a lot.
3. Be willing to try new things.
4. Use facial and hand expressions.
5. Do not be afraid to use whatever little Spanish that you do know.
6. Be ready for lots of hugs and hand-shaking.
7. Be prepared to be offered a lot of food and coffee.
8. Allow yourself to be touched and affected by what you will see.
9. You may be offered gifts, accept them.
10. Be easy-going and let the day flow.



Trip Itinerary Examples

3-Day Trip Example #1

Arrive in Santiago– p.m.

Day 1:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Explore ILAC
10 a.m. Visit Service Site
12:30 p.m. Lunch at ILAC
2 p.m. Centro Leon
4 p.m. Calle del Sol
7 p.m. Dinner in Santiago

Day 2:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Campo
6 p.m. Dinner at ILAC
7 p.m. Baseball game

Day 3:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Sosua beach
6 p.m. Dinner in Santiago
7 p.m. Visit the Monument

3-Day Trip Example #2

Arrive in Santiago– p.m.

Day 1:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Sit in Creighton Class
12:30 p.m. Lunch at ILAC
2 p.m. Explore ILAC
3 p.m. Centro Leon
6 p.m. Dinner in Santiago

Day 2:

8 a.m. Breakfast in Santiago
10 a.m. Leave for Cabarete
12:30 p.m. Arrive in Cabarete

Day 3:

3 p.m. Leave for Santiago
6 p.m. Dinner at ILAC
9 p.m. Visit the Monument



Dominicans performing traditional Spanish dances in Plaza Española in Santo Domingo.

5-Day Trip Example #1

Arrive in Santiago-p.m.

Day 1:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Explore ILAC
10 a.m. Sosua beach
7 p.m. Dinner in Santiago

Day 2:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Campo
7 p.m. Dinner in Santiago
9 p.m. Visit the Monument

Day 3:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Visit Service Site
12:30 p.m. Lunch at ILAC
1 p.m. Leave for Puerto Plata

Day 4:

Puerto Plata

Day 5:

2 p.m. Leave for Santiago
6 p.m. Dinner at ILAC
8 p.m. Visit the Monument

5-Day Trip Example #2

Arrive in Santiago-p.m.

Day 1:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Sit in Creighton Class
12:30 p.m. Lunch at ILAC
2 p.m. Centro Leon
4 p.m. Calle del Sol
6 p.m. Dinner in Santiago

Day 2:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Explore ILAC
10 a.m. Visit Service Site
12 p.m. Lunch in Santiago
2 p.m. Kaskada Park
6 p.m. Dinner at ILAC

Day 3:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Campo #1
6 p.m. Dinner at ILAC

Day 4:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Campo #2
6 p.m. Dinner in Santiago

Day 5:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Sosua beach
7 p.m. Dinner in Santiago
9 p.m. Visit the Monument

7-Day Trip Example

Arrive in Santiago-p.m.

Day 1:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Explore ILAC
10 a.m. Visit Service Sites
12:30 p.m. Lunch in Santiago
2 p.m. Centro Leon
4 p.m. Calle de Sol
6 p.m. Dinner in Santiago

Day 2:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Campo #1
6 p.m. Dinner at ILAC
8 p.m. Basketball game

Day 3:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 a.m. Campo #2
6 p.m. Dinner in Santiago

Day 4:

8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
9 p.m. Leave for Puerto Plata

Day 5:

Puerto Plata

Day 6:

Puerto Plata

Day 7:

2 p.m. Leave for Santiago
6 p.m. Dinner in Santiago
8 p.m. Visit the Monument



Cacao Tree
The fruit is used to make chocolate.



Other Activities

Kaskada Park

-Waterpark
-Santiago
-350 RD\$ per person
-10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 300 RD\$

Estadio del Cibao

-Santiago
-Dominican professional baseball
-Season is from October-December
-100 RD\$ & up per ticket
-www.aguilas.com.do
-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Arena del Cibao

-Santiago
-Dominican professional basketball
-Season is from February to April
-70 RD\$ & up per ticket
-www.abasaca.com
-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 250 RD\$

Cabarete Coffee Company

-Coffee and Chocolate Day Tours
-Departs from Cabarete at 9 p.m.
-\$75 per person
-Tel: (809) 571-0919
-www.cabaretecoffeecompany.com
-Public Transportation

Rancho Baiguate

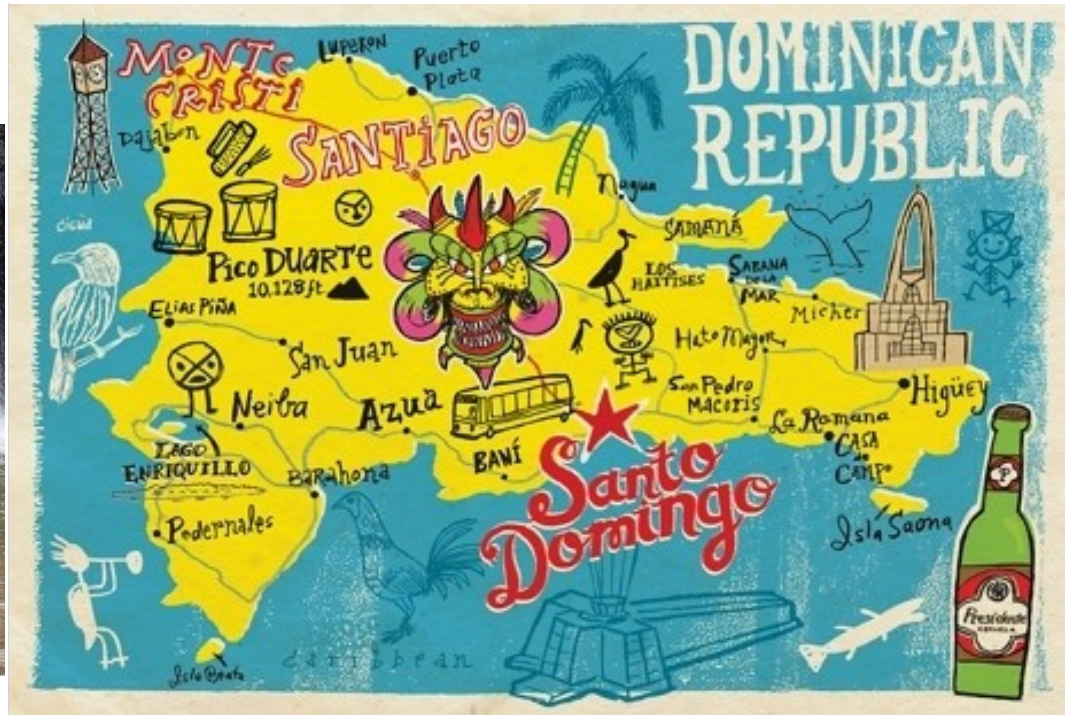
-Jarabacoa
-Rafting, horseback riding, hiking and
-waterfall tours
-All-inclusive lodging
-www.ranchobaiguate.com
-Public Transportation from Santiago to La Vega (70 RD\$ p/p) and La Vega to Jarabacoa (90 RD\$ p/p). Then take a taxi from Jarabacoa to Rancho Baiguate (200 RD\$ per taxi).

Colonial Zone

-Santo Domingo
-Gift shops and cafés on the famous pedestrian street called, El Conde, walking historical tour around the city by English speaking guides, the first Cathedral of the Americas, Plaza España, historical museums and near China town.
-Taxi one-way from Caribe/Metro Tours Station: 200 RD\$ & up



Kristina Roselle & mother in Jarabacoa at Salto de Baiguate.



Thank you family and friends!



Kali McElroy & parents at ILAC.



Camille Claire & sister taking carriage ride at the Monument.

At one of the first reflections the students have together, each student dedicates the upcoming semester to someone who has made a positive influence in their life. Many of the students choose someone from their family or a close friend. A reason commonly stated for why that family member or friend was chosen is because that certain person was influential in the student participating in the program. Throughout the semester, the value of family is brought up time and time again. Students truly appreciate their families more upon their return home and it is a lesson that sticks with them for the rest of their lives. It is not always

possible for family and friends to visit the student during the program, and most students are very understanding if they do not end up having visitors. Students will never be alone during vacations and many will tag along with others that do have family or friends in the country who are supportive of the student following through with the program as it is not for everyone. The Encuentro Dominicano program draws a special type of student that is responsible, mature, open-minded, courageous, willing to serve and has the desire to

learn from others as well as about themselves. After the program, many students become very involved on campus and in their communities, especially in organizations and activities that relate to social justice. While some students become even more clear on their path in life, some students change their visions. Parental support and guidance is continually sought out by Encuentro Dominicano students before, during and after the program. Many thanks for having provided the student with a strong foundation and for your positive reinforcement. It makes a great difference.