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 insight 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 have insurance that will cover them in case of any medical emergency while in the DR. Check with your insurance provider to see what their policies are on international travel. If this is not an option for you, check out www.mycisi.com for visionary travel insurance.
**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**
Carretera Duarte Km 7.5
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 Taxi Familiar, the recommended taxi company.

Most taxi drivers will accept either dollars or pesos. Rates with Taxi Familiar 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 500 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 room fee, which can be paid at the end of your stay in the ILAC office (Please contact the Student Life Director katturco@creighton.edu for current rates). 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 a local Jesuit, Fr. Manolo Maza who does speak English and is a great friend of the Encuentro program.

The gift shop consists of arts and crafts made by Dominicans who live in the countryside communities in which ILAC works, and all income from the products goes back to those communities. Purchases can be made with ILAC staff members Lilian or Carolina. Cash only (dollars or pesos are accepted).

International calls can be made from one of our program’s cell phones. 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 11 minutes if calling the U.S. Nearly the entire ILAC center is equipped

**Transportation to Santiago**

A van, known in Spanish as “guagua,” is the public form of transportation into Santiago. These “guaguas” are normally very crowded and cost 25 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 Taxi Familiar 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 recommended 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.

Sundays and Lunch Hour

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 outside of the US. Most providers do have service in the D.R., but charge much more for data usage and incoming and outgoing calls.
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: 300 $RD

Centro Leon
-Dominican art and anthropology museum
-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.
-100$RD per person, free on Tuesdays
-Check website for more information on featured activities such as movies and live music www.centroleon.org.do
-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 250 RD$

El Gran Teatro del Cibao
-Santiago’s main performing arts theater just east of the Monumento a los Héroes de la Restauración
-Show include plays, comedians and operas
-Prices vary
-Call for more information: (809) 583-1150
-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 300 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

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: 300 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: 300 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: 300 RD$

Cigar Factory
-English-Speaking tours available to see the process in which cigars are hand-rolled at the Aurora Cigar Factory
-Call to arrange a tour 809-841-2983 (Eugenio)
-Tours are free, but purchase of cigars is appreciated
-Taxi one-way from ILAC: 450 RD$

Carnival
-Parade down the street, Las Carreras

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
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.

La Campagna
- Located on La Carretera Duarte near Plaza Internacional
- Traditional Dominican and American breakfast options,
- Sandwiches, salads and pasta for Lunch or Dinner
- 200 RD$ & up per plate
- 8 a.m.-12 a.m. (1 a.m. Fri-Sat.)
- Taxi from ILAC: 250 RD$

Lunch & Dinner
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: 300 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: 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: 300 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 a.m.-1 a.m.
- 200 RD$ & up per plate
- Taxi from ILAC: 300 RD$

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: 300 RD$

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

Rinconcito
- Located in the neighborhood of Rincon Largo (behind Careterra Duarte)
- Hamburgers, wraps and sandwiches

Hodelpa Centro Plaza
- Located on 30 de Marzo
- Standard room: $100-120 per night for two people. Includes breakfast.
- Telephone: 809-581-7000
- Make reservations online at www.hodelpa.com

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

Tipping 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.
Caribe and Metro Tours Prices
From Santiago in SRD:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Caribe</th>
<th>Metro</th>
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<td>320</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sosua</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puerto Plata</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>160</td>
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Rent-a-Car From Airport

Nelly
Economic car rental
$24 & up per day

Adventure
SUV rental
$53 & up per day
http://www.adventurerentcar.com/

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 inactivo”) 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 there 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 50 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 Santo Domingo 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, it will cost 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.

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. 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 and sandals. 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.

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.

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.
- 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

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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
www.puertoplavillage.com
Tel: (809) 320-4012

Lifestyles Resorts
- Located in Puerto Plata
- All-inclusive resort
www.hacienda-resorts.com
Tel: (809) 586-1227

Barceló
- Located in Puerto Plata
- All-inclusive resort
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
www.casamarinabeachhotel.com
Tel: (809) 571-3535.

Hotel Alegria
- Located in Cabarete
- Hotel only
- Large studio with kitchen available for 3 people or more.
www.hotel-alegria.com
Tel: (809) 571-0455

Hotel Kaoba
- Located in Cabarete
- Hotel only
www.kaoba.com
Tel: (809) 571-0300

Villa Taina
- Located in Cabarete
- Hotel, breakfast included
http://www.villataina.com/
Tel: 809 571 0722 or Toll free from USA: 1 877 584 5053

Tropical Clubs-Casa Laguna
- Located in Cabarete
- All-inclusive resort
www.tropicalclubs.com
Tel: (809) 571-0725

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

Kiteboarding in Cabarete

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

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, ecotourism 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.

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 Marina
- Located in Las Galeras
- All-inclusive
Tel: (809) 538-0020
www.amhsamarina.com

Hotel Doca
- Located in Samaná
Tel: (809) 538-2041
www.samananet/samanacity/hotel_doca-en.html

Gran Bahia Principe Cayacoa Resort
- Located in Samaná
- All-inclusive
Tel: (809) 538-3131
www.bahia-principe.com

Hotel Palcocó
- Located in Las Terrenas
- Includes breakfast
Tel: (809) 240-6151
www.palcocó.com

Hotel La Tortuga
- Located in Las Terrenas
- Includes breakfast
Tel: (809) 240-6566
www.hotel-la-tortuga.com

Oasis Hotel
- Located in Las Terrenas
Tel: (809) 240-5420

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 $60 per person. See the website for more information.
www.whalesamana.com

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 center for children working and living on the streets, 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.

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.
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.

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.
## Trip Itinerary Examples

### 3-Day Trip Example #1
3 p.m. Leave for 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 5:
- 8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
- 9 a.m. Sosua beach
- 7 p.m. Dinner in Santiago
- 9 p.m. Visit the Monument

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### 3-Day Trip Example #2
3 p.m. Visit the Monument
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 5:
- 2 p.m. Leave for Santiago
- 6 p.m. Dinner at ILAC
- 8 p.m. Visit the Monument

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### 5-Day Trip Example #1
3 p.m. Leave for 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 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
3 p.m. Leave for 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. Campo #1
- 6 p.m. Dinner at ILAC
- 8 p.m. Basketball game

Day 5:
- 8 a.m. Breakfast at ILAC
- 9 a.m. Campo #2
- 6 p.m. Dinner in Santiago

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### Other Activities

- **Kaskada Park**
  - Waterpark
  - Santiago
  - 350 RDS per person
  - 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
  - Taxi one-way from ILAC: 300 RDS

- **Estadio del Cibao**
  - Santiago
  - Dominican professional baseball
  - Season is from October-December
  - 100 RDS & up per ticket
  - www.aguilas.com.do
  - Taxi one-way from ILAC: 250 RDS

- **Arena del Cibao**
  - Santiago
  - Dominican professional baseball
  - Season is from February to April
  - 70 RDS & up per ticket
  - www.abasaca.com
  - Taxi one-way from ILAC: 250 RDS

- **Cabarete Coffee Company**
  - Coffee and Chocolate Day Tours
  - Depart from Cabarete at 9 a.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 RDS p/p) and La Vega to Jarabacoa (90 RDS p/p). Then take a taxi from Jarabacoa to Rancho Baiguate (200 RDS 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 RDS & up

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**Dominicans performing traditional Spanish dances in Plaza España in Santo Domingo.**

**Cacao Tree**
The fruit is used to make chocolate.
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 visiting. The program directors are grateful to all family and friends 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.
LODGING REQUEST FORM — Guests of Encuentro Dominicano

PLEASE RETURN TO:
Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC)
Creighton University
2500 California Plaza
Omaha, NE 68178

Omaha Office: Telephone 402/280-3179 // Fax: 402/280-1889
email: ilac@creighton.edu

Person requesting this reservation:

Last Name                   Middle Name                   First Name

Organization (if applicable):___________________________ Group Sponsor: ______________________

If a group, please attach a list of the participants, their age, and gender

Address:

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<tr>
<th>Number/Street</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip Code</th>
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Emergency Contact Information:

Name:_____________________________ Phone:________________________

Lodging Reservation

Arrival Date and Time at the ILAC Center:
__________________________________________________________

Departure Date and Time from the ILAC Center:
__________________________________________________________

Purpose of the visit: ______________________________________

Number of persons in the group: _______ Number of males: ________ Number of females: _________

Special housing arrangements (e.g., married; families; physical disability needs): __________________

Airport Transportation

Do you need ground transportation to and from the airport?   Yes _____   No _____
If yes, indicate the date and time for arrival and departure, the airport, airline, and flight number. (There is a fee for this service.)
__________________________________________________________

*Please contact the Encuentro Student Life Director (katturco@creighton.edu) for current ILAC rates