

## DAY TRIPS...

There are many things to do in Rincon and the surrounding areas. One of the best guides on what to see and do in Puerto Rico is "*Places to Go*". We provide the following list of businesses as a service to our guests. It is always a good idea to call to make sure they are still open, and check the hours of operation, get directions, etc. You may also want to check out some of these following web sites: [www.sunsetparadise.com/thingstodo.htm](http://www.sunsetparadise.com/thingstodo.htm) , [www.rincon.org](http://www.rincon.org) , [www.rinconpr.com](http://www.rinconpr.com) , [www.gotoportadelsol.com](http://www.gotoportadelsol.com) , [http://escape.topuertorico.com](http://http://escape.topuertorico.com) , [www.elyunque.com](http://www.elyunque.com) , [www.puertoricowow.com](http://www.puertoricowow.com) , [www.gotopuertorico.com](http://www.gotopuertorico.com) , and [www.puertoricoisfun.com](http://www.puertoricoisfun.com). Another great source of information is our managers, Holly or Alex. They have lived on the island for many years and are happy to help in any way.

**Tour Companies** Another way if to see the sights is through a tour company. Try Amigos Tours 787-360-9398 or 787-536-1743. They do guided tours to Bioluminescent Bay, Rio Camuy Caves, Old San Juan, and a lot more.

### **Christopher Columbus**

Stepped onto Puerto Rican soil somewhere along the northern half of the west coast. Down the beach on a point south of our home, there is a boat perched on the rocks. Some say that this is the spot where he landed.

### **Gyanica Dry Forest**

Lots of trails for hiking and nature lovers. Has more than 1,000 types of insects and around 80 migratory and residential birds. Is designated an International Biosphere Reserve open daily to the public located on the southern coast off Route 333. Caution: we went on one of the shortest, easiest trails, the sun was intense and we got hot and tired. Wear the right clothes, hiking shoes and take lots of water with you.

### **Old San Juan**

A walk through this restored area allows you to see 500 years of history in a single day. This is a must do! You can do a walking tour or if you choose use the (free) trolleys to save steps to enjoy your day in Old San Juan. Visit one of the most famous forts; El Morro. Caution: the streets are narrow and there are lots of one ways, which can be confusing. It is best to find one of the parking buildings and go explore!

### **Plaza Las Americas Mall**

The largest mall in the Caribbean, and still growing. Over 190 stores, including the world's largest Sears and JC Penny stores. Lots of exclusive stores like Gap, Cache, Banana Republic, etc. Over 25 restaurants and 8 movie theaters. Wear a comfortable pair of sneakers. On the main road into San Juan. Phone: 753-3333

### **El Yunque Caribbean National Forest**

*Please let us know if you think anything should be added or changed.*

The only rain forest in United States. Up to 200 inches of rain falls every year. It has 28,000 acres and hosts 240 different species of tropical trees, 50 kinds of orchids, and 150 varieties of ferns. Two endangered species can be found here: the coqui frog and the Puerto Rican Parrot. If you like nature and enjoy hiking, do not miss it! Go to the visitor's center, see the film and get a map of the trails. Be sure to go on the one that has a waterfall. Phone: 887-2875

### **Rio Camuy Cave Park**

268 acre park, Incredible caverns with lots of stalactites and stalagmites. It has the 2nd longest underground river in the world. Enjoy a vacation day for the whole family on walking trails, picnic areas, and food facilities. It also has an exhibition hall and souvenir shop. It is great fun for kids and very educational. Last known prices and time: \$10 adults, \$7 children, \$2 parking. Open Tuesday to Sunday Last tour starts at 2 PM Phone: 787-898-3100 (go in the morning when the lines are usually short) Best route from the villas is to take Hwy 2 toward San Juan. Just past Isabella you get on to Hwy 22 and shortly after you are on it you take rd 129 and follow it all the way to the Caverns. (There are fruit/vegetable stands on the way to to the caverns so stop and get some fresh treats.)

### **Mona Island**

This is a major trip and NOT for the faint of heart. You should be prepared to "rough it". There are no bathrooms, or any place to plug in your blow dryer! It is a very rough and hostile, nature refuge, reachable by chartered boat (or by plane?) The sea trip takes about 3 hours, normally through some of the roughest waters in the Caribbean. Temperatures can soar to 110 degrees and the island is covered with dense thorn bushes and poisonous plants. Lodging is "bring your own", or you might be able to stay in a rustic cabin, (if you know a park ranger or a biologist). The island was originally home to the Taino Indians. It is dubbed the "Galapagos of the Caribbean. Mona Island means *Monkey Island* in English, but instead of monkeys, it is home to 4 foot long iguanas, the endangered hawksbill turtle, pigs, goats, several types of deadly scorpions, seabirds, many colorful fish, and over 50 species of spiders. The island is 7 miles by 4 miles and has over 200 caves, cliffs, and many pristine, unspoiled coral reefs. It was used in the past as a stopping point for pirates, including the infamous Captain Kidd. Legend has it there is lots of buried treasure that has never been found. Call the Department Natural Resources @ 787-724-8774 before you go. You Must have special permit (last know price was \$4) to go.

### **Cabo Rojo Lighthouse**

At the end of Route 301 (the main road ends and follow the VERY winding and VERY bumpy road to its end) Built a century ago by the Spanish government. Currently, it is in poor condition. Our own lighthouse in puntas is in better condition, but the view and cliffs are beautiful. You'll even find a white sand beach with magnificent turquoise waters. Bring your swim wear and a picnic lunch

### **US Fish & Wildlife Refuge**

Phone: (787) 851-7258

### **Phosphorescent Bay**

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Located in Lajas named for the underwater "fireworks" display produced by millions of bioluminescent micro organisms that feed on diminutive algae called plankton nightly cruises are given to observe this phenomenon. One boat operator is "Johnny Boats" with Johnny Cordero as captain.

### **Arecibo Observatory**

Featuring the world's largest radar/radio telescope. The observatory is conducting groundbreaking astronomy work. The "dish" sits in a 565 foot deep sink hole and covers 20 acres with a 600 ton platform hovering over it. Phone is 878-2612. Hours sometimes changes, but last known hours: 12 to 4 pm Wednesday-Friday, 9Am to 4:30 PM Saturday and Sundays, closed Monday & Tuesdays and most holidays Located by the Cumay Caverns at the end of Route 625

### **Moca**

For people looking for Mundillo style lace-making. Hand made lace can be found here. The lace is beautiful but expensive. The town, Moca is just outside of Aguadilla

### **Bacardi Rum Tour**

Come and explore more than 130 years of tradition and ...feel the spirits. A fascinating tour of the world's largest rum distillery. Covers the history behind making Bacardi Rum, a wonderful array of Puerto Rico's arts and crafts, and a free taste of the greatest cocktails. No Charge. Phone 787-788-8400 or 787-788-1500

### **Mayaguez**

Plaza - in the center of town there is an elegant plaza with stone walk and benches where you'll find a Christopher Columbus statue.

### **Botanical Gardens**

At the Tropical Agricultural Research Station run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It has one of the largest collections of tropical and semitropical plants in the world, including many exotic species. Located in the university.

### **Zoo**

Just under gone major renovations and reopened. Zoologico de Puerto Rico was originally established in 1955 in La Paruera, Lajas. In 1964 the Zoo was moved to a farm in Mayaguez where it is today, next to the university of Puerto Rico's Mayaguez Campus. It is the home of several species of mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles representing the fauna of Africa, Caribbean and South America. Turn North on Carr. 108 by the park south of the university. Follow the signs. Phone 834-8110 or 722-1551

### **Ponce**

Close to two hours from Rincon. Visit the downtown Plaza to see the fountains, a cathedral and Parque de Bombas (century-old firehouse), You might want to visit the world-class Museum of Art

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(phone 787-848-0505 or 787-840-1510), which houses 1,000 paintings and 400 sculptures, including the finest collection of European works in the Caribbean. There is also Castillo Serralles (phone 787-259-1774), a restored Mansion of the founder of Don Q rum. It is perched on El Vigia Hill overlooking the city. It is a magnificent example of the Spanish Revival architecture popular in the 1920's. Tours are in English and Spanish. You will find an excellent shopping mall also in the city.

#### **Tibes Indian Ceremonial Center**

Site of the oldest cemetery uncovered to date in the Antilles located outside of Ponce much to explore here about this pre-Columbian tribe, including an astronomical observatory, ball-fields, dance grounds and a reconstructed Taino village

#### **El Farro (Punta) Lighthouse**

Not a day trip (it is located in Rincon), but it is a must see. Recently restored lighthouse at which you can stroll at its park overlooking the ocean telescopes (coin operated) allow you a glance toward Desecheo island. A great spot to watch humpback whales (November to March) and even watch surfers catch the breaks

#### **Other**

Take a trip into the hills. One suggestion is to Las Marias or San Sabastian. Mountainous, scenic, very lush and tropical. If you want to escape, go to Parador Hacienda Juanita on Route 105 Km 23.5, an old coffee plantation with walking trails and a very good restaurant.

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