

TIPS & FACTS ABOUT THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

US citizens are required to have a valid passport. A tourist card (US \$10.00) must be purchased prior to arrival to the country at select Dominican consulates, at airline counters abroad, or at the airport upon arrival.

CAR RENTALS

Major car rental companies have airport and city locations, such as National, Honda, Avis, Budget, Hertz and Dollar. A valid driver's license and major credit card are required to rent a car for up to 90 days. Driving is on the right hand side and the speed limit is 60 kph in the cities and 80 kph or 100 kph on the highways unless other indicated. Getting around the Dominican Republic is easily accomplished on a network of fine roads.

MONEY/BUSINESS GUIDE BUSINESS HOURS

Government offices, as well as foreign consulates and embassies, open at 8:00am and close at 2pm, Monday through Friday. Some offices stay open for meetings by appointment until later in the afternoon. Businesses typically work from 9 to 5pm, five days a week. Shops open on weekdays at 9am and usually stay open until 7pm. Major stores remain open on Saturdays and Sunday, some through 2pm.

SIESTA

The Latin tradition of a long lunch, which is the major meal of the day, is generally observed, and many shops and businesses still close from 12:30 to 2:30pm.

CURRENCY

Foreign currency can be changed into Dominican pesos at exchange booths of the Banco de Reservas at airports, major hotels, or commercial banks. Banking hours are 8:30 to 4pm, Monday through Friday. Some banking branches remain open through 9pm, and on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Airport booths remain open to service all incoming flights, up to 24 hours if necessary. Traveler's checks and major credit cards are widely accepted. Cash advances are available at some commercial banks. The rate of exchange fluctuates around \$30.82-US\$1 (April, 2006).

TAXES & SERVICE CHARGES

On arrival, most visitors are required to purchase a tourist card for \$10.00, and pay a \$US\$10.00 departure tax at the airport when leaving. (These taxes are usually included in the airline taxes and fees). Hotels collect 23% above published prices (8% sales tax + 5% room tax + 10% service charge. *(These are included in your Mill Creek Lumber package). Restaurants charge the 8% sales tax and 10% service charge. (It is customary to tip an additional 10% for good service in restaurants).

HOLIDAYS

Stores, banks and most businesses close on: January 1, "New Year's Day;" January 6, "Epiphany" (not a holiday but observed by many companies), January 21, "Our Lady of Altagracia Day;" February 27, "Independence Day;" September 24, "Our Lady of Mercedes Day;" and December 25, "Christmas Day." In the Dominican Republic, the following holidays will be celebrated on the closest Monday to the actual date: January 6, "Epiphany" January 26, "Juan Pablo Duarte's Birthday;" May 1, "Labor Day;" August 16, "Dominican Restoration Day;" November 6, "Constitution Day;" "Good Friday" and "Corpus Christi Day" do not have fixed dates.

COUNTRY PROFILE GEOGRAPHY

The Dominican Republic occupies the eastern two-thirds of Hispaniola Island, which it shares with Haiti, and is the second largest country in the Caribbean comprising an area of 18,712 square miles. It is bordered on the North by the Atlantic Ocean and the South by the Caribbean Sea.

LANGUAGE

Spanish is the official language. English is widely spoken, especially in tourist areas. Knowledge of German, Italian and French is becoming more widespread. Traffic signs and most menus in restaurants are in Spanish, although menus in tourist regions tend to be multilingual.

TIME

The Dominican Republic is in the same time zone as the U.S. Eastern seaboard, but Daylight Savings Time is in effect year-round. So New York and Miami are one hour behind in the fall.

CLIMATE

The average annual temperature is 77 degrees Fahrenheit with August being the warmest month and January the coolest. Summer temperatures range from 89 to 95 degrees and in the winter, from 75 degrees to 90 degrees.

POPULATION

The nation's population is approximately 8 million inhabitants. Some 2.5 million people live in Santo Domingo, the capital city.

OTHER SERVICES

Appliances run on 110 volts/60 cycles, the same as the U.S.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

A doctor is on call at major hotels. These are stocked with medicine for the most common ailments. Ambulances are available, as is air ambulance evacuation. Emergency dental treatment can be provided if needed. Twenty-four hour pharmacies can be found in every major city. For travel health guidelines, see www.dr1.com/health.htm.

PET REGULATIONS

The Department of Animal Health requires proof of a rabies vaccination for dogs indicating that the inoculation was given 30 days prior to the animal's arrival in the country. For both dogs and cats, a Health Certificate issued not more than 15 days prior to the animal's arrival in the country is also required. If these requirements are not met, the animal will be quarantined upon arrival from 8 to 30 days, depending on its country of origin.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Though the country is 90% Roman Catholic, there are many Christian denominations, including Anglican, Baptist, Evangelical, Seventh Day Adventist, and Mormon. English services are held in some churches of the capital city. Santo Domingo's synagogue holds a weekly service on Friday evenings at sundown.

COMMUNICATIONS

The country's privately owned telephone company CODETEL, a GTE subsidiary, and Tricom (a local joint venture with Motorola) provide the Dominican Republic with one of the most sophisticated telecommunications systems in Latin America. Services include international direct dialing, faxing, teleconferencing, electronic mail and videoconferencing. Cable, fax, telex services, and long distance calling services are provided by All America Cable and Radio, ITT and RCA Global Communications. There is direct dial to the Dominican Republic using area code 809.

MEDIA

There are five local morning newspapers and three afternoon dailies in Spanish. English language daily news can be found on the internet site of Dominican Republic One: www.dr1.com. Foreign language magazines and newspapers are readily available in major cities and most tourist destinations. Televised coverage of tourism destinations and special events are broadcast on the Caribbean Traveling Network (CTN) of Telecable Nacional.

WEB SITES INFORMATIN ON THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Ministry of Tourism: www.dominicana.com.do

National Hotel & Restaurant Association: www.drhotels.com

Ministry of Foreign Relations: www.serex.gov.do

Dominican Telephone Company (Codetel): www.codetel.net.do

Dominican Republic One: www.dr1.com