



© Connie Gelb/TNC

Dominican Republic

DATES

December 8th-14th, 2024

PRICE

Double Occupancy: \$5,375

Single Occupancy: \$6,315

The Dominican Republic's vibrant diversity of plants and animals attracts scores of visitors from around the world. It is home to more than 5,600 plant species and 300 bird species. Residents appreciate the natural environment for its beauty but also depend upon it for food and as a source of livelihood. This is why The Nature Conservancy has helped establish national parks, water funds, and marine managed areas around the country from areas surrounding Samaná Bay to Santo Domingo to Parque Nacional del Este (also known as Parque Nacional Cotubanamá).

These protected areas promote sustainable fisheries, help to facilitate coral reef and mangrove conservation, and support the government's commitment to protect 20% of its marine and nearshore environment through the Caribbean Challenge Initiative.

Our journey begins in the country's beautiful and historic capital, Santo Domingo. We'll spend time with local Nature Conservancy staff, partners, and community members learning about Water Funds, agroforestry, and TNC's investment in small communities. You'll have an opportunity to step back in time, strolling through the oldest continuously inhabited European-established settlement in the Americas.

Experience the landscape surrounding Punta Cana alongside TNC's local partners, Grupo Punta Cana Foundation and FUNDEMAR. Explore colorful coral gardens, visit mangrove restoration sites, snorkel in the clear blue seas, and bird-watch at Parque Nacional del Este. These spots are teeming with sea life along the coast, so be sure to pack your camera!

Along the way, learn how TNC staff and local partners are conserving nature to support the lives and livelihoods of the island's population.



HISTORIC SANTO DOMINGO

Step outside your hotel to explore Santo Domingo; founded in 1498, this colonial town was laid out in a grid pattern that became the model for the New World. Visit the Alcázar de Colón, originally the home of Diego Columbus and an exemplary example of Spanish Colonial architecture, and Fortaleza Ozama, a fort constructed to defend Santo Domingo from foreign invasion and pirates.

CORAL RESTORATION

Don snorkeling gear for a close-up look at how The Nature Conservancy is using cutting-edge science to restore diverse, resilient reefs and helping ensure their protection throughout the Caribbean and beyond.

PARQUE NACIONAL DEL ESTE

Explore one of the Dominican Republic's most treasured national parks and visit beautiful Saona Island for a chance to swim in the protected blue waters of the Caribbean Sea.

Your trip supports the local communities you're traveling in and The Nature Conservancy's efforts locally and globally. This trip has been planned specifically by The Nature Conservancy's team of scientific experts and travel liaisons to immerse you in the work the Conservancy is doing on the ground that has global consequences.

TNC TRAVEL VALUES

ACCESS:

Travel with renowned Conservancy experts and local partners for an exclusive, behind-the-scenes experience. You won't just see amazing places, you'll witness how you are helping save them.

IMPACT:

See how your commitment to our planet and your passion for conservation are making a difference. You will see the wild places and the communities you are impacting.

KNOWLEDGE:

Learn how we are applying the latest cutting-edge science to affect global change and drive conservation.

INSPIRATION:

Immerse yourself in local cultures and awe-inspiring landscapes to foster your own connection to our world.

GLOBALLY MINDED:

Elevate your understanding of our work by seeing first-hand how TNC and our partners act locally and how we turn local results in to global impact by scaling solutions that work.

TRAVELER EXPECTATIONS & CODE OF CONDUCT:

Please read [TNC's Traveler Expectations](#), our guide for ensuring that we treat each other with respect, fairness and integrity beyond reproach during travel in accordance with [TNC's Code of Conduct](#). Following the Code is an expectation and responsibility for everyone in the larger TNC community, including our staff, partners, vendors and supporters. To that end, when registering for a TNC trip, you are agreeing to uphold the Code.



THE CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE

PUNTA CANA

Purchased by American investors in 1969, Punta Cana has become one of the Dominican Republic's most important tourist destinations and a critical part of the country's economy. Innovative sustainability practices have been developed here and the area serves as a model for global ecotourism. While in Punta Cana, spend time with local representatives from the Grupo Puntacana Foundation; at the Center for Sustainability, learn how collaboration with dozens of strategic partners from the private, public, and civil society sectors is addressing the social and environmental challenges of tourism in the Caribbean.

PARQUE NACIONAL DEL ESTE

Encompassing both land and sea on the southeastern tip of the Dominican Republic, Parque Nacional del Este is home to over 500 species of flowers and over 140 species of birds. Sea turtles nest on beautiful Saona Island and dolphins, humpback whales and manatees can be found in the surrounding seas. The park was founded in 1975 with support from The Nature Conservancy.

SANTO DOMINGO WATER FUND

Water Funds are organizations that design and promote financial and governance mechanisms, engaging public, private, and civil society stakeholders in order to contribute to water security through solutions grounded in nature-based infrastructure and sustainable management of watersheds. Established in 2015, the Santo Domingo Water Fund (FASD) was founded by a group of local conservation organizations and large businesses including TNC, The Coca-Cola Company, and the Center for Agricultural and Forestry Development. Current initiatives of FASD include: using science and innovation to maximize efficiency, positively influencing public policies and corporate practices, building public-private alliances, and promoting dialogue and facilitating relationships to promote a culture of conservation and comprehensive management of water.

ITINERARY

DAY 1 — Sunday, December 8th | Arrive at Arrive at Santo Domingo's Las Américas International Airport. Plan to arrive earlier in the day so you can enjoy a few hours exploring Santo Domingo's Colonial Zone, the city's historic core and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Explore the winding streets, pop into museums and churches, or shop in local boutiques. Upon arrival at the airport, you will be welcomed by your Iconic Trip Leader and, depending on timing, transferred downtown for free time, or to your hotel to check-in. After settling in, enjoy a welcome reception and group dinner to kick off the trip.

OVERNIGHT AT HODELPA NICOLÁS DE OVANDO

DAY 2 — Monday, December 9th | This morning, enjoy breakfast before journeying 1 hour and 30 minutes to the Villa Altigracia area. On arrival, we will meet with TNC Staff and partners from the Santo Domingo Water Fund (FASD) who are carrying out restoration work in the water basin. The three local aqueducts provide about 35% of the city's water supply and are the first source of water for the surrounding communities. Learn about environmental contamination as a threat to clean water and how FASD is addressing these problems at the micro-watershed level to carry out focused intervention.

Meet with farmers who are utilizing agroforest resistance strategies within this tropical environment, and how planting additional cacao trees captures water and increases water supply overall, benefitting overall production, creating work for small communities, and resulting in greater revenue for all.

In the afternoon, we will head back to Santo Domingo. Dinner tonight is in town at a local favorite.

OVERNIGHT AT HODELPA NICOLÁS DE OVANDO

DAY 3 — Tuesday, December 10th | Start the morning with breakfast at leisure. We will meet at a group mid-morning to depart on a tour of the Zona Colonial, the historical heart of the city. As we wind through the cobblestone streets, learn how colonists shaped the city, see architecture dating back to the 16th century, and view many of the Americas' "firsts" that make up its UNESCO identification—the first hospital, first fortress, and first university.

We will stop for lunch along Calle al Conde, one of the oldest streets within the city walls. After lunch, we will continue our explorations before downtime at our hotel. We'll regroup this evening for another delicious dinner in town.

OVERNIGHT AT HODELPA NICOLÁS DE OVANDO

DAY 4 — Wednesday, December 11th | Enjoy breakfast before beginning the 2-hour and 45-minute journey to Punta Cana. We'll have lunch-with-a-view followed by a presentation from local TNC staff about their work in the region.

LODGING



© Hodelpa Nicolas de Ovando

HODELPA NICOLÁS DE OVANDO

Dating from 1502, this hotel in the heart of the Colonial Zone was originally home to Santo Domingo's fifth Spanish governor of the Americas, Nicolás de Ovando. It was during his tenure that the construction of what is now the colonial city of Santo Domingo began.



© The Westin Puntacana Resort & Club

THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

The Westin is part of Puntacana Resort & Club's pioneering approach to sustainable tourism, which includes a Zero Waste program, sustainable agriculture initiatives and ridgetway hawk and turtle conservation efforts, among others.



© The Westin Puntacana Resort & Club

ITINERARY, CONT.

Our home for the next three nights is The Westin Puntacana Resort & Club; enjoy your afternoon at leisure, heading to the beach or pool for a swim. We will reconvene for dinner as a group, dining seaside at the resort.

OVERNIGHT AT THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

DAY 5 — Thursday, December 12th | After breakfast on-site, depart to the Center for Sustainability for an overview of the resort's sustainability practices and Grupo Puntacana Foundation's current projects. Additional time will be spent at the Center for Marine Innovation, a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to marine conservation, restoration, and management, for an introduction to coral restoration techniques and Grupo Puntacana's partnership with TNC.

We will drive to Playa Blanca to enjoy lunch before heading out via boat to explore the clear blue waters and the diverse world below. Joined by TNC staff and local partners, you'll have an opportunity to don snorkeling gear to view the colorful reefs and see coral outplanting at work.

On our return to land, choose to explore the Indigenous Eyes Eco-Reserve, a 1,500-acre protected area dedicated to conservation, scientific research and recreation, or spend time at the resort. We will reconvene for dinner as a group.

OVERNIGHT AT THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

DAY 6 — Friday, December 13th | After breakfast this morning, transfer to Bayahibe, approximately 1 hour southwest, to meet with TNC partner FUNDEMAR and explore the famed Parque Nacional del Este (also referred to as Parque Nacional Cotubanamá). Visit FUNDEMAR's coral laboratory to learn the science behind their coral restoration work and then board a skiff for a water-based tour of the park. The tour will take you past rocky shoreline, mangroves filled with frigate birds, and protected swimming spots before reaching beautiful Saona Island. Enjoy a picnic lunch and free time on the beach before the return trip to Bayahibe and then Punta Cana.

Tonight, we'll gather at La Yola for a final, celebratory dinner and reflections on the week together.

OVERNIGHT AT THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

DAY 7 — Saturday, December 14th | Breakfast this morning is at your leisure. Transfers to Punta Cana International Airport (PUJ) will be arranged based on flight itineraries.



© Jeff Yonover



© Mark Godfrey/TNC

PRICE DETAIL

Double Occupancy: \$5,375

Single Occupancy: \$6,315

Price is based on a minimum of 12. Trip size not to exceed 14 travelers.

Price **includes** all lodging, transportation once in the Dominican Republic, airport transfers from Santo Domingo (SDQ) and Punta Cana (PUJ), activities, tips, meals, TNC expert staff and local guides. Price does **not include** your inbound flight to Santo Domingo (SDQ) or your return flight from Punta Cana (PUJ), or your chosen nearby airport.

PLEASE NOTE: This itinerary is representative of your trip and like all natural history excursions, activities are subject to modification based on weather and unforeseen circumstances. We will do our best to keep you informed on any necessary changes.