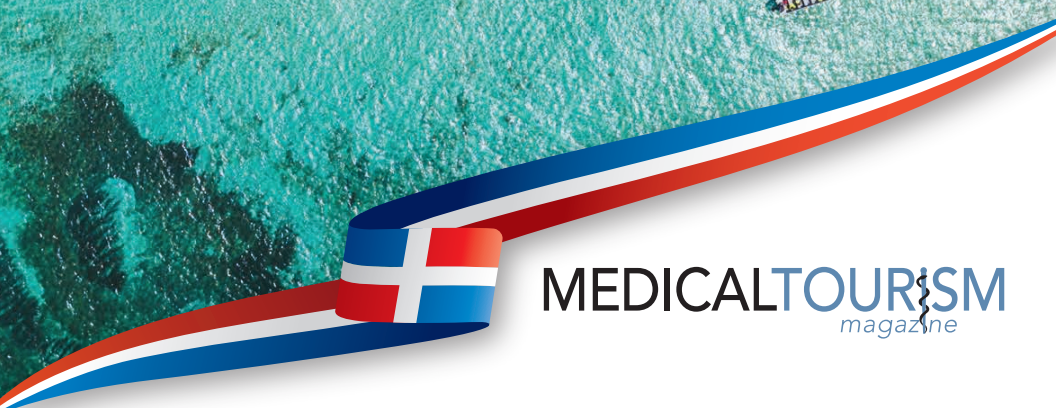




Dominican Republic

Health & Wellness Destination Guide

THIRD EDITION



MEDICALTOURISM
magazine

Dominican Republic

Health & Wellness Destination Guide

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Dominican Republic

Health & Wellness Destination Guide



By **Renée-Marie Stephano** • Editor **William Cook**

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

RECOMMENDED ROADS

KEY

- Highway
- Main Road
- Secondary Road
- Rural Road
- Toll Station
- City or Town
- Point of Interest
- Cruise Port
- Protected Area or Park
- Ocean / Sea/River / Lake
- International Airport
- Domestic Airport
- Golf Course
- Highest Peak



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This is a big Caribbean island.
Avoid paying hefty taxi fees by landing at the closest airport to your destination.

PUNTA CANA - PUJ	LA ROMANA - LRM	SANTO DOMINGO - SDQ	SANTIAGO - STI	PUERTO PLATA - POP	SAMANÁ - AZS
- Cap Cana - Punta Cana - Bávaro - Macao - Uvero Alto - La Romana - Higüey	- Juan Dolio - La Romana - Casa de Campo - Bayahibe - Dominicus - Playa Nueva Romana - Higüey	- Santo Domingo - Boca Chica - Juan Dolio - San Cristóbal - Bani - Azua - Barahona - Samaná - Las Terrenas	- Santiago - La Vega - San Francisco de Macoris - Jarabacoa - Constanza - Bonao	- Amber Cove Port - Puerto Plata - Sosúa - Cabarete - Cabrera - Playa Grande - Montecristi	- Las Terrenas - Samaná City - Las Galeras - Nagua - Cabrera - Playa Grande - San Francisco de Macoris

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Dominican Republic

By The Numbers

CAPITAL
SANTO DOMINGO

GOVERNMENT TYPE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

LAND AREA
48,320 SQ KM

LANGUAGES
SPANISH (OFFICIAL)

POPULATION
10,530,000

PHYSICIAN DENSITY
1.49 PHYSICIANS/1,000

HOSPITAL BEDS DENSITY
1.7/1,000 POPULATION

ELEVATION EXTREMES
LOWEST POINT:
LAGO ENRIQUILLO -46 M
HIGHEST POINT:
PICO DUARTE 3,175 M

COUNTRY CODE
+1

CURRENCY
DOMINICAN PESO

ELECTRICITY
110 VOLTS, 60 CYCLES, AC

TIME ZONE
-4 GMT



Colonial Zone street, Santo Domingo



Altos de Chavón - Casa de Campo, La Romana



Santiago Apostol Cathedral, Santiago



Los Cocos Wind Park, Barahona



Juan Dolio Beach, Juan Dolio



Damajagua Falls, Puerto Plata



Amber Cove, Puerto Plata

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Message From the Minister of Tourism of the Dominican Republic

Lic. David Collado Morales

Minister of Tourism Dominican Republic



Health and wellness tourism, worldwide, has grown exponentially in recent years, representing an important potential in the diversification of our tourist destination, as it offers the opportunity to combine medical services offered, mainly in metropolitan areas, with other tourism offers of the different hubs in the Dominican Republic. Sample of this fact, according to data gathered by the World Tourism Organization, a health tourist spends up to five times more than a conventional tourist, which indicates that the health tourist, who traveled to the Dominican Republic to receive some type of medical treatment, is willing to explore tourist options once released.

The health tourism offer in the Dominican Republic for international patients has historically consisted of dental services and plastic surgery, and mainly in private clinics. This information tells us that we still have an ample growth margin and a great opportunity for diversification in the health sector.

Health Tourism is of high priority for our management, and as administrators, we are committed to supporting all initiatives called to improve growth prospects of the health sector, especially if they involve the diversification of tourism offers of our country and they generate more jobs and opportunities for our Dominican citizens.

Among the important contributions arising from the development of this sector, it is worth mentioning the fact that it stimulates investment of specialized health centers, and by so, elevating the quality of services not only for the tourists that travel to the Dominican Republic to obtain them but also for our citizens who now have greater and better access to specialized treatments; likewise, it also stimulates Dominican physicians and all medical sector professionals to invest in their academic career, to procure a higher quality standard of quality. In this regard, the Social Security Act, in support of this initiative, has trained many staff members, both professional and technical, in the health sector, which represents an advantage for investors in the sector, who know they have the required staff and the necessary quality standards to receive the new tourists who seek their services.

Lic. David Collado Morales
Minister of Tourism of the Dominican Republic



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* REPRESENTATIVES

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Ministry of Tourism

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Message From the Minister of Public Health of the Dominican Republic

Dr. Víctor Elías Atallah Lajam

Minister of Public Health of the Dominican Republic



Health tourism has grown significantly, establishing itself as a strategic component of the national tourism industry. In the Dominican Republic, important regulatory advances have been implemented to strengthen patient safety, both for local users and for those accessing services through health tourism. A significant milestone was the enactment of the Technical Regulation for Clinical Record Management in August 2023, which sets precise standards for the recording, handling, and safeguarding of clinical information. This regulation applies to all authorized healthcare establishments and services in the country, ensuring traceability, confidentiality, and continuity of care—essential elements for modern, high-quality healthcare.

In 2024, the Care Protocol on Safety Criteria for Liposuction Plastic Surgery and the Care Protocol for Breast Reconstruction Surgery with Implants and Tissue Expanders were updated. Both procedures are among the most in-demand surgical interventions within medical services associated with health tourism, due to their frequent request by international patients seeking aesthetic and reconstructive treatments in the country. The review of these protocols responds to the need to strengthen clinical quality and safety, ensuring that these practices, which involve elevated risks, comply with updated standards of health regulation and institutional oversight.

The Dominican government reaffirms its commitment to promoting policies that ensure balanced growth, where the expansion of the tourism industry goes hand in hand with the preservation of health.

Within this framework of regulatory advances, strengthening of medical protocols, and consolidation of health tourism, we are pleased to present the new edition of the Health & Wellness Destination Guide, designed as a strategic tool to promote this sector and to continue positioning the Dominican Republic as a regional reference in health and wellness.

Dr. Víctor Elías Atallah Lajam
Minister of Public Health of the Dominican Republic



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC *your destination* FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

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- Research, surveys and statistics in DR Health Tourism
- Promotion of the Dominican Republic Medical Tourism and Wellness Guide
- Medical Tourism International Certifications and training
- Quality Seal

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WeConnect, Santo Domingo, D.N. Dominican Republic
www.adtsalud.org

Message from the President of the Dominican Republic Health Tourism Association

Alejandro Cambiaso R., M.D.

President of the Dominican Health Tourism Association



The Dominican Republic has a long history of being a travel destination for Americans, Canadians and Europeans. Its Caribbean beauty, surrounded by clear blue water, with stunning beaches and mountains, ideal climate, and culture of service, make it the perfect getaway. Also, the Dominican Republic is a medical tourism safe destination and has proven to be one of the countries with the most impressive and efficient response to COVID-19 in the region, which is a decisive factor in these uncertain times. The certified medical facilities in the Dominican Republic are modern and are staffed with qualified English-speaking doctors, who are highly trained, and who have also received academic preparation on a par with doctors in the United States. Many physicians have also studied abroad at world-renowned universities, which allows patients to save on health treatments without compromising the quality and safety of the services they receive. The medical community has relied on the country's tourist flow to develop attractive packages for medical tourism. In that regard, the Dominican Republic is a trusted destination for preventive medicine, cardiology, orthopedics, urology, plastic and weight-loss surgery, oncology, eye surgery, wellness and dental procedures.

Conveniently, the Dominican Republic is a desirable place to recover after a medical procedure, and patients are cared for and closely monitored during post-surgery as well. The possibility of enjoying a spa-like experience during the days following surgery, or following another medical procedure, while gazing at the shimmering Caribbean Sea and listening to the sound of the waves or the swaying of palm trees, is the most soothing experience that can be desired by a recovering patient. We are pleased that you are considering the Dominican Republic as your health and wellness destination of choice.

Alejandro Cambiaso R., M.D. President
Dominican Health Tourism Association

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About of the Dominican Health Tourism Association (ADTS)

The Dominican Health Tourism Association (ADTS) is a not-for-profit organization that promotes the Dominican Republic as an ideal place for medical tourism, given its geographical position, great hospitality, climate, as well as its high-level and cost-effective health services. The association supports the best health tourism practices, international certifications, and accreditations to constantly improve the quality and safety of medical care.

The ADTS works with top medical and wellness centers, hotels, governments, and other international and local partners to provide an optimal national environment to support the sustainable development of medical tourism in the nation.

Our Mission is to inform, assess, support, and connect the national and foreign public with excellent health and wellness services in the Dominican Republic.

Our Vision is to position the Dominican Republic as a leader in world class health and wellness services.



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About the Author

Renée-Marie Stephano
CEO and Co-founder



Renée-Marie Stephano is Chief Executive Officer of the world's preeminent authority in the business of health, Global Healthcare Resources, a strategy, business development, marketing, and consulting firm, also responsible for managing the Medical Tourism Association, where Stephano was previously CEO. She is also the Co-founder of HEALTHCARE REVOLUTION®, the industry-leading conference that gathers the most innovative healthcare executives from around the globe.

Formerly an attorney, she has since 2007 been specializing in building global patient and medical travel programs in countries such as Dominican Republic, South Korea, Washington, D.C. USA, Abu Dhabi, Puerto Rico, Dubai, Croatia, China, Turkey, Portugal, and more. Stephano has worked with governments and hospitals to develop healthcare clusters, medical tourism cities, international patient departments, and long-term international patient strategic plans.

Currently, Renée-Marie Stephano acts as a Strategic Advisor to Global Healthcare Accreditation (GHA) for new services related to medical travel and well-being including GHA Healthcare Accreditation For Medical Travel, GHA WellHotel, GHA For Business. To learn more about GHA, visit ghaccreditation.com.

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The Medical Tourism Association®

The Medical Tourism Association® (MTA) is a global non-profit association for the medical tourism and international patient industry. The MTA works with healthcare providers, governments, insurance companies, employers, and other buyers of healthcare in their medical tourism, international patient, and global healthcare initiatives, with a focus on providing the highest quality with transparent pricing. To learn more about the MTA, visit MedicalTourism.com/mta.

Medical Tourism Association®

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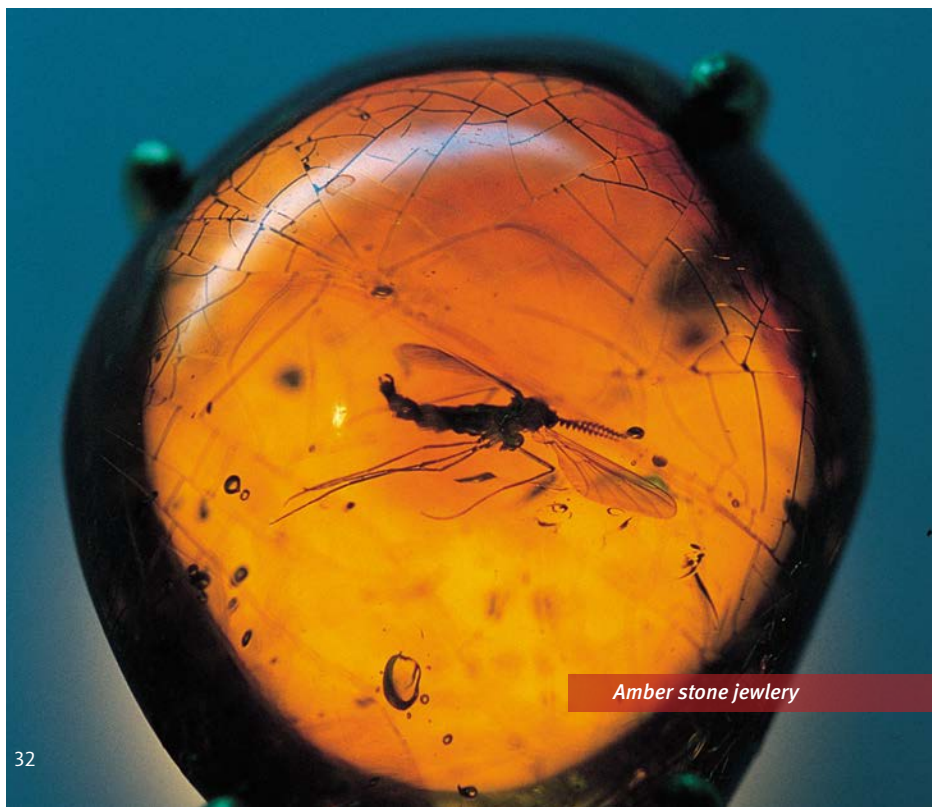
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About the Medical Tourism Association® Destination Guides

For decades, travelers have trusted destination guides for information on culture, language, gastronomy, tourism activities, currency and the many attractions that make each destination unique. Currently, because of the high cost of healthcare, limited access to high technology and specialized surgical technique among other factors, patients are finding themselves looking for alternative options for treatment, many times, outside of their local community, state and even country.

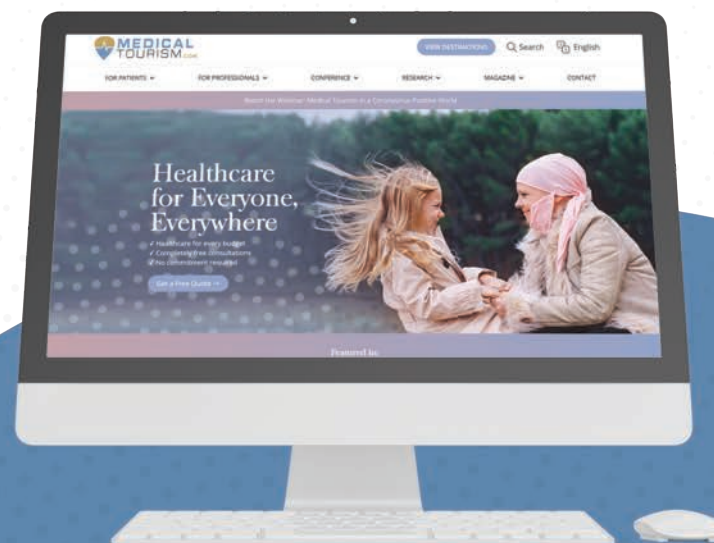
As nearly 100 countries around the world embrace the medical tourism industry, the Medical Tourism Association® has launched its Destination Guides program as a commitment to education, with a focus on consumer awareness. The Medical Tourism Association® Destination Guides provide an exclusive focus on a destination, country, or city with detailed information about the quality of healthcare in the destination and the healthcare infrastructure found in that region, including wellness and preventative healthcare options as well.

The Destination Guides are structured to educate consumers and take them through their medical tourism decision making process; from the moment they begin to research a destination, they will know what to look for. The key function of the Destination Guides is to empower medical travelers with knowledge about the industry and provide a step by step, set of guidelines to take into consideration when traveling for healthcare and/or wellness. Additional features of the Destination Guide include instant free access for prospective medical tourism patients. Patients can learn more about the destination and others like it at MedicalTourism.com, as well as comprehensive destination rankings. The Print Edition of the Guides may be available through Amazon, iTunes, and/or other merchants for worldwide distribution.

A past study conducted by Medical Tourism Association® found that almost 73 percent of medical tourists researched their information on medical tourism online. The guide will include information on hospitals, clinics, medical spas, wellness centers, hotels, and tour operators for patients. The Medical Tourism Association® Destination Guides also feature tourism information for patients with full-color images to go along with the tourism information to help establish expectations and includes helpful tips for patients and their companions during their medical stay.



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From the Author

Considered by many to be one of the most beautiful destinations in the Caribbean, the Dominican Republic captivates visitors with its sugar-white sand beaches, breathtaking tropical scenery, and luxurious island sunsets. It is a land of many contrasts, with the western side of the country dominated by soaring mountains and fertile valleys that descend gently eastward to a lush coastal plain and the shimmering waters of the Caribbean.

As the world slowly emerges from a global pandemic and travel restriction begin to lift, the Dominican Republic is ready to welcome patients from around the globe, to a tropical paradise where safety and hospitality go hand in hand.

Santo Domingo, the nation's capital, is a bustling city that melds the present with the past. Its vibrant neighborhoods and modern office buildings play counterpoint to a picturesque colonial district rich in tradition and history. To the east, at the very tip of the Island is world-famous Punta Cana, one of the top beach resort destinations in the Caribbean, where visitors from all over the globe come to bask in the sun, among paradisiacal coves and crystal-clear waters.

While the country's many natural and cultural attractions are sure to enchant even the most demanding visitors, it is the warmth and friendliness of the Dominican people that truly sets the country apart. Whether at work or at play, Dominicans will go out their way to make sure visitors feel welcomed and comfortable.

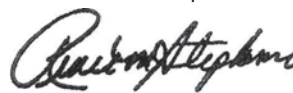
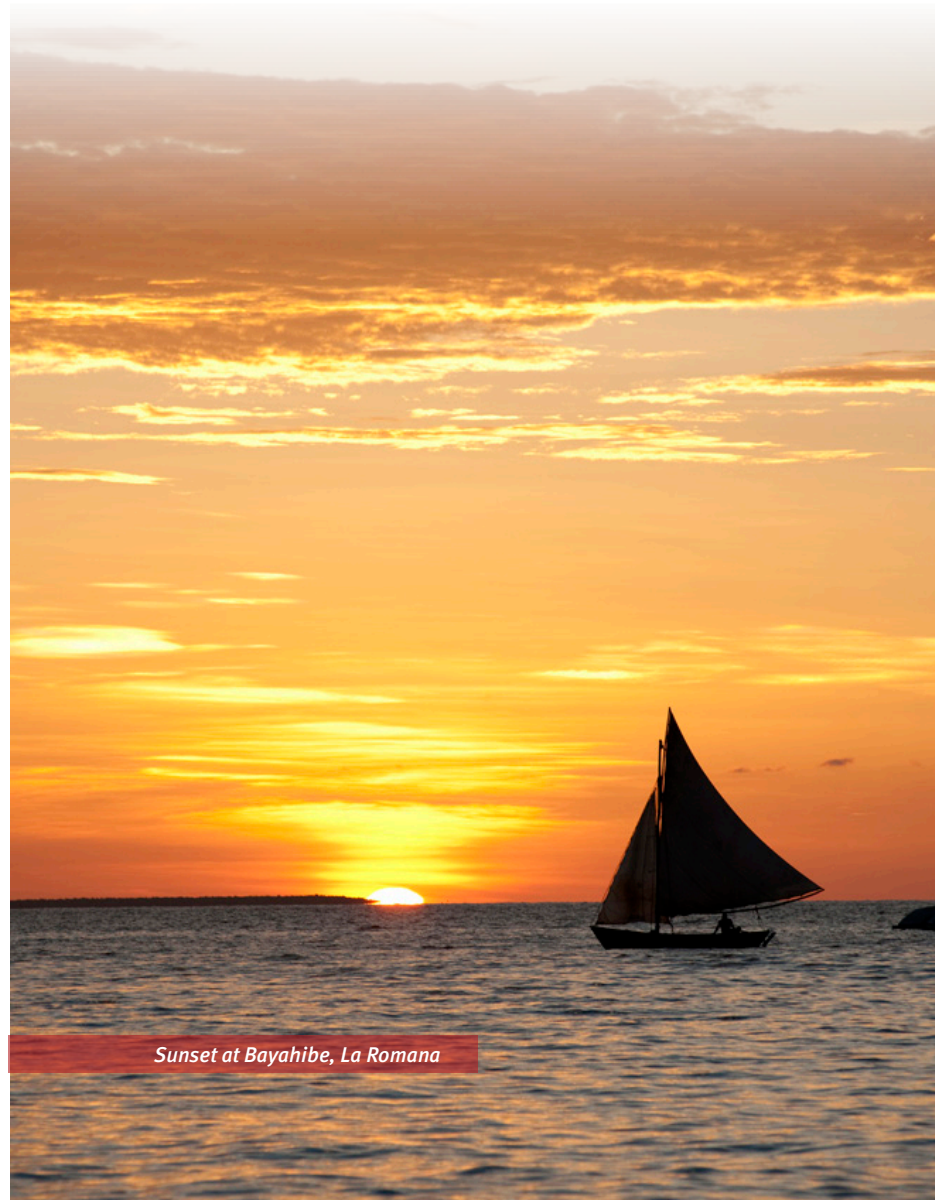
They are open and friendly in their relationships and enjoy chatting with friends and strangers alike about the latest news, weather, or baseball (the country's national pastime).

With all these impressive attributes, it is easy to overlook the fact that the Dominican Republic is also a leading medical and wellness destination. It has one of the most advanced healthcare systems in the Caribbean and attracts thousands of patients each year for high quality treatments and medical procedures that cost a fraction of what they do in the United States and Europe.

Yet while low cost is a strong motivator for patients to travel abroad, it is a destination's ability to consistently deliver a high-quality medical tourism experience that will ultimately determine its level of success as an exporter of healthcare services.

As a potential medical tourist, you need reliable resources to help you make an informed decision about traveling to the Dominican Republic for care. It is my hope that this guide will provide you with all the necessary information and insight to help you achieve your health and wellness goals.

To your health!
Renée-Marie Stephano

Sunset at Bayahibe, La Romana

Macao Beach, Punta Cana



About
MEDICAL TOURISM



Santo Domingo's Malecón - Seawall

WHAT IS MEDICAL TOURISM?

Medical tourism (also known as medical travel or global healthcare) is the process in which patients travel to another region or country for medical or health and wellness services. Oftentimes, these services can take the form of a dental treatment, knee surgery, health check-up or even a trip to a wellness spa.

The term medical tourism may sound strange and exotic to some people; but, in fact, it is a rapidly growing phenomenon spurred on by an increasingly empowered patient base searching for quality, affordability, availability, and accessibility of healthcare.

Some people have the erroneous impression that patients are flying for open heart surgery to a dilapidated jungle clinic in some third world country - followed by bungee jumping. The opposite is true. Most patients are receiving care in high-end hospitals or clinics located in major urban centers and at the hands of highly experienced medical professionals. Patients will typically plan their trip to allow enough time for a prudent recuperation period before heading home.

“ The term medical tourism may sound strange and exotic to some people; but in fact it is a rapidly growing phenomenon spurred on by an increasingly empowered patient base searching for quality, affordability, availability, and accessibility in healthcare. ”

WHEN DID MEDICAL TOURISM BEGIN?

You might be surprised to know that medical tourism is not a new phenomenon. In fact, archaeological evidence from the third millennium B.C. suggests that ancient Mesopotamians traveled to the temple of a healing god or goddess at Tell Brak, Syria, in search of a cure for eye disorders. A few thousand years later, the Greeks and Romans would travel by foot or ship to spas and cult centers all around the Mediterranean. The Asclepia Temples, dedicated in honor of the Greek god of medicine, were some of the world's first health centers. Pilgrims would sometimes spend several nights in the temple, hoping Asclepios would appear in a dream and suggest a diagnosis or treatment.

Later in the 16th and 17th centuries, spa towns such as St. Moritz and Bath became prime destinations for the European upper classes looking to soothe their ills. More recently, the wealthier citizens of developing nations have begun traveling to renowned medical institutions in the United States and Europe, usually for invasive medical procedures such as open heart surgery or cancer treatments that require a high degree of specialization and experience.

Over the last fifteen years, however, the trend has reversed itself as increasing numbers of patients have begun traveling from developed nations such as the United States, Great Britain and Russia to so-called “developing” nations in search of affordable medical care or treatment options not available at home. Most media attention has focused on patients traveling for what are referred to as “elective” procedures such as plastic surgery or dental. However, a growing number of patients are traveling for more acute care procedures such as open heart surgery, spinal procedures or hip and knee replacements.



“Archaeological evidence from the third millennium B.C. suggests that ancient Mesopotamians traveled to the temple of a healing god or goddess at Tell Brak, Syria, in search of a cure for eye disorders.”

WHY IS MEDICAL TOURISM GROWING?

Patients from all over the world and from all walks of life are increasingly engaging in medical tourism. Companies in the U.S. are sending employees to Latin America for medical treatment in order to save on costs; patients in Europe and the Middle East are traveling to Asia. Why are more and more people around the world bypassing their local medical providers and, instead, choosing to travel hundreds or even thousands of miles for medical care?

There are four main factors driving medical tourism: **affordability** (patients looking for less expensive medical care options), **accessibility** (patients looking to schedule treatments quickly), **availability** (patients looking for procedures that are not available in their own country or city) or **better quality** (patients looking for the doctors and facilities with the most experience and cutting-edge medical technology). Additionally, there are other elements contributing directly or indirectly to medical tourism's explosive growth, these include:

- A trend towards globalization of services including healthcare
- The growing popularity of cross-border medical tourism where patients simply cross borders or travel regionally to access care
- A growing population of older patients in need of care for degenerative conditions, such as a failing heart and joints
- Unavailability of appropriate medical treatment due to lack of technology and/or infrastructure services
- Limited availability of medical expertise and specialization
- Increasing difficulty in finding suitable primary care physicians
- Healthcare costs continually rising, which motivates people to look for innovative solutions
- Millions of people who are uninsured or underinsured
- People have better access to information than they did fifteen or twenty years ago, particularly through the internet
- Hospitals, clinics, doctors, and medical tourism facilitators are increasingly and enticingly advertising their services
- Patients cannot access procedures due to long wait times, as well as religious or cultural reasons

Regardless of the motivator, medical tourism's popularity is being fueled by a rapidly growing market of potential customers who, in many cases, are being forced to look outside traditional healthcare models for solutions to their healthcare needs.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT MEDICAL PROVIDER

Choosing the right medical provider is the single most important factor to the success or failure of your treatment outcome, it's that simple. As you consider the Dominican Republic and research your options, there are several key elements you should take into account.

Quality of care

The term "quality" is thrown around quite casually these days. You see it plastered on websites, magazines and television; so much so that it's true meaning has been diluted.

For the purpose of this guide, we will define quality of care as the *effectiveness of clinical and inter-personal care*. In other words, there are two sides to quality of care: a clinical/technical side (e.g. did the nurse insert the IV in correctly?) and an experiential side that hinges on relationships (e.g. did the patient assistant smile and make eye contact with me?).

Patients are typically seeking "best in class" hospitals or "centers of excellence" that perform a high volume of the medical procedures they are seeking. Some well-known hospitals that fit this category are the Cleveland Clinic (USA), MD Anderson Cancer Center (USA), and Johns Hopkins Hospital (USA). Dominican Republic has top facilities as well, including: The Centers for Diagnosis and Advanced Medicine and Medical Conferences and Telemedicine (CEDIMAT), Hospital General de la Plaza de la Salud, Hospital Metropolitano de Santiago (HOMS), Centro Medico Punta Cana, and Centro Medico Bournigal, among many others.

Consequently, hospitals that see high patient volume for certain procedures will tend to:

- Have experienced and talented specialists on staff
- Offer higher quality of care
- Provide better outcomes

This translates into lower complication rates, a quicker recovery (missing fewer work days) and higher patient satisfaction.

Healthcare quality indicators

Quality indicators are a commonly used method to measure hospital quality. These are metrics used to assess particular health processes and outcomes. As a medical traveler to the Dominican Republic, it is important to be informed about the experience level and success rates of a particular hospital for the procedure you are interested in. Ask the hospital or clinic about its medical

procedure volume, mortality rates, complication rates, infection rates, and re-admission rates. Find out if the procedure you require is one of its specialties – in other words, that it performs a high volume of these types of procedures.

Although healthcare quality indicators may not tell the whole story, they are a good way to gauge a medical provider's overall level of proficiency and, with all else being equal, will often translate into a better surgical or treatment outcome.

Medical expertise

How good is your doctor? In other words, how much experience and training does he/she have in the particular procedure you are interested in? Although the likelihood of your doctor being unqualified is slim if you are dealing with a well-known medical institution, it is still prudent to verify your doctor's credentials before traveling anywhere for surgery – especially if you are considering a hospital you have never heard about or a smaller clinic. Your goal is to find out if he or she has the necessary background, skills, and experience to successfully treat your condition.



In the Dominican Republic, the Ministry of Health is the authority that regulates the practice of medicine in the country. To practice medicine, doctors must belong to the Dominican College of Physicians and Specialists to their respective Specialized Society. For more information, visit the website of the Dominican Health Tourism Association: www.adtusalud.org. When checking the credentials of physicians in Dominican Republic, you have several options:

- Request physician credentials from internationally accredited facilities as they have a very high stake in making sure that their medical staff's qualifications are in order.
- Ask the hospital or company that is facilitating your trip to provide you with a doctor's bio or curriculum vitae that has been authenticated by the hospital and/or the Ministry of Health.
- Check and see if the physician is affiliated to local or international professional societies.

While none of these measures are full-proof, they will significantly reduce the likelihood of you being treated by an unqualified medical professional.

You should also feel comfortable with your physician. It is only natural that you'll want to get to know the individual who will be treating you, both on a professional and personal level. Feel free to request a video-conference call with the doctor or doctors you are considering. Ask them about their experience and background; how they will approach your procedure or treatment, and what to expect during recovery. Remember, this will be your opportunity to ask questions and get a "feel" for the medical professional who may be treating you. It will also allow you to gauge whether there could be any language or communication barriers.

Accreditations and Certifications

In the context of healthcare, accreditation is a voluntary process by which hospitals and clinics meet standards established by an external accrediting body such as the Joint Commission International (JCI), The Health Care Accreditation Council, Trent Accreditation Scheme, Accreditation Canada, or another agency that is recognized by the International Society for Quality in Health Care Inc. (ISQua). According to ISQua: "accreditation is a formal process to ensure delivery of safe, high quality health care based on standards and processes devised and developed by health care professionals for health care services. It is also a public recognition of achievement by a healthcare organization of requirements of national healthcare standards."

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Some well-known accrediting organizations

Although the Joint Commission International is by far the most recognizable accrediting organization, there are currently a number of other country-specific organizations that are also ISQua members, including:

- QHA Trent Accreditation
- The Taiwan Joint Commission on Medical Accreditation (TJCMA)
- The Health Care Accreditation Council (Jordan)
- The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards
- Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation
- Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited
- Irish Health Services Accreditation Board now HIQA
- Council for Health Service Accreditation of Southern Africa
- Dominican Republic Joint Commission on Healthcare Accreditation
- Quality Improvement Council, Australia
- CHKS Healthcare Accreditation Quality Unit, UK
- Joint Commission International, USA

While accreditation does not guarantee a perfect medical experience, it does signal that a particular hospital or clinic has invested significant time and resources in perfecting quality of care processes and patient safety protocols that over time will promote successful surgical outcomes. For patients it is an assurance that high standards of safety and quality of care are in place, and that the medical provider cares about delivering quality services to its customers. Most hospitals will usually display accreditation information prominently on their websites. In the case of Joint Commission International accreditation, you can check to see if a hospital is accredited at <http://www.jointcommissioninternational.org>.

It is also wise to look for hospitals that are affiliated to recognized national or international healthcare organizations. The Cleveland Clinic, John Hopkins, and the Mayo Clinic are examples of the latter, and there are others in Europe and Asia. Again, this is no guarantee that something can't go wrong; however, it does show that a particular hospital has met the rigorous criteria set by these internationally recognized organizations.

A growing number of hospitals have opted for an internationally recognized accreditation to validate the quality of their services. And while most accrediting bodies are doing an excellent job of promoting better procedure outcomes and improving patient safety, there have been few initiatives that focus specifically on improving the overall international patient experience.

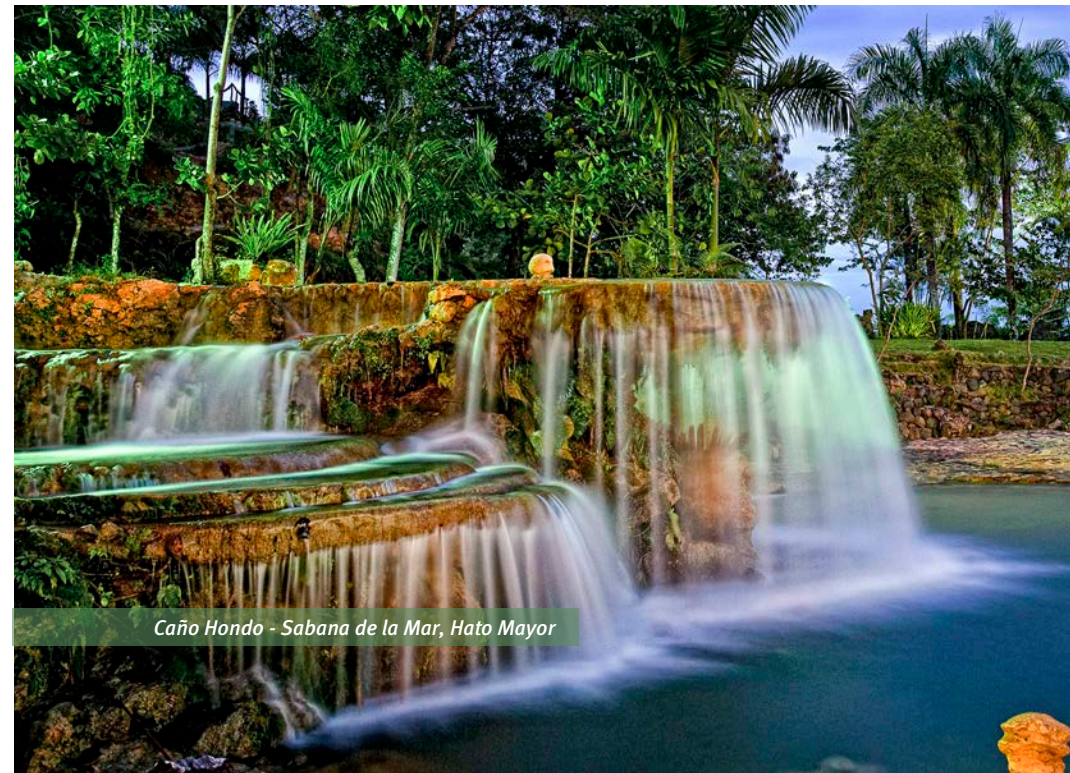
Global Healthcare Accreditation

The Global Healthcare Accreditation (GHA) Program is an independent accrediting body that seeks to improve the patient experience and excellence of care received by patients who travel for their medical care and treatment, whether within their own country or internationally. While traditional programs typically focus on the clinical aspects of care for the entire organization, GHA conducts a deep review of the International or Global Patient Services program, or the entity within an organization that serves the medical travel patient. For more information visit: <http://globalhealthcareaccreditation.com/>

International patient services

As a patient, you may be unsure of how to coordinate your surgery in the Dominican Republic or perhaps you are concerned about a potential language barrier. Fortunately, many hospitals and clinics in the Dominican Republic have their own international office or a staff member available to assist foreign patients at all stages of their medical trip. Typical services include:

- Assistance with airline bookings
- Visa and passport coordination
- Arranging accommodation



Caño Hondo - Sabana de la Mar, Hato Mayor

- Arranging airport pick-ups and transportation
- Sending price quotes
- Coordinating conference calls with doctors
- Insurance billing
- Arranging transfer of medical records
- Arranging tourism and leisure activities
- Assisting with translation or interpretation needs
- Providing personalized assistance for patients and their companions while they are at the hospital

Personable and caring international staff will be there for you at all times; holding your hand, providing advice and listening to your concerns. Don't underestimate the value of the services they provide when choosing a medical provider.

Savings

Saving money is often a prime motivator for people choosing medical tourism. The fact that you can save anywhere from forty to sixty percent on medical procedure costs in the Dominican Republic is extremely alluring regardless of your socio-economic background.



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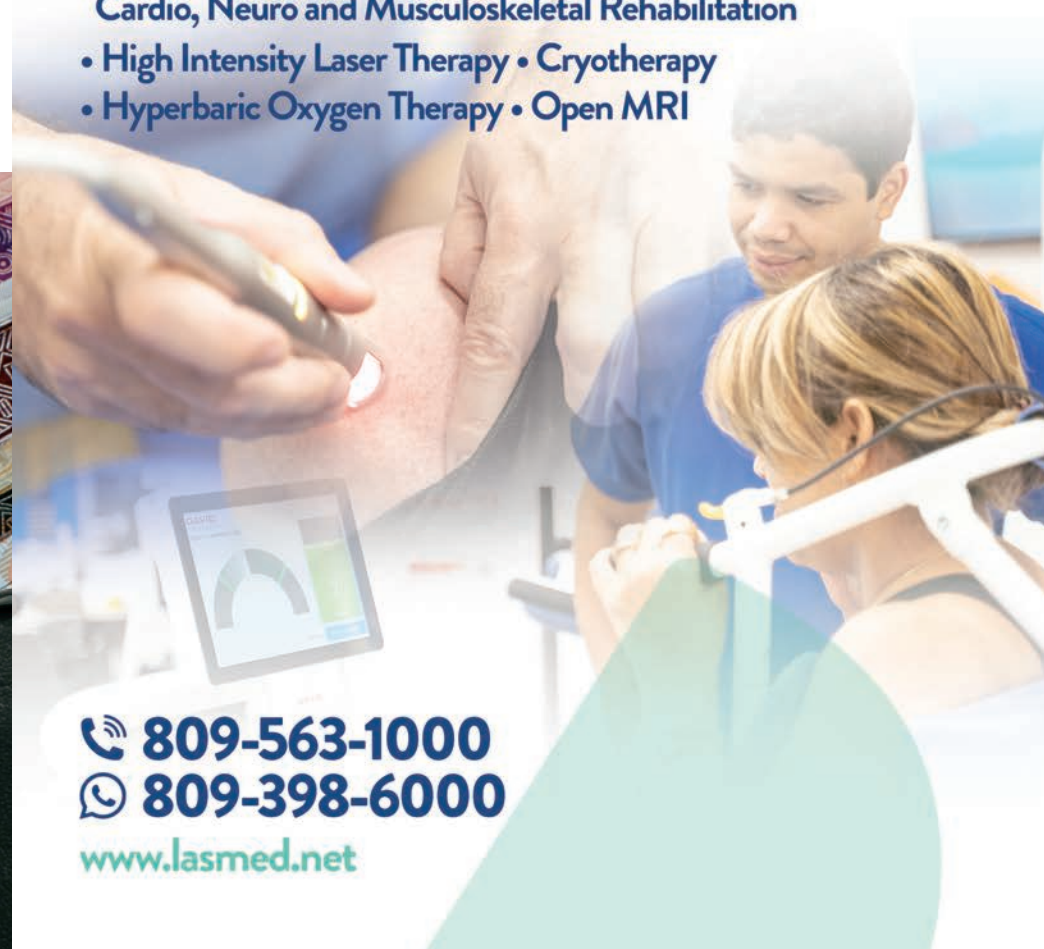
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A facelift procedure in the Dominican Republic, for example, will often cost you less than \$4,000 USD compared to about \$12,000 USD in the U.S. A tummy tuck costs roughly the same, compared to about \$14,000 USD in the U.S.

Ask the hospital or facilitator you are contacting if they offer a bundled or package price for the procedure you are looking for. This means that the price you are quoted will be the price you pay whether or not actual hospital/clinic costs are higher or lower. Some hospitals may even include extra expenses such as a longer stay due to a medical complication or because you simply are not ready to be discharged.

Quick access

In some cases, your primary reason to choose an outside medical provider may be because your local health system cannot program your procedure quickly enough. This can be a common occurrence in countries with social healthcare systems such as Canada or Great Britain. Patients in these countries may have to wait weeks or months to have a diagnostic procedure or meet with a specialist. One of the many advantages of medical tourism is that procedures and treatments can usually be scheduled with very short notice. Ask your Dominican Republic medical provider what is the typical waiting time for scheduling your procedure.

Availability

If the procedure or treatment you are seeking is not available due to a lack of technology, expertise or local regulatory reasons, you may need to seek care abroad. In some cases, your local hospital may not have the equipment or medical expertise to treat certain conditions. In other instances, a certain procedure may not be authorized in your home country. In these circumstances, it is advisable to research your options very carefully to ensure that you are seeking treatment with a reputable provider that has proven clinical results.

FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

As you make final decisions about your medical trip to the Dominican Republic, it is important that you have an understanding of the financial transactions that may be involved. Depending on your circumstances there are two likely scenarios:

1. You will pay the medical provider (or medical tourism facilitator) out of pocket for your procedure or treatment. Sometimes a deposit may be required, other times you will be allowed to pay the full amount once you arrive at the hospital or clinic in the Dominican Republic.

2. Your procedure or treatment will be paid for in full or in part by a third party such as an insurance carrier or your employer. Either way, you may be required to pay a deductible or copay. In some instances, your insurance carrier may not pay for any of the costs up front and, instead, require you to cover the costs and file for reimbursement.

Therefore, it is important to request pertinent details in writing so you have a complete understanding of your financial responsibilities.

Procedure pricing and packages

Most hospitals in the Dominican Republic serving medical tourism patients will have packages for the procedures they quote. However, the term “package” can have different meanings depending on each hospital or clinic. In general, procedure packages will include at the very least:

- Hospital costs (surgery room, anesthesia, patient room, implants, supplies and medications)
- Doctor team fees (some hospitals may reflect this as part of the hospital costs)

Many hospitals will go beyond that and include the cost of pre-operative exams, physical therapy (if required), and ground transportation (to and from airport and hotel). A smaller percentage of hospitals will include outside lodging in the package.

It is important to get a written statement of all services (clinical and non-clinical) included in your surgical or treatment package. The last thing you want is a big bill at discharge for the physical therapy and medications you thought were included in your quoted price.



Some hospitals or clinics may not offer a package but simply provide an approximate range, expecting you to pay the total price of the services rendered and supplies used. Make sure you have all the information up front before committing to surgery.

Typical payment methods

Can you pay with a check? Should you bring your credit card? Will they accept traveler's checks? Whether you use a facilitator or pay directly at the hospital, make sure to find out which payment methods are available *before* you travel. Typical payment methods include:

- Credit card
- Wire transfer
- Travelers checks
- Cashier's check
- Cash

Make sure to notify your bank that you will be making a significant purchase while traveling abroad, otherwise the charge may be denied. Also note that some banks charge a fee for using your credit card overseas. In other cases, there may be discrepancies between the price you paid at the hospital and the amount charged by your bank due to the bank using a different exchange rate from the one you were quoted. Wire transfers and travelers checks will also normally have associated fees. If you are bringing cash, be aware that many countries (including the U.S.) will not allow you to bring in or take out more than \$10,000 USD (or the equivalent in the local currency) without declaring it.

Cancellations and refund policies

Before making any payment or deposit make sure to find out the hospital's (and facilitator if you are using one) cancellation and refund policies. Typically, most hospitals will not charge a penalty fee if you give them enough advance notice. Or at most they, will charge you a small "administration" or "service" fee. However, keep in mind that a last-minute cancellation is not like cancelling a hotel room. It takes a lot of work to coordinate the schedules of doctors, and anesthesiologists, reserve surgery room space, and schedule pre-operative exams. To minimize the risk of paying a cancellation fee, be considerate and provide as much advance warning as you possibly can.

WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG?

Whether you are in New York, New Deli, or the Dominican Republic, no medical procedure – not even the simplest one has a one hundred percent guarantee



Street decorations during Carnival, Santo Domingo

of success. You can choose the best doctor; make all the right decisions and take every precaution possible and still experience a medical complication. Fortunately, complications are usually very rare for most procedures.

Medical complications

Medical complications include situations such as bleeding, infections, allergic reactions, breathing problems, and blood clots among others. As a traveling patient, you need to be aware of these risks, especially as they relate to the specific procedure you are requesting. You also need to understand your economic responsibility if something were to happen. Some complications may be minor and simply require an extra day or two in the hospital; while others could be more serious and require weeks of additional expenses.

You should talk to your surgeon about the specific risks associated with your surgery. If complications do occur, you may require a second surgery in order to correct the problem. Your surgeon will inform you regarding the treatment options available if you suffer a complication:

Contact your Surgeon if:

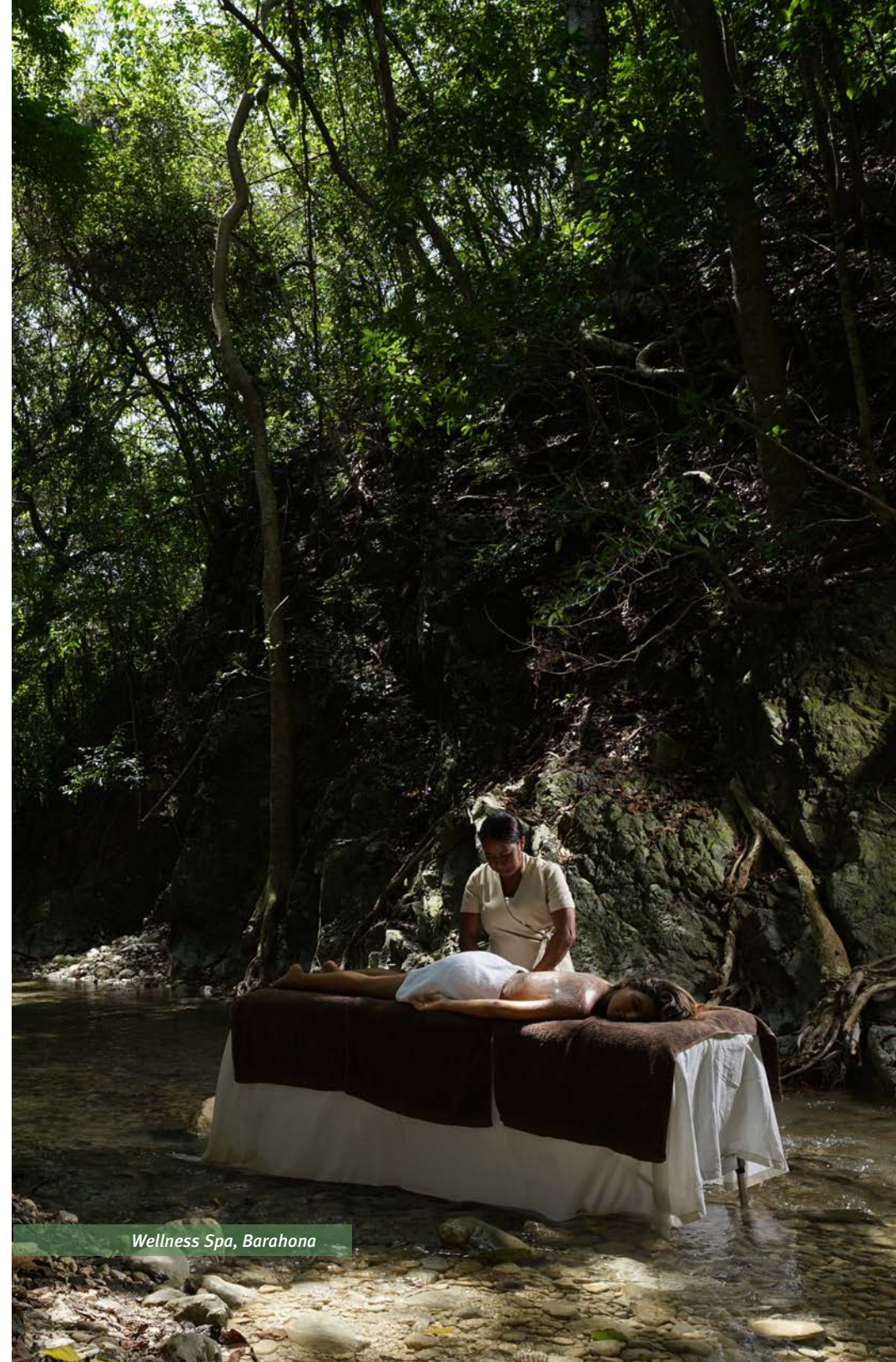
- You develop a fever.
- Your wound feels hot or your wound is oozing.
- The problems for which you are having the surgery get worse.
- You have severe pain at the incision site.
- You are having pain or a burning sensation when passing urine.

If you do not have insurance coverage, then it is advisable to purchase a medical complication insurance to protect yourself against these types of situations.

Legal recourse

In the Dominican Republic, medical providers are required to manage all legal issues according to Dominican laws. Since regulations vary by country and jurisdiction within countries, hospitals in the Dominican Republic are working to establish international standards to protect patients' rights.

Before any treatment or intervention, patients have the right to be informed about their current health status, risks, benefits and treatments alternatives in a language and terms that are understandable to them. International patients can ask for the informed consent form to be sent to them prior to traveling to the Dominican Republic. All patients have the right to, at their own responsibility, continue or discontinue treatment



Wellness Spa, Barahona

regardless of their health condition, and also the right to receive a copy of their complete medical records.

If the patient experiences a bad outcome due to provider negligence, a malpractice claim can be submitted in court. Medical malpractice occurs when a healthcare provider deviates from the recognized standard of care in the treatment of a patient. Under these circumstances, the patient has the right to file a claim. The Dominican Health Tourism Association is making efforts to promote the use of arbitration agreements so that parties involved in these types of situations (even though they are rare) agree to bring any legal claims to arbitration, rather than filing a medical malpractice lawsuit in court. Arbitration is faster than litigation and unlike trials, can usually be scheduled around the needs and availability of those involved, are solved faster and are generally held in private.

For patients involved in these types of situations, it is important to contact a specialized legal firm to have a better understanding of your rights according to Dominican laws. Below are the names and contact information of Dominican firms with experience in these types of cases:

Inttof Estudio Legal

Calle Max Henríquez Ureña Núm. 18
Santo Domingo, Distrito Nacional
+1 809 467-8950 / +1 829 341-9330
www.inttof.com

DMK Abogados

Calle Max Henríquez Ureña 11
Santo Domingo, Distrito Nacional
+1 809 549-3446
www.dmklawyers.com

JSI - Consultores y Asesores Estratégicos

Orlando Martínez #13, Ensanche Naco
Santo Domingo, Distrito Nacional
+1 809 541-2196
www.jorgesuberoisa.com

Squire Patton Boggs, Peña Prieto, Gamundi

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JJ Roca & Asociados, Abogados-Consultores

Calle El Vergel No. 45A, J.A. Roca Suero BLDG
 Santo Domingo, Distrito Nacional
 +1 809 567-6771
www.jjrocalaw.com

Informed consent or patient contract

Informed consent is the process whereby the patient is informed of the risks, benefits, and treatment alternatives available for a particular surgery or treatment. All hospitals and clinics in the Dominican Republic require that patients sign an informed consent before undergoing treatment. Some doctors have their own consent forms which you will also be required to sign. As a traveling patient, it is important that you have a clear understanding of the risks and benefits of a procedure or treatment and any available alternatives. Don't hesitate to ask for clarifications if you have any doubts about the details of your treatment, terminology or the meaning or intention of a phrase. Ask the hospital or facilitator to send you the informed consent form before you commit to payment, and make sure it is in a language you understand.

If you are working through a medical tourism facilitator, you will often need to sign an agreement or contract freeing them from any legal responsibility should anything go wrong or if you are not happy with the outcome of the procedure. The contract confirms your understanding of the specific risks of traveling abroad for treatment and clarifies that the company is not providing treatment or medical advice, but simply facilitating services as an intermediary.

USING A MEDICAL TOURISM FACILITATOR

A medical tourism facilitator (also known as a healthcare facilitator or medical tourism agency) is simply a company that functions as an intermediary or primary point of contact between patients and medical care providers. MTF's can be found all over the internet; however, it is advisable that patients work with companies that are certified by organizations such as the Medical Tourism Association® or Better Business Bureau.

The role of a medical tourism facilitator is two-fold:

1. Educate potential patients about the various medical facilities and physicians they are promoting
2. Manage the flow of information and coordination of services between patients and providers

The services they provide are designed to facilitate a smooth medical tourism process for both patients and medical providers, and usually include:

- Providing price quotes
- Arranging the transfer of medical records
- Coordinating video conference calls between patient and surgeon
- Collecting payment (not all facilitators do this)
- Arranging travel logistic services such as passports, flights, lodging and transportation
- Providing a main point of contact while the patient is at the hospital
- Following up with patients after they return home



Sosúa, Puerto Plata

Advantages of using a facilitator

- **One-stop shopping** - The convenience of being able to choose and access information about a variety of destinations, hospitals, procedures, and services at one location, instead of having to contact each hospital piecemeal. Patients can visit a medical tourism facilitator's website and request a price estimate for a particular procedure from several different hospitals or clinics, and then choose which provider better serves their needs and budget. In addition, once they have made a decision on where to travel, the medical tourism facilitator can usually take care of all their travel logistics such as flights, lodging, and transportation.
- **Established relationships with international hospitals** - Medical tourism facilitators, at least in theory, have already done the groundwork to make sure a patient's chosen hospital and doctor are duly accredited and licensed. Although not always the case, many have visited the hospitals and physicians they are promoting and already have a system in place to make the medical tourism process safe and smooth.
- **Language and cultural barriers are minimized** – If you are traveling from overseas, contacting some hospitals can be challenging due to time zone differences, language barriers, and cultural differences. As shown above, medical tourism facilitators already have the right contacts and a tried-and-true process in place with their network of hospitals. Additionally, patients can often choose facilitators located in their own country, assuring them that they will be dealing with people who speak their own language and have a better understanding of the obstacles they face in order to get them from point A to point B.
- **Convenient transfer of medical information** – As relationships and systems are already in place, most medical tourism facilitators have the ability to quickly transfer a patient's medical information including large image files such as CT's and MRI's.

Disadvantages of using a facilitator

- **Quality of service may vary significantly from one medical tourism facilitator to another** - Medical tourism facilitators are popping up all over the internet these days with flashy websites promising they offer the best of everything. And even though people may know that a beautiful website does not guarantee quality service, the internet has promoted a level playing field for a wide range of facilitator options that may not always be in the patient's best interest. Some facilitators simply do not have the skill, experience, resources or relationships to provide a quality medical tourism experience.

Unfortunately, this is not always easily discernible to a patient looking at a website or speaking to someone on the phone.

- **There may be a bias towards certain hospitals or destinations** - Obviously medical tourism facilitators do not have the time or resources to visit every destination or work with thirty different international hospitals. They must choose wisely from a limited number – always described as “the best”. Naturally, patients will be directed to these hospitals and not others – even if they aren't necessarily the best hospitals for their particular needs.
- **Using an intermediary increases the possibility of miscommunication or errors** - Though perhaps not a big concern in most people's minds, using an intermediary will always increase the risk of an error or misinformation occurring between the patient and the hospital. Something as seemingly innocuous as mistaking kilos for pounds in a medical tourism patient's weight information, could lead to the surgery being postponed or even cancelled.
- **The potential for paying a higher price** - Medical tourism facilitators offer a lot of convenience but do need to make their money somewhere. This will usually come from a hospital commission, service charge (concierge fee), or both. One way or another, these fees do have a way of trickling down to the patient no matter what the medical tourism facilitator or hospital may say.



Columbus Lighthouse, Santo Domingo



The Dominican HEALTH SYSTEM¹

The *Dominican Republic* is a high middle-income country, which in recent decades has been experiencing a strong period of economic growth. It has remained among the leaders in per capita GDP growth in the region.

The country's economic growth has been fueled by the advancement of the tourism industry, which according to official estimates is directly responsible for roughly 25 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product, not including the indirect effects tourism has had on investment and the creation of new jobs. Tourism activities have also had a powerful impact on other economic sectors such as agriculture, industry, finance, and public investments.

Tourism's important role in the economy is evidenced by the continued growth over the last decades in the number of hotel rooms, mainly as a result of increased foreign investment that has recognized the country's institutional and macroeconomic stability and high caliber tourism offering.

According to figures from the Ministry of Tourism, during 2019, 6.4 million tourists arrived in the Dominican Republic, making it the regional leader in this sector, with visitors coming mainly from the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Russia and Spain. Tourism revenues reached to US\$7.69 billion in 2019, representing a 64% increase over 2012. Hotel rooms are increasing every year, there being 84,000 rooms in 2019, which represents a 27% increase over 2012.

The rapid expansion of the economy has resulted in a substantial reduction in poverty from 43% in 2004 to 21% in 2019.² This has resulted in increased life expectancy and a significant improvement in health indicators. It has also led to improved investment in health, a major expansion of its services and an improvement in the overall quality of the sector.

¹ Prepared by Magdalena Rathe, health financing expert, founder and CEO of PLENITUD Foundation and the Health System Observatory of the Dominican Republic.

² Central Bank of the Dominican Republic.



Given the strong links between technical staff in the sector and medical institutions in the United States, conditions are favorable for further development of the emerging medical tourism industry in the country.

INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION

The transformation of the Dominican health system -- focusing on people and endeavoring to achieve universal coverage -- has become one of the top priorities for national authorities. Just over a decade ago, the country initiated a top-to-bottom structural reform of the healthcare system, based on the separation of the functions of governance, financing, and services. This occurred in an environment promoting the cooperation of private and public actors in both insurance and the provision of services, stimulating competition and facilitating investment.

Family Health Insurance provides the following funding schemes with corresponding beneficiaries:

- **Contributory scheme:** that includes public and private salaried workers and employers. It is funded by workers and companies, including the State as an employer.
- **Subsidized:** for self-employed workers with income that is unstable or below the national minimum wage, as well as the unemployed, disabled and indigent. Funded by the Dominican State.

There is another scheme that has never been implemented called the Subsidized Contributory Scheme. Its objective would be to protect independent technical professionals and self-employed workers with average income above the national minimum wage. There are presently discussions to modify the law in order to eliminate this scheme.

Since 2007 when the process of coverage expansion was launched, affiliation to the system has grown dramatically, reaching 95% of the population by the end of 2020, because of the decision of the new

government that took office in August 2020, which proposed to increase the number of people in the subsidized regime by two million. With this measure, the country has practically reached the goal of universal affiliation.

FINANCING

National health expenditure corresponding to 2018 (latest WHO publication) amounts to 6% of GDP, within which 3% corresponds to public financing. Although relatively low in the context of Latin America, the extension of affiliation recently carried out by the government to cover practically the entire population is going to represent a significant increase in public financing as of 2021, coupled with the extraordinary expenditures that have been taking place as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. The government has plans to implement the contributory-subsidized regime, which may also increase its expenditures.

The government's efforts in recent years to increase public funding have resulted in improved financial protection for Dominican families, by reducing out-of-pocket expenses and improving equity in health financing.

Funding for the sector can be broken down as follows: 48% of the funds are channeled through public funding schemes and 52% are private schemes. The latter includes primarily direct payments from households to healthcare providers and the purchase of supplemental insurance or other private insurance schemes including international coverage.³

The upper tier of the healthcare market is funded primarily through private schemes that include world-class services closely linked to the American system. Some of these higher-end providers are already operating in tourist areas of the country, offering services to domestic visitors, while others are actively targeting customers who come to the country specifically to seek health services.

³ National Health Strategy Law, 1/2012.

RESOURCES

In terms of healthcare resources, there are more than 1,300 public establishments of various levels of care, with more than 12,000 beds, including 14 national referral hospitals. There is also a large network of private sector providers, numbering more than 7,000, of which it is estimated that more than 400 are private hospitals, 500 diagnostic centers and nearly 4,000 are medical offices. The rest are pharmacies, vision centers, and other small clinics.⁴

Overall, it is estimated that in 2013, the country had 2.1 physicians per 1,000 inhabitants and was ranked fourth in the LAC region, indicators that are consistent with countries of a similar level of development.⁵ Although the number of nurses is below international requirements, the government has recently introduced measures to improve financial incentives, as well as the professionalism and quality of nurses, through virtual training focusing on guidelines and protocols of care. The government has also increased investment in human resources, knowledge generation, information and technological tools, construction, reconstruction, and equipping of public facilities.

Recently, the government, the government carried out important initiatives to reorganize the public health system, creating a unique network of public providers, improving management systems, strengthening primary care and agreeing on better working conditions and incentives for healthcare workers. A revision of the family health insurance law is also underway to ensure that it offers better benefits coverage and broadens protection for Dominican families.

The private sector is a fundamental partner in the Dominican health system. Through a national network of private providers, it provides services to people affiliated to the family health insurance contributory scheme, as well as to upper income populations who typically pay out of pocket or with international insurance.

In this sector, there are a group of providers run by world-class managers with certified technology and human resources trained primarily in the United States. Given the proximity and historical relations between the two countries, including a large Dominican population living in the U.S., many Dominican doctors travel there for continuing medical education and specialty training. These include diagnostic centers offering the latest technology and advanced hospitals where cutting-edge procedures are performed, as explained in the next section.

ADVANTAGES OF OBTAINING HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic boasts the latest in cutting-edge technology for diagnosis and treatment of various diseases. Many of its providers offer next-generation MRI, Pet Scan, computed tomography, minimally invasive procedures, micro surgery, robotics surgery, and health professionals trained in the United States and Europe.

The country has policies in place to monitor healthcare quality and the government encourages the certification of all providers according to national standards. At present, several institutions have memberships and affiliations with international quality bodies and clinical laboratories and blood banks are ISO 9001 certified. The most important health centers in the country are in the process of obtaining international accreditation by Joint Commission International and Accreditation Canada International. Additionally, many hospitals have international departments responsible for providing services to medical tourists that include the transfer of medical records, translation services, airport pick-up/drop-off and help with accommodations.

The Dominican Republic also has several universities with foreign professionals on staff, mainly from North America, and there are dual-degree agreements with recognized universities in the United States and Europe.

Some additional advantages of seeking medical and wellness treatments in the Dominican Republic include:

- Proximity and close ties with the United States and Canada.
- Citizens of the United States, Canada, and several European countries do not require visas.
- There are numerous air links with all parts of the world, particularly in North and South America and Europe.
- Health centers accredited with first-order specialists.
- Immediate care without waiting lists.
- Excellent road infrastructure and satellite communications.
- Favorable climate all year round, and sun-and-beach tourism, ideal for rest and recovery.
- World-renowned anti-aging and spa wellness services.
- Friendliness, warmth and hospitality of the Dominican staff, with respect for privacy.
- Economic stability and security.

⁴ Rathe and Suero, *opus cit.* 2017.

⁵ Rathe and Suero, *opus cit.* 2017.



MEDICAL PROCEDURES AND TREATMENTS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Regardless of your location, the Dominican Republic is an attractive choice for a wide-range of medical procedures and treatments accompanied by cutting-edge technology and some of the most qualified doctors in the world. In fact, the Dominican Republic is one of the most popular destinations in the Caribbean for patients seeking high quality and affordably priced medical care. The following pages will provide you with an overview of some of the many procedures and treatment options available in the Dominican Republic.

Plastic Surgery

Dominican Republic's plastic surgery centers offer a wide variety of cosmetic and laser skin procedures to restore a patient's youthful appearance. Office-based procedures and home care skin remedies are often the first line of treatment for many patients. In fact, a short 10-minute consultation with a medical beauty expert is often the first step to a radically improved appearance. With a little more time, laser and RF technology is also an option for many patients, as they can be utilized to reverse the visible signs of aging. For more severe interventions, plastic surgery procedures can be performed to lift and refresh a patient's face and body.



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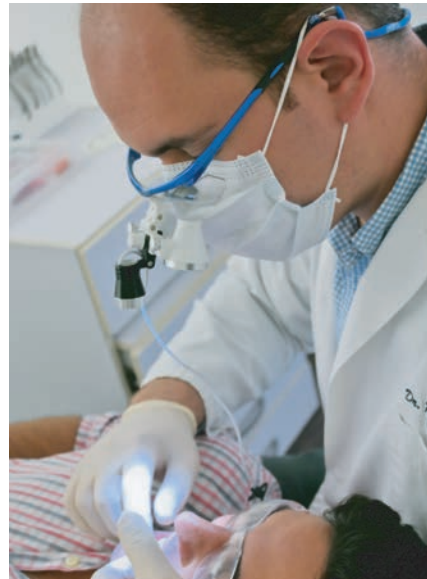
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Many of the Dominican Republic's clinics and medical beauty centers specialize in:

- Wrinkle reduction with Botox, Dysport, Xeomin, Restylane, Juvederm, Radiesse and Sculptra
- Laser treatment for acne scars with Fraxel
- Lightersheer laser hair removal
- IPL intense pulse light brown spot removal
- Thermage for non-invasive skin tightening and rejuvenation
- Laser tattoo removal
- Radiowave mole removal
- Skin resurfacing with CO2 laser.

The Dominican Republic's specialists also offer patients minimally invasive plastic surgery procedures such as tumescent liposuction to remove unwanted fat, breast augmentation, facelift, rhinoplasty and fat transfer (to face, buttock, breast and hand). For more information, please visit The Dominican Society of Plastic Surgery's website at www.sodocipre.net.



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•Orthodontics , •Endodontics, •Periodontics

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Health Check-ups

Medical facilities in the Dominican Republic offer visitors the flexibility to be proactive about their health. It is a known fact that many debilitating diseases and medical conditions can be prevented. However, maximizing opportunities for prevention requires awareness – and awareness starts with a comprehensive health exam. Although facilities and equipment in the Dominican Republic are comparable to the best in the United States or Europe, most of these tests cost 80 percent less than they would outside of the Dominican Republic. Medical facilities offer health exam packages that are designed to evaluate every aspect of a patient's health including conditions or issues in the following areas: neurological, cardiovascular, renal, liver, ocular, lifestyle and diet, and more. These tests often catch the early signs of preventable and treatable conditions, such as:

- Abnormal growths
- Unknown injuries
- Early stage cancer
- Heart disease
- Lung disease



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- Organ disease
- Age-related illnesses

From these baseline packages, individuals can add additional tests and customize their health check exam in a nearly infinite number of ways. Additionally, advanced medical technology is included as part of all health screening programs. In many other countries, such tests and equipment are rare and often not available for use in preventive medical programs.

Cardiology

Cardiovascular interventions encompass the entire field of interventional cardiovascular medicine, including cardiac (coronary and non-coronary) peripheral and cerebrovascular interventions. Common treatments sought by medical tourism patients include coronary artery bypass graft, heart valve replacement, coronary angiography and angioplasty.

Recovery time before travelling home varies depending on the procedure. Patients undergoing a Coronary Angiogram without intervention will usually be able to travel home 72 hours after discharge. Patients undergoing Coronary Angioplasty with or without stents may fly home 10 to 12 days after discharge. Patients undergoing a coronary artery bypass graft, on the other hand, will usually spend 15-21 days in country. Please contact your Dominican Republic medical provider for more specific information regarding your recommended treatment protocol.

Fertility

According to Medicinenet.com, infertility can be defined as “the diminished ability or the inability to conceive and have offspring. Infertility is also defined in specific terms as the failure to conceive after a year of regular intercourse without contraception.” Over the last ten years, the number of couples seeking fertility treatments has risen dramatically. This phenomenon can be attributed not only to increased fertility issues, due in part to later childbearing, but also to improving techniques, technology and results.

Treatment options include:

- Fertility drugs
- Artificial insemination
- In vitro fertilization
- intracytoplasmic sperm injection or ICSI



A number of well-known clinics in the Dominican Republic offer the latest fertility treatments tailor-made to each patient's unique condition. If you are coming to the Dominican Republic for an infertility treatment, you will likely receive a tentative schedule weeks in advance of your trip. Typically you will have an initial screening with a physician in your area. The actual time you will need to spend in the area will depend on the type of treatment you are receiving.

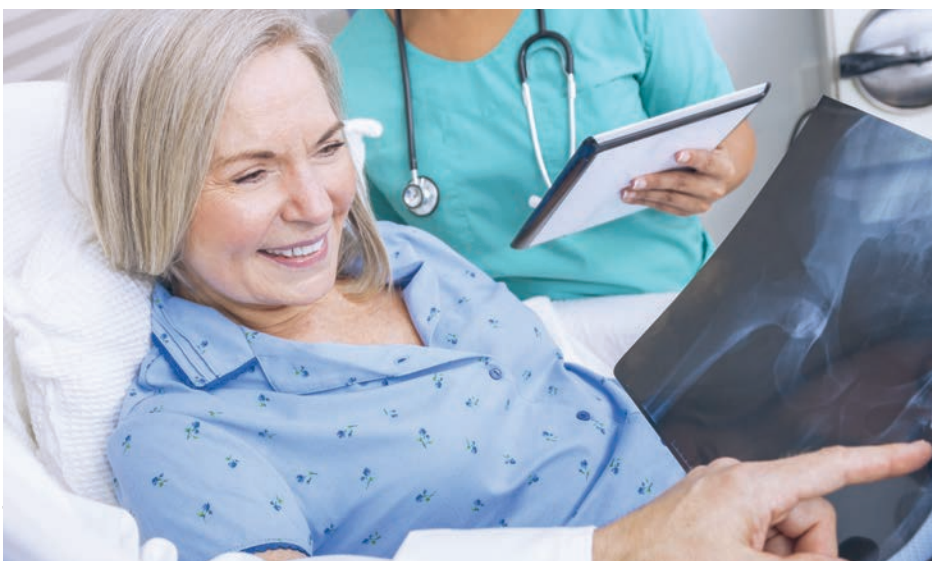
Please contact your Dominican Republic medical provider for more specific information regarding your recommended treatment protocol.

Joint Replacement

Many individuals without health insurance are faced with the prospect of joint replacement surgery, but many do not have the means to pay the high rates in their own countries. In the United States, for instance, both knee replacement surgery and hip replacement surgery can cost upwards of \$50,000 dollars.

It is estimated that osteoarthritis afflicts upwards of 20 million Americans, most of whom are over the age of forty-five. In addition to this, there are millions of Americans who do not have health insurance. Since the only long-term treatment for osteoarthritis is total joint replacement, many Americans are left with few options to relieve their pain.

By traveling overseas for medical care, patients can access savings upwards of 75 percent. For example, knee replacement surgery in the Dominican Republic can be obtained for less than \$12,000 USD. Even after the price of flights and accommodations, many medical travelers find themselves saving tens of thousands of dollars by traveling overseas for their medical procedures.



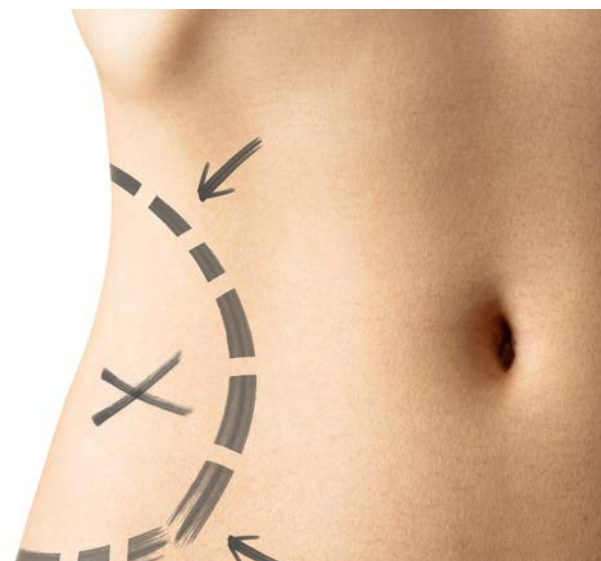
If you are traveling for an orthopedic procedure, you will need to spend between seven and fifteen days in the Dominican Republic, depending on the type of procedure. Details of your itinerary will depend on your hospital's particular protocols, but in general, you will start with your preoperative exams on the day after your arrival, have surgery on the following day and then spend seven to fourteen days recuperating and undergoing rehabilitation therapy before traveling home. Please contact your Dominican Republic medical provider for more specific information regarding your recommended treatment protocol.

Weight Loss Surgeries

Bariatric surgery or weight loss surgery includes a variety of procedures performed on people who are obese. Weight loss is achieved by reducing the size of the stomach with an implanted medical device (gastric banding) or through removal of a portion of the stomach (sleeve gastrectomy or biliopancreatic diversion with duodenal switch) or by resecting and re-routing the small intestines to a small stomach pouch (gastric bypass surgery).

Weight loss surgery in the Dominican Republic typically consists of minimally-invasive laparoscopic procedures. Each type of procedure has its pros and cons, and is chosen after a careful review of the patient's case.

Laparoscopic Surgery is abdominal surgery that is performed through small incisions using tiny video equipment to allow the surgeon to see what he is doing on the inside. The abdominal cavity is inflated with gas in order to provide working space. Small surgical tools pass through ports placed through the incisions, and the procedure is performed internally in the same way as those done through an open incision.



The benefits of Laparoscopic Surgery stem from the lack of large, painful incisions. Patients can resume their usual activities within a few days, and that in turn, makes it possible to avoid most problems linked to long recoveries with restricted mobility.

However, Laparoscopic surgery is still a surgical procedure, and involves the potential risk for complications after surgery (e.g. internal bleeding, infection, reaction to anesthesia...). Complications rates are generally very low, but can occur even when everything is done correctly. Surgery is recommended when it is the better choice, after a thorough review of individual cases by the doctor.

If you are traveling for a weight loss procedure, you will most likely need to spend between five to eight days in the Dominican Republic. Itineraries will vary from clinic to clinic, but in general you will start with your preoperative exams on the day after your arrival, have surgery on the following day, and then recuperate on a special diet before traveling home. Please contact your Dominican Republic medical provider for more specific information regarding your recommended treatment protocol.

Ophthalmology

The Dominican Republic is a great medical tourism destination for people who seek ophthalmology treatments with high success rates and at affordable prices. In the Dominican Republic there are many experienced hospitals, clinics, and doctors who specialize in ophthalmology treatments. Common treatments include:

- Cornea transplant
- Cornea/Corneal Diseases
- Glaucoma
- Laser Eye Surgery
- Ophthalmological Procedures
- Orbital Tumors
- Retinal Detachment / Repair
- Squint / Strabismus...

Please contact your Dominican Republic medical provider for more specific information regarding your recommended treatment protocol.



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Dental Treatments

The Dominican Republic is a popular medical tourism destination for people seeking high quality and affordable dental treatments. The country boasts many experienced hospitals, clinics, and doctors who specialize in a wide-range of dental treatments, these include:

- Dental Bonding
- Dental Crowns
- Dental Bridges
- Dental Implants
- Dental Jewelry
- Gum Surgery
- Smile Makeover
- Dentures
- Laser Dentistry
- Orthodontics
- Root Canal
- Tooth Contouring/Reshaping
- Tooth extraction
- Dental Veneers

Most dental procedures or treatments can be performed in a matter of a few days. If you are traveling for dental implants, there may be instances where you will need to stay a little longer, or in some cases, return to complete your treatment several months later. Please contact your Dominican Republic dental provider for more specific information regarding your recommended treatment protocol.

Dr. Manuel Sanabria
estetica-cosmetica dental



Gustavo Mejía Ricard #83
Plaza Andalucia I Local 2B
Santo Domingo; D. N. Rep. Dominicana.
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Dominican Republic

Dominican Republic Hospital Listings

Disclaimer: The following is a list of healthcare facilities and providers in the Dominican Republic made available by the Dominican Health Tourism Association. It is extremely important to communicate with your primary care physician that you are traveling to the Dominican Republic for a medical procedure and to advise them of any special requirements or considerations you may need. Your physician can provide you with this information prior to travel.



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- Specialized, highly qualified doctors, who receive continuous medical training.
- Training and ongoing professional preparation through education, medical residencies, and instruction programs.
- CEDIMAT treats over 202,000 international and national patients annually.
- Our specialists belong to the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS).
- We are in the process of preparing to obtain Joint Commission International (JCI) certification.

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- Health Executive plan (Preventative health plan)
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Web: cemdoe.com

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MEDICAL SPECIALTIES

- Diabetic Foot Unit
- Cardiology and Cardiovascular Diagnostics Services
- Ophthalmology and Specialized Ophthalmological Surgery
- Nephrology and Hemodialysis
- Gynecology, Obstetrics and Reproductive Health

CLINICAL SPECIALTIES

- Endocrinology and Nutrition
- Nutriology
- Rheumatology
- Neurology
- Pneumology

- Internal Medicine
- Dermatology
- Gastroenterology
- Clinical psychology

SURGICAL SPECIALTIES

- General Surgery
- Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery
- Peripheral Vascular Surgery
- Endocrinological surgery
- Oncology Surgery
- Urology
- Orthopedics and Traumatology
- Anesthesiology and Algology
- Coloproctología
- Otorhinolaryngology



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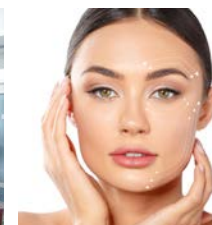
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HOMS – Metropolitan Hospital of Santiago

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Email: info@homshospital.com
Web: www.homs.com.do

Located in Santiago, Dominican Republic's second largest city, **HOSPITAL METROPOLITANO DE SANTIAGO, HOMS**, is an advanced medical institution offering patients more than 40 medical and surgical specialties. HOMS possess highly ADVANCED MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY, including the Da Vinci® Surgical System, high resolution microscopes for micro-surgery, laparoscopic towers, two Varian linear accelerators for radiotherapy, radio-surgery and brachytherapy; smart OP rooms, a chemical-biological counterattack system, and a state-of-the-art electronic medical record system.

As a teaching and research hospital, HOMS offers a wide-range of emergency room adult and pediatric services, general surgery and a wide range of specialties including: laparoscopic and robot-assisted laparoscopy, endoscopy unit, vascular, urology, orthopedics, nuclear medicine and radiology, coronary and cardiovascular intensive care units, dialysis, physical therapy and rehabilitation (see website for complete directory).

The **SAMADI-HOMS-ROBOTIC INSTITUTE** has a robotic surgery program using the Da Vinci® Surgical System, which allows surgeons to manipulate tissues and operate in an accurate way that improves patient outcomes, reduces pain, and allows for minimal blood loss.

Dr. DAVID B. SAMADI is a board-certified urology oncology expert in robotic surgery for treating prostate cancer. Dr. Samadi is the Chairman of Urology, Chief of Robotic Surgery at Lenox Hill Hospital of New York, and Chief of Robotic Surgery at the Samadi-HOMS Robotic Institute. He has developed his own advanced SMART prostate cancer surgery technique having performed over 5,000 robotic prostate surgeries.

His Dominican counterpart in the Institute is Dr. RAFAEL SÁNCHEZ ESPAÑOL, a local pioneer in the use of this new technology. He is also a Bariatric and General Surgeon with ample experience in Laparoscopic surgery spanning more than 15,000 cases.



The **PREVENTIVE MEDICAL EVALUATION UNIT** offers nine evaluation plans that include cardiovascular and respiratory, athletic, smoking, hypertension, silver, gold, diamond, platinum and uranium. This unit is characterized by personal attention, exclusive physical area, privacy, state-of-the-art technology, aides accompanying patient for each procedure, and the possibility of including extra services that may be required.

Patients with cardiovascular diseases are treated in the **CENTRO CARDIOVASCULAR HOMS**, under a scheme of process-oriented care and a patient-centered model of comprehensive care.

The care of oncology patients is provided in **HOMS CANCER CENTER** where our patients receive treatment according to recognized international protocols.

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Hospital General de la Plaza de la Salud (HGPS) is one of the top hospitals in the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean, attracting over 125,000 patients each year seeking excellent results, state-of-the-art technology, quality and safety. HGPS operates out of 29,000 square meter ultra-modern facility that includes 285 beds, 9 hospitalization wards, 12 operating rooms, ambulatory operating rooms, consultation areas, physical therapy, and rehabilitation gym.

HGPS is also a teaching hospital through its affiliation with the top medical school in the country: Universidad Iberoamericana (UNIBE), which boasts important residency and research programs. Additionally, HGPS has developed collaboration agreements with prestigious international universities and hospitals with the vision of continuously improving processes, outcomes and medical staff qualifications.

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HGPS Services: HGPS offers a wide range of services and medical specialties from dermatology to orthopedics, neurology, oncology and cardiology. Visit www.hgps.org.do for a complete list of specialties.

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UROPLAZA

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PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE UNIT

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ORTHOPEDICS AND SPORTS MEDICINE

The Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Unit at HGPS is a complete sports medicine facility that provides evaluation, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of sports, joints, muscles and bone injuries.

Membership and Certifications:

- International Patient Services Certification (IPS).
- Laboratory and Blood Bank certified by ISO 9001.
- Quality Department and Committee: Regulations, Protocols and Medical Auditing.
- Members of the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQUA).
- Members of the Medical Tourism Association (MTA).
- Members of the Dominican Health Tourism Association (ADTS).
- Accredited official center of the Consular Corps.



Espaillat Cabral Institute

The Espaillat Cabral Institute is the first specialized medical center in the Dominican Republic, founded on April 1, 1970. At the cutting edge of science and technology, with a medical staff mastering all branches of ophthalmology, patients receive personalized treatment meeting US standards.

The Espaillat Cabral Institute is renowned for their services of:

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- Pediatric Ophthalmology
- Neurophthalmology
- Among others

The Institute's modern and comprehensive diagnostic center as well as their on-site optical store make it possible for patients to meet all their visual health care needs in one place. The Medical Director of the Institute, Dr. Arnaldo Espaillat, received his training in ophthalmology at the Barraquer Institute in Barcelona (Spain), where he also completed a Master's Degree in Pathology of the Anterior Segment, and specialties in Vitreo-Retino-Choroidal Pathology and in Retina/Vitreous. Dr. Espaillat has been president of the Dominican Society of Ophthalmology and currently serves as president of the Executive Board of the Latin American Association of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ALACCSA-R), and member of the International Council of Refractive Surgery.

International Quality Accreditation - HFAP

The Espaillat Cabral Institute became the first Dominican health center –and first internationally– to receive the Accreditation on Quality by the Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program (HFAP), one of the main accrediting agencies in the United States.

The accreditation was granted after going through a rigorous process spanning several years and requiring numerous external audits.



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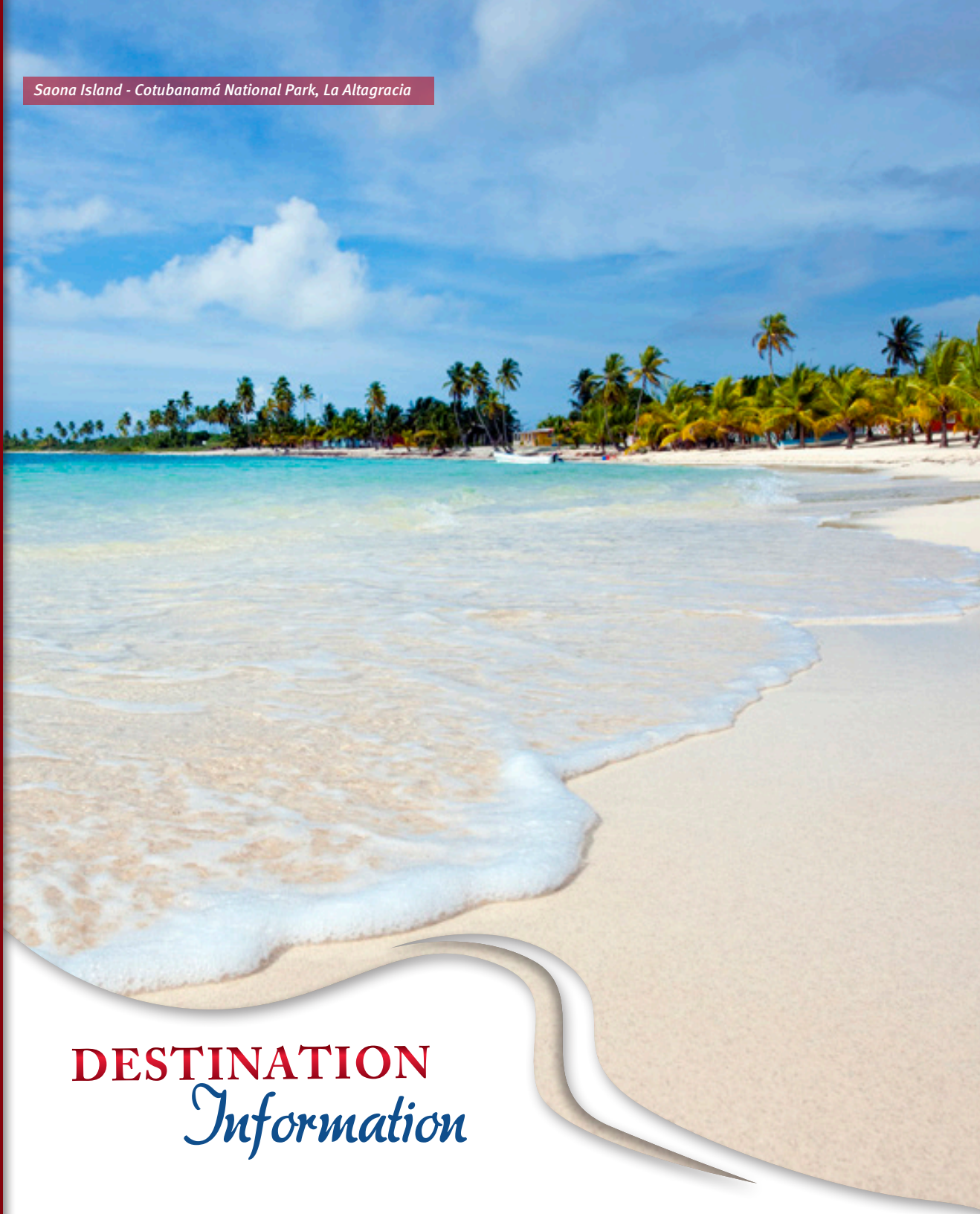
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- (BBL) Gluteal Lipograft Augmentation Mammoplasty
- Liposculpture (Body Contouring)
- Gynecomasty Reduction Mammoplasty



DESTINATION *Information*

GENERAL INFORMATION

Nestled in the heart of the Caribbean, washed by the waters of the Atlantic Ocean to the north and the impetuous Caribbean Sea in the south, is a placid and beautiful country officially named The Dominican Republic.

It is located between latitude 17° 40' and 19° 56' North and longitude 68° 20' and 72° 01' west of the Greenwich Meridian (GMT-4).

Christopher Columbus discovered the island on December 5, 1492, during his first voyage to the New World. It occupies 18,704 sq. mi/48,442 sq. km of the 76,192 sq. km it shares with the neighboring Republic of Haiti. Its natural beauty and rich history fascinate and excite those who get to know it.

Through a 1508 royal edict, King Ferdinand of Spain named it the Island of Santo Domingo. Its aboriginal name, "Quisqueya," means "mother of all lands" in the Taino language. At the time of its "Discovery" by Christopher Columbus, aborigines that called themselves "Tainos," a word that translates as "the good," populated the island.

The Taino were a part of the Arawak people of the tropical regions of the South American continent, from where it is believed they migrated by canoe through the Lesser Antilles to the Greater Antilles. They were physically well-built and had a rather tawny complexion and dark eyes. Even though they were generally peaceful and were practically subjugated by an internal regime under the dominion of a "cacique" or chieftain, historical records do show instances in which they bravely defended their families, their land and their freedom from the Conquistadors that enslaved them. Unfortunately, a population estimated at around 600,000 was practically exterminated in less than thirteen years.

Taíno sociopolitical structure was organized under five polities or cacicazgos: Marién, governed by Guacanagarix; Maguá was dominated by the cacique Guarionex; Caonabo ruled in Maguána; in Higüey, Cayacoa; and Jaragua fell under the might

of Bohechío. After Bohechio's death, his sister Anacaona, who was also the widow of Caonabo, emerged as his successor. She was reputedly the cleverest, most beautiful and talented woman on the island. Nevertheless, she had to witness the merciless slaughter of her people at the sword of Nicolas de Ovando, the Spanish governor, in 1503. This first act of cruelty has gone down in historical records as the Jaragua Massacre. Made a prisoner, the Taino Queen responded to the heinous act with these words:

"It is not honorable to kill; nor can honor propitiate the tragedy. Let us open a bridge of love, so that across it even our enemies may walk and leave their footprints for posterity."

Language

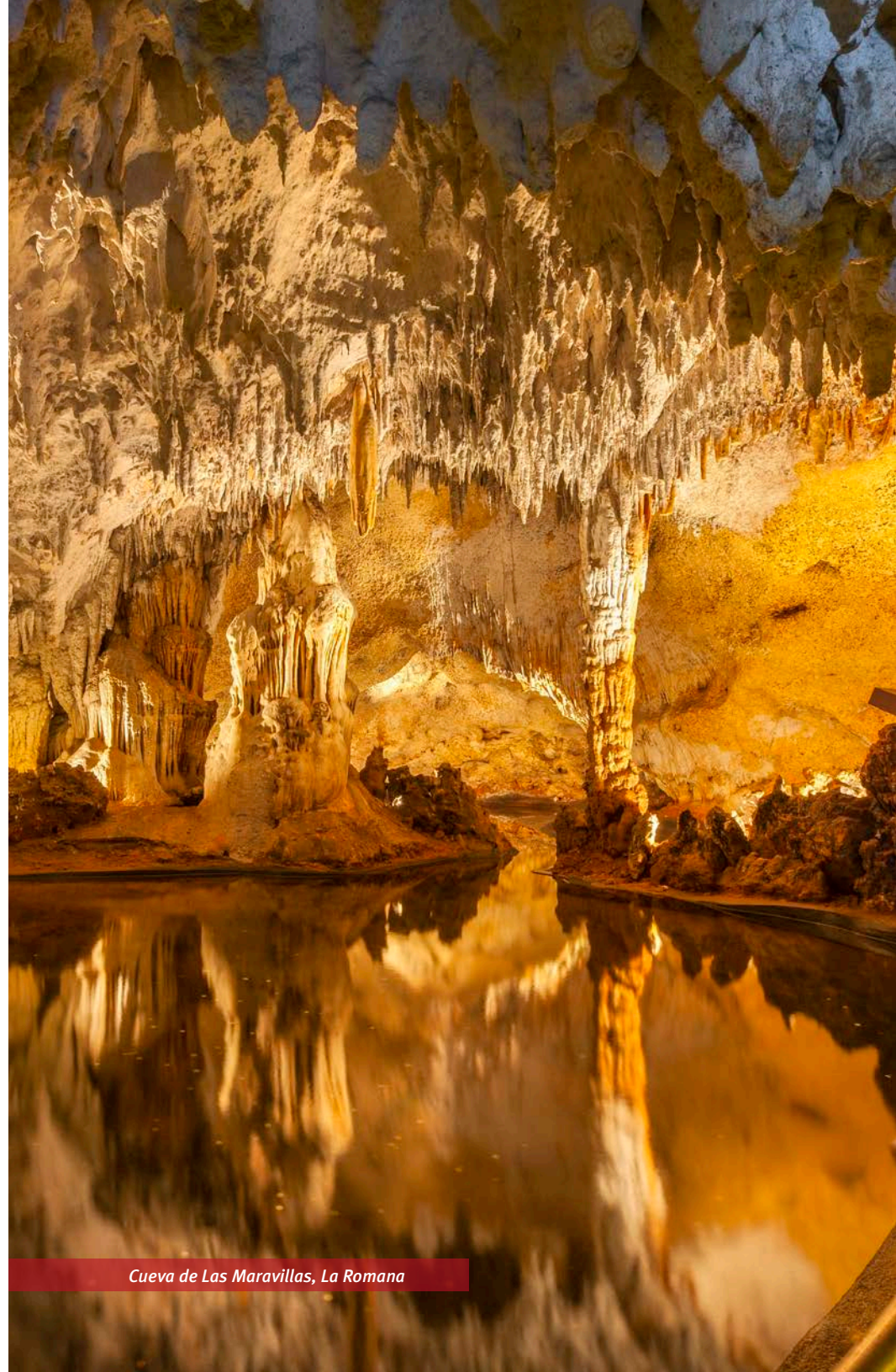
Spanish is the country's official language. Nevertheless, in some communities that have a foreign origin and in tourist hubs English, German, French, Italian, Dutch and other languages are spoken.

It is important to point out that the Dominican way of speaking is the result of collective experiences and the wisdom of rural farmers and peasants. The dialect comes with a rustic accent and hinterland flavor. In our country each region has its own accent, charm and peculiar expressions, which usually identify the speaker from the very moment he or she opens his or her mouth.

This unique form of expression has been a source of inspiration for renowned writers, both native and foreign. It is not known precisely when the country's common parlance became integrated into literary writings. Nevertheless, a rustic poem written in 1635 by Tirso de Molina earned a literary award— the rustic lilt had been immortalized thanks to his sojourn between 1616 and 1618 at the Convent of Las Mercedes in Santo Domingo's Colonial City.

Despite the preponderance of Spanish culture, several words from the Taino's melodious and sweet language remain in use and have become a part of the everyday lingo. Nearly all these terms preserve their original meaning. For example: ají (pepper), barbacoa (barbecue), batea (trough or small tub), bija (anatto fruit), bohío (hut), burén (flat griddle), canoa (canoe), Carey (tortoise-shell), caribe (Caribbean), casabe (cassava), coa (sharp wood rod), conuco (a plot of land for cultivation), guanábana (soursop), guayaba (guava), hamaca (hammock), higüero (calabash tree), huracán (hurricane), iguana (iguana), lambí (conch meat), maíz (corn), tabaco (tobacco), tiburón (shark), yagua (palm), and yuca (yucca), among others.

Some visitors tend to think that Dominicans are either angry or deaf when they hear them talking. Indeed, shouting and gesticulating, common



Cueva de Las Maravillas, La Romana

among rural folk who overcome distances by raising their voices, have now made their way to urban areas, and have even crossed generational lines.

For this reason, protest in this country differs markedly from what one might see in Switzerland or the United States. While it is their practice to walk slowly in silence at the venue of the protest as they hold a poster that expresses their feelings, Dominicans tend to shout while making abrupt gestures and running from one place to the other in order to call attention. For this reason, a demonstration that may appear imminently violent to a visitor tends to fizzle out within half an hour without any great problems. This manner of protesting, which is very much a reflection of the Dominican people's national character, has on occasion been misunderstood by the international media.

The nation: government and territory

The Dominican Republic has a population of over 10 million people. Its territory is divided into 31 provinces plus the National Capital District of Santo Domingo. The country is a Democratic republic. Government is composed of three branches: executive, legislative and judicial. The country elects its president, vice president and legislators every four years by universal adult suffrage. The country's capital, Santo Domingo de Guzmán, with a population of nearly 3 million, was founded by Don Bartholomew Columbus on August 4, 1496. It is the oldest city of the New World.

Because of its key geographical position, the Dominican Republic has always been considered a strategic location for the hegemony of the continent and has been coveted by the great powers. It has been invaded



National Palace, Santo Domingo

Patient Name: _____

Address: _____ Date: _____

R_x

Take 3 times a day

Crystalline waters, Turquoise blue sky

Burning tropical sun

White sandy beaches

Spectacular sunsets, Historical relics

Kind people, Beautiful flowers

White water streams, Color harmony

Tons of smiles, Ecological paths

dunes, mountains, lush vegetation

local and gourmet gastronomy

hustle and bustle, tranquility

sense of humor.

MD: _____

Signature: _____



NATIONAL TOURISM GUIDE
OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

and controlled at different times by Spain, France, England, Simon Bolívar's Gran Colombia, Haiti and the United States.

However, thanks to the unbridled patriotism of Juan Pablo Duarte, Francisco del Rosario Sánchez, and Matías Ramón Mella, the Founding Fathers, the nation won its independence and the Dominican Republic, as a free and sovereign state, was established on February 27th, 1844.

Located on La Hispaniola, the island beloved by the Great Admiral Christopher Columbus, as he himself stated in his diary, the Dominican Republic's past is studded with historical events that showcase the most prominent figures of the Age of Discovery. This land of promise that was conquered and colonized by the Spaniards in 1492, continues to be, five centuries later, a new frontier that is full of opportunities and a true paradise for international tourism.

So, welcome visitors to this old haven of the Americas, the original site of the conquest of the New World and the Colonial era. We invite you to browse in the secret drawers of this antique colonial cabinet, now five hundred years old, where relics of an era - very much a heritage for all the Americas, still survive. It is also a source of pride for those who received the light of the Gospel under the influence of Spanish culture.

Education

In 1505, the Convent of the Friars of the Franciscan Order established the first primary schools, which were later moved to the St. Francis Monastery in 1512. It was here that the cacique Guarocuya was educated and baptized into the Christian faith under the name Enriquillo.

In 1510, the missionaries of the Dominican Order settled in Hispaniola under the leadership of Friar Pedro de Córdoba. The Order requested that the Pope confer the status of University to the center for higher education that they were directing. The Pontiff granted their request by the "In Apostulatus Culmine" papal bull and, on October 28, 1538, the first university in the Americas was established. It was named after St. Thomas Aquinas. Today, it is the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (Autonomous University of Santo Domingo), a center of great intellectual activity whose reputation aptly earned for the city of Santo Domingo the nickname "Athens of the New World."

Based on that heritage of scholarship, many prominent citizens felt the need to make education accessible to all people. Consequently, the Constitution states that free compulsory education shall be provided for all children between the ages of six to thirteen. Basic education is no longer a privilege; it has become a universal right in the Dominican Republic.

The state's public education policy extends to the secondary level through the provision of subsidies for private school education. The State also supports public higher education at the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (UASD), and subsidizes higher education schools specializing in science and technology, as well as several private academic centers that have been accredited by the Ministry for Higher education, Science and Technology and several private academic centers that have been accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (Ministerio de Educación Superior, Ciencia y Tecnología). Currently public education at the basic level and secondary education is provided to more than 3 million students nationwide.

Religion

In the Dominican Republic, freedom of religion is guaranteed and protected under the constitution. According to the latest census figures, Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion of the country.

It is considered offensive and inappropriate to enter a temple inebriated or in shorts.



Horse Back Riding, Jarabacoa

Climate

The average annual temperature fluctuates between 18 °C / 65 °F and 27 °C / 81 °F. The fertile Dominican soil is ideal for the cultivation of grain. According to the W. Koppen Climate Classification System, the predominant climate is tropical savanna climate with two rainy seasons and its three variations of jungle, forest and savanna, with five variations or microclimates, classified as: humid, dry steppe, tropical jungle, forest and savanna. Thus, for Dominicans there is only one season: summer.

The country's pleasant climate may be understood in terms of its geographical location. The prevailing determinant of precipitation and vegetation is the northwest trade winds. Variations from the general weather and vegetational patterns are conditioned by such factors as elevation and proximity to ocean currents.

In the Central Mountain Range, the Pico Duarte soars to a height of, as per Professor Kenneth Orvis, 3.098 meters (10.164 feet) above sea level, making it the highest peak in all of the Antilles. Another interesting feature of the island's topography is Lake Enriquillo in the province of Barahona. From the lake's surface, at 30m below sea level, emerges Cabritos Island, where according to Dr. Sophie Jackowska, "the largest reserve of the American crocodile exists".

Water

About 80% of the urban population has access to tap water. Nevertheless, to avoid "the revenge of Caonabo," one should drink purified and bottled water.

Electricity

The Dominican Republic uses 100-120V/60Hz North- American electrical outlets. While there are occasional power outages in tourist hubs, 95% of all hotels have their own private power supply, and restaurants and other businesses usually have emergency generators.

Sun

Dermatologists advise against sunbathing between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Instead, they suggest gradual exposure and always using sunscreen and other protective items such as hats and sunglasses. Moisturizing the skin daily enhances and prolongs a tan.

Weights and measurements

Concerning weights and measurements, the Dominican Republic uses, in conformity with national legislation, the metric system. Nevertheless, the country continues to use certain units from the old Spanish system and from other systems that were formerly used in the territory.

Solids, for example, are measured in ounces/ pounds instead of in grams/ kilograms. Gasoline and motor oil are sold by the American gallon, about 128 fluid ounces; cooking oil is measured by the pint. Fabrics are sold by the yard instead of the meter. And rum, beer, and other liquids are packed in bottles of about 0.75631 liters.

Urban land areas are measured in square meters, while in the countryside they are measured by "tarea," a unit that equals 628.86 sq. meters.

Another unconventional custom in our markets is the bargaining that takes place between the potential buyer and seller to arrive at a mutually acceptable price. Your purchasing success will depend on your negotiation skills. During the process, you might even make a friend and the seller might give you "a ñapa" (something extra) at the end of the sale.

Source: From "La Cotica" and its related Website: <http://dominicanway.com>, reviewed and authorized by the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic



Amber Museum, Santo Domingo

Top Destinations

SANTO DOMINGO

This is the largest, most energetic, cosmopolitan and people-friendly city in the Caribbean and Central America. This is a metropolis that has it all - assuming you are able to avoid rush hour traffic.

Every first time traveler is advised to leave the comfort of their resort and, for at least a day, visit the Colonial City, recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The Colonial City is easily explored on foot and consists of a grid of 16 short streets with an abundance of 16th to early 20th century architectural gems. Cobblestone lanes and iron street lamps lead to the many small museums, shops, hotels, restaurants, and bars that are tucked away on every street. The Chu Chu Colonial offers a 45-minute trip around the city to help newcomers get their bearings.

In the city, you can marvel at the lushness of the Botanical Gardens or take a walk over to the Malecón and people-watch while enjoying magnificent sea views.

Shopping is big at the malls in Santo Domingo. Look for Dominican shops to buy a linen Guayabera, leather handbag or original designed clothing. Eyeball gorgeous men and women at one of the better gyms, then relax with a nice cigar at one of the open terrace-restaurants at Plaza de España or Av. Gustavo Mejia Ricart. The city is yours.

Las Americas International Airport (SDQ) is the main port of entry, half an hour east of the city. Cruise ship passengers arriving in Santo Domingo by sea are 10 minutes away from the leading attractions of the Colonial City.

PUNTA CANA

Sun-kissed Punta Cana is the land of rest and relaxation. Where the Atlantic meets the Caribbean, there is no shortage of fine beach resorts with swimming pools in all shapes and sizes and entertainment options for the entire family. Dream weddings are also common here, with couples silhouetted against a backdrop of silky-fine white sand and beaches with coconut palms. Punta Cana is also a golfer's paradise, with 11 spectacular courses located all along the strip.

Punta Cana International Airport (PUJ) is the best-connected airport in the Caribbean and Central America, with flights from 26 countries. With the recent opening of a new highway, tourists are less than an hour away from the attractions of La Romana, and two and a half hours from Santo Domingo.



Golf Course, Cap Cana

LA ROMANA

One of the country's top visitor destinations, La Romana is defined by sugar cane, golf, beaches and diving. To get there, tourists drive past sprawling sugar cane fields and scenic rural vistas.

In the 1970s, the largest sugar mill in the Americas diversified and opened the resort of Casa de Campo, famous for its world class golf and the artists' village of Altos de Chavón, featuring galleries and shops. While golf put La Romana on the tourism map, most visitors today come for the pristine beaches and the comfort of its resorts.

Bayahibe is the gateway to Saona Island in the National Park of the East, the most visited natural attraction in the country. It is the land of the rare Bayahibe Rose, a cactus-shrub that in 2011 was named the National Flower.

The Casa de Campo International Airport and the Casa de Campo Tourist Port are the main ports of entry to this area.



Amphi-theater Altos de Chavón, La Romana

SAMANÁ

Samaná is a natural treasure. Wild, verdant, with coves, bays, waterfalls, mountains and awe-inspiring views – visitors are continually enchanted by its many wonders. It is known for its wading and body-boarding beaches, nature trekking and whale-watching.

Samaná has a cosmopolitan vibe due to the many independent travelers – particularly Europeans – who have come as tourists and ended up becoming year-around residents. Samaná City is the provincial capital; Las Galeras is the base for visiting the famous Playa Rincón beach; and Las Terrenas is the main tourist center, but it still retains an easygoing beach town feel, with some great shops, restaurants and bars.

Samaná has its own international airport at El Catey (AZS). Cruise ships arrive mainly in the winter season docking offshore near Cayo Levantado.

PUERTO PLATA

The silver clouds atop Mt. Isabel de Torres, the towering mountain behind Puerto Plata, once gave the city its name. Today, tourists ride the cable car to the top of the mountain, visit its botanical gardens and take in the sweeping views of the port city.

The city boasts of the largest collection of still-standing 19th century Victorian-style homes in the Caribbean. Its San Felipe Fort is one of the oldest military colonial period fortresses in the region, dating back to 1577.

Puerto Plata is the province where the remains of the first European settlement in the Americas are located. Admiral Christopher Columbus' famous three ships made landfall here in 1492, naming it La Isabela.

Today, however, Puerto Plata is better known for its Atlantic coastline with more than 62 miles (100 km) of palm-fringed beaches, coastal villages and hotels. The beach towns of Sosua and Cabarete, world famous for their windsurfing and kiteboarding, are less than half an hour away.

The popular Ocean World Adventure Park is on the outskirts of the city, while Damajagua Falls, a real-life version of Disney's Splash Mountain ride, is just a 30-minute ride south.

The main port of entry is the Gregorio Luperón International Airport (POP).



Kite Surfing Cabarete Beach, Puerto Plata

What to Do

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

Although as a patient or companion the main purpose of your visit will be to improve your health and wellbeing, you might be interested in knowing that the Dominican Republic is also one of the world's most desirable destinations for business travel and leisure.

The country boasts some of the most stunning and varied natural landscapes in the Caribbean, along with world class travel and sophisticated accommodation infrastructure. Visitors can choose from a variety of natural and cultural attractions located in beach, mountain and city destinations. Choose a high-end sun and fun experience, and then go for adventure trips to the mountains or birdwatching trips in Barahona and Pedernales. Combine beach hopping and zipline adventures in Samaná with history and culture in Santo Domingo.

For those planning large meetings of more than 1,000 persons, consider Punta Cana and Santo Domingo, with their nearby beach areas of Boca Chica and Juan Dolio. For medium-sized meetings, also consider Puerto Plata, La Romana, and Santiago. For smaller meetings, look into Samaná or the two-for-one destinations of Jarabacoa and Constanza or Barahona and Pedernales. Golfers have no shortage of putting options to choose from with 26 golf courses to get their daily fix. Is it any wonder that the Dominican Republic is one of the Caribbean's top destinations for meetings, incentives, conventions and events?

WEDDINGS AND ROMANCE

Love is in the air. With a mixture of culture, nature, scenic beaches and accommodating resorts, as well as excellent flight connections, the Dominican Republic is highly rated as a wedding and honeymoon destination.

Take your vows beneath the arches of historic churches in the Colonial City of Santo Domingo. Or choose a backdrop of weathered stones at Altos de Chavón's St. Stanislaus Church. Some may prefer to forego the formality of traditional church wedding for the romance of the beach resorts of Puerto Plata, Samana, Punta Cana, La Romana, Juan Dolio or Boca Chica.

Destination weddings work for either large or intimate ceremonies. Hotels offer packages specially designed for all tastes and budgets that include experienced wedding planners that will take care of all the details so you can concentrate your attention on your partner.

**Take note that civil services are performed solely in Spanish, but translators can participate.*



Paragliding at Constanza and Jarabacoa



Punta Espada Golf Course, Cap Cana

GOLF

The Dominican Republic's ideal tropical climate favors golfers all year round. World-class courses dot the coastline and interior amid some of the most magnificent scenery on the planet. But don't get too complacent with your game; the stiff tropical breezes have a way of tricking even the best golfers.

Rounds of golf are played in the scenic surroundings of Punta Cana, Puerto Plata, Playa Grande, La Romana, Juan Dolio, Jarabacoa, Santiago, Bonao, and Santo Domingo. Here golfers enjoy manicured courses while listening to expert advice from their caddies on how to play each hole. There are six courses on the coast, and twenty inland, including a course on a cliff overlooking a river and another in the mountains.

Of the coastal courses, none is more famous than Pete Dye's "Teeth of the Dog" at Casa de Campo, which literally places the Dominican Republic on the world golfer's map. You can also showcase your skills at courses designed by golf legends Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player, Tom Fazio, Nick Price, and Robert Trent Jones, to name just a few.

EXCURSIONS

By Caribbean standards, the Dominican Republic is a rather large island measuring more than 18,533 m² (48,442km²) in size. A wide range of tour packages are available as tourists arriving at one destination will typically want to visit other areas.

There are all-day tours, water, adventure, horseback, dune buggy, Segway, SUP, catamaran, and cultural tours – you name it. It is best to check at your hotel tour desk to find out which tours will include transportation to and from your hotel. It is also important for medical travelers to engage in tours prior to their treatment or consult with their doctor once they have recovered sufficiently from their treatment or surgery.

ADVENTURE AND ECOTOURISM

Surrounded by sea and ocean, crisscrossed by rivers and lakes, covered in rain and dry forest and a central spine of high-rising mountains, the country's sheer diversity makes it a one-of-a-kind destination for adventure and ecotourism. The tropical climate lends itself to outdoor activity all year round. However, as a patient, you should not engage in strenuous activities without the authorization of your physician. Instead, send your spouse or companion out to enjoy the national parks and national scientific reserves which cover an astounding 25 percent of the country.

As an interesting fact, the Dominican Republic has the highest and lowest points above and below sea level in the region. Duarte Peak rises 10,125 feet (3,087 meters) within the Cordillera Central mountain range, while Enriquillo Lake is 15 feet (42 meters) below sea level.

BEACHES

Take your pick: white sand, golden sand, pebbles... gorgeous beaches for snorkeling, surfing, kiteboarding, windsurfing and stand-up paddle boarding. Walk along the surf, stretch out in the sun (unless you have had a recent surgery) or veg out under the towering swaying palms with the gentle sea breezes dancing about. Enjoy beaches near the cities and beaches near jungles, isolated coves, or beaches with all the trappings and amenities. What else could you ask for in a beach destination?

Fabulous activities beckon you at the various beaches in the Dominican Republic. If you have time before your treatment, take your pick of banana boat trips, kayaking, sailing trips, catamaran trips, two-story party boats or speed boats. Then dine amid a spectacular Caribbean sunset on a pirate-themed vessel. Land and water taxis make it easy to get around to all the attractions and restaurants.

As of October 2013, there are 18 Blue Flag beaches in the country, meeting the demanding criteria of high water quality, environmental management, wheelchair accessibility, recycling, restroom facilities and lifeguards on the beach.

WATER SPORTS

The Dominican Republic has the second-longest coastline in the Caribbean at nearly 1,000 miles. Most of the coastline is dotted with tranquil beaches, ideal for enjoying sugar-white sands and crystal waters. Other beaches, such as Cabarete's Kite Beach, are perfect for water sports like surfing, kite boarding, boogie boarding and windsurfing.

The country is also well-known for its world-class sport fishing. For years it has hosted several international bill fishing tournaments, such as the blue marlin fishing tournament at Cabeza de Toro, the ESPN Billfish Xtreme Tournament at Punta Cana Resort & Club and the new International Billfish Shootout at Cap Cana Marina, the largest marina in the Caribbean.



Sailing at Playa Dominicus, La Romana

BASEBALL

As they say in the Dominican Republic, baseball is much more than a game. In March 2013, the Dominican Republic won Major League's World Baseball Classic with an 8-0 dominating performance. Later in the year, Dominican David Ortiz would lead the Boston Red Sox to win the World Series.

Visitors to the Dominican Republic can experience the passion and the heart that Dominicans put into the game in the annual winter season championship.

This is also the land of Baseball Hall of Famer San Francisco Giants' Juan Marichal and of the trio of Pedro Martinez, Manny Ramirez, and David Ortiz that propelled the Boston Red Sox to win the legendary World Series in 2004. It is the original home of Robinson Canó of the New York Yankees and José Reyes of the Toronto Blue Jays, the sluggers who made sure the Dominican Republic clinched the World Baseball Classic.

The Dominican Professional Baseball League season runs from mid-October to the playoffs in the first week of February. The winning team represents the country in the Caribbean Series, where the team plays against the professional league champions from Mexico, Venezuela, and Puerto Rico.

FAMILY

Are you coming for a minor medical procedure or dental treatment? Then why not bring your family along? Miles of unspoiled nature fill this island, ready for you and your family to explore and experience together. As an all-year-round family destination, the Dominican Republic boasts some of the best all-inclusive resorts in the region. Included in the price are day and night-filled activity programs where everyone can do their own thing.

All-inclusive resorts might have been invented for fun-loving adults, but it is the children who stand to gain the most from their visit. Children are free to order anything, to roam, to participate in their own activities... what more could you ask for? Take your baby to the beach and check out the cute smile on his face when his little chubby toes tickle the sand.

For older children, and those who will always be a child-at-heart, there are authentic eco and nature adventures that will put Disney World to shame. The waterfalls at Damajagua in Puerto Plata, Jimenoa in Jarabacoa and El Limón in Samaná are thrilling and unforgettable experiences.



Baseball our national sport



Cassava bread

NIGHTLIFE

Not a day person? Relax, the Dominican Republic offers night-owls plenty of exciting options. Your first choice will be the bustling capital city of Santo Domingo, home to three million people, many of whom enjoy hanging out chatting, laughing and enjoying a drink together at outdoor terraces and bars until late at night. Wine bars and clubbing are also hot in the city. International DJs frequently visit to entertain the crowds that gather at the trendiest entertainment venues, including discos, pubs and clubs outside of the hotels. Concert venues also abound with local and international performers, and there is a full schedule of festivals and events.

All-inclusive beach resort areas offer a more relaxing tropical vibe. Most resorts stage variety shows for their guests each night to help them wind down after an activity-filled day. Many also boast casinos on the premises. However, don't forget that you have come to the Dominican Republic for health and wellness reasons. So make sure you get enough rest, especially after undergoing a surgical procedure.

SHOPPING

Whether you are searching for international brands, locally designed clothes, a handcrafted fishing boat, jewelry, or an unusual souvenir, shopping in the eclectic boutiques on side streets or in the mega-malls will prove equally rewarding.

You'll find local art next to fresh produce and Dominican sweets alongside coconut leaf hats... Stop by side-of-the-road vendors to purchase handmade rugs, carved wooden kitchen utensils and rocking chairs.

Enjoy educational tours of factories that sell local products such as coffee, rum, cigars, and jewelry, and pick up one of the special souvenirs at the carnivals celebrated in February. Each city entices the shopper to check out the many and varied items they offer.

Take note that bargaining when purchasing objects is customary in Dominican markets. Sellers expect some give-and-take so make sure to sharpen your bartering skills whenever you head out to a market. During the process you might even make a friend and the seller might give you "a ñapa" (something extra) at the end of the sale.

DINING

Experience the Dominican Republic through your taste buds. Start with the colorful markets for stocking up on fruit so sweet you won't believe it is real. Pineapples, papayas, melons, guavas, soursop, passion fruit, tamarind, strawberries, mangos, and even dragon fruit... Taste the fruit bars and sherbets, macadamia and organic chocolate ice cream at the Helados Bon ice cream shops located all around the country.

Don't forget that lunch (noon to 3:00 pm) is the big meal of the day, with many restaurants in cities and towns offering "executive lunch" or "dish of the day" deals. Dominicans are faithful to the so-called "Dominican flag:" stewed or fried meat with rice and beans and fritters. Rare is the tourist who is not hooked on a chilled Presidente beer that goes so well with authentic Dominican food. Head to the supermarkets to pick up locally produced rum, coffee, and macadamia nuts to take back home.

Cooking traditions from all over the world are represented on the island. Foreigners who first came as tourists have opened restaurants to share their culinary heritage and their culture. From Italian to Peruvian and everything in-between, you will find something to delight your palate. For those who require a booster shot of American fast food, there are plenty of well-known chains represented in the country. In Santo Domingo, head to Winston Churchill Avenue and the city malls. In resort areas, many have also opened to cater to U.S. tourists who make up the largest visitor segment.

It could well be said that the Dominican Republic has more restaurants than all of the rest of the Caribbean combined. How to choose? Don't. Go with the flow. Chances are the restaurant near you will satisfy your taste buds. Browse the menu for fusion cooking, where innovative chefs have taken popular recipes and given them a Dominican twist with local ingredients.

When in the Dominican Republic, make it a point of looking for places where you can dine with a view. Opportunities abound...you can dine overlooking expansive grass fairways, towering native pine trees, seaside horizons or 500 years of history.

Source: from the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic website:
<http://www.godominicanrepublic.com>



Dominican Republic

Directory of Hotels and Resorts

Disclaimer: The following is a list of hotels in the Dominican Republic provided by the Dominican Republic Association of Hotels and Tourism. It is always extremely important to let hotels know that you will be coming for a medical procedure and to advise them of any special requirements or considerations you may need. Your physician can provide you with this information prior to travel.

Whether you choose a five-star resort or a corner boutique hotel, the Dominican Republic offers you a wide range of well-appointed accommodation options tailor-made to your special medical needs.

George Washington Ave., Santo Domingo

Santo Domingo

JW MARRIOTT HOTEL SANTO DOMINGO (150 rooms)

Winston Churchill Avenue No. 93
809-807-1717
www.marriott.com

RENAISSANCE JARAGUA HOTEL & CASINO (300 rooms)

George Washington Ave. 367
809-221-2222
renaissance-hotels.marriott.com

PLAZA FLORIDA SUITES (32 rooms)

Ave. Bolívar No. 203, La Esperilla
809-412-1212
www.plazafloridasuites.com.do

SHERATON SANTO DOMINGO (245 rooms)

George Washington Ave. 365
809-221-6666
www.sheraton.com

DOMINICAN FIESTA HOTEL & CASINO (282rooms)

Anacaona Avenue 101, Cibao Oeste Street
809-562-8222
www.palladiumhotelgroup.com

HODELPA CARIBE COLONIAL (50 rooms)

Calle Isabel La Católica #159
809-688-7799
www.hodelpa.com

HOLIDAY INN SANTO DOMINGO (179 rooms)

Av Abraham Lincoln 856
809-621-0000
<http://www.holidayinn.com>

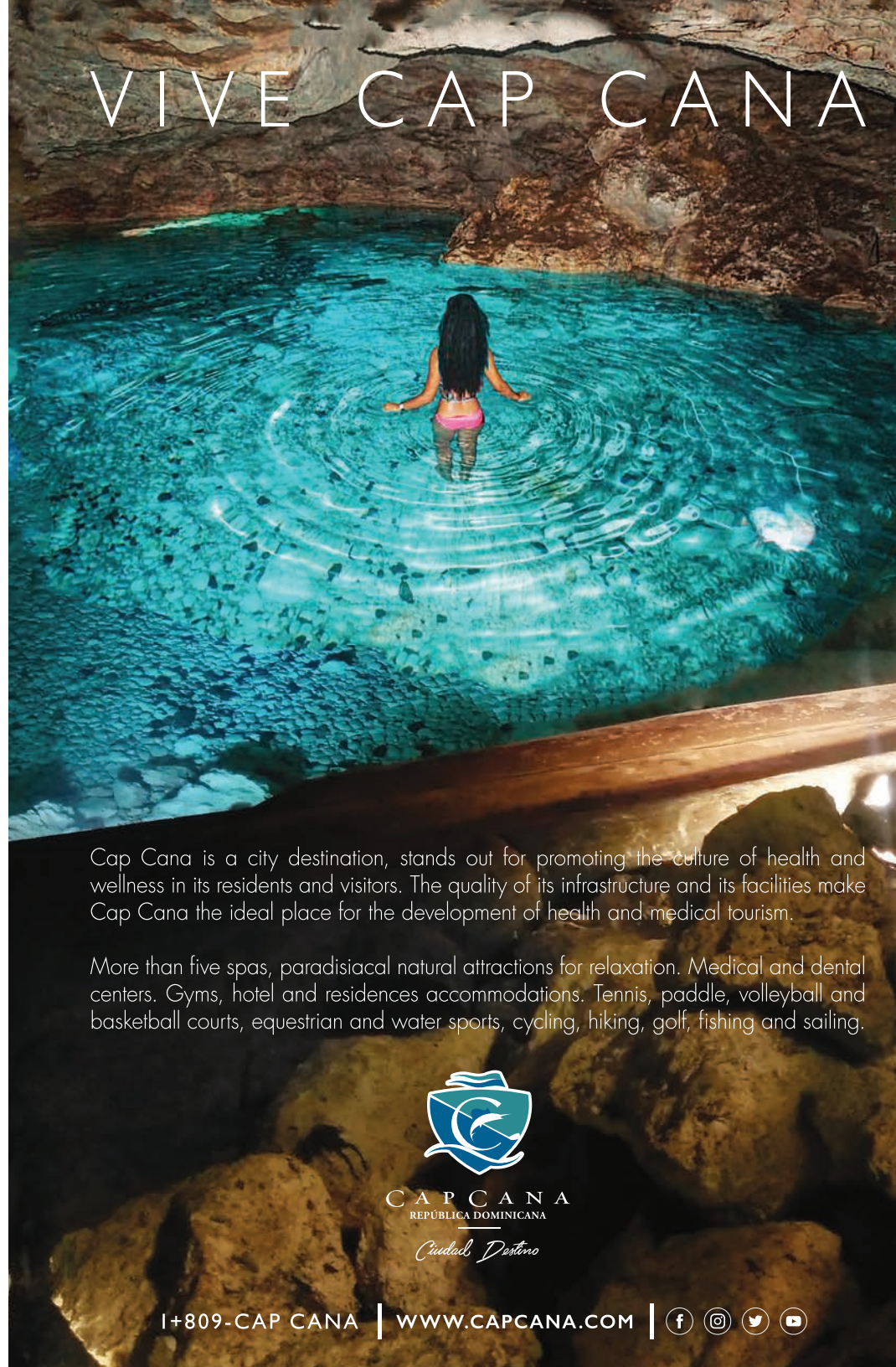
HOTEL CROWNE PLAZA SANTO DOMINGO (196 rooms)

Avenida George Washington 218
809-221-0000
www.crowneplaza.com/santodomingo

NOVUS PLAZA HODELPA (96 rooms)

Calle Hostos, Ciudad Colonial
809-688-5500
www.mercure.com

VIVE CAP CANA



Cap Cana is a city destination, stands out for promoting the culture of health and wellness in its residents and visitors. The quality of its infrastructure and its facilities make Cap Cana the ideal place for the development of health and medical tourism.

More than five spas, paradisiacal natural attractions for relaxation. Medical and dental centers. Gyms, hotel and residences accommodations. Tennis, paddle, volleyball and basketball courts, equestrian and water sports, cycling, hiking, golf, fishing and sailing.



CAP CANA
REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Ciudad Destino

OCCIDENTAL EL EMBAJADOR (279 rooms)

Av Sarasota 65
809-221-2131
www.occidentalhotels.com

RADISSON HOTEL SANTO DOMINGO (199 rooms)

Presidente Gonzalez #10 at Tiradentes Av.
809-541-6226
www.radisson.com

Boca Chica

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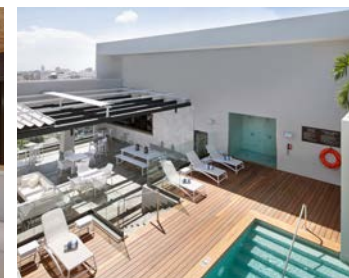
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www.ranchoplaton.com

CASA BONITA TROPICAL LODGE (13 rooms)

Km. 17 Carretara de La Costa
809-476-5059
www.casabonitadr.com

Source: from the hotel directory published by ASONAHORES and the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic.



Planning Your Trip

While there will always be an element of anxiety where travel and surgery are involved, with the right planning there is no reason you cannot enjoy a pleasant medical trip.



Water cave, Pedernales

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

Travel these days is stressful enough without throwing a medical procedure into the mix. Questions abound: How much should I budget for my trip? What should I pack? Where should I stay after my procedure? In this section we will take a detailed look at the medical tourism process and what you can expect during each phase of your trip.

Before your trip

Get as much information about the medical travel process as possible

- How much will the surgery or treatment cost?
- Who will pick you up at the airport?
- Who will be your main contact at the hospital or clinic?
- How many appointments will you need?
- How long you will be in the hospital?
- How will you get from the hospital to your hotel?
- How long is the post procedure recuperation period?
- Will you be provided with a detailed schedule of tests and appointments?

Don't be afraid to ask for information such as doctor's bios/curriculums, medical outcomes or hospital performance indicators that will help in your decision making process. Most hospitals in the Dominican Republic will be happy to provide this information. As a traveling patient, it is important that you have as much information as possible in order to make a decision that will be in your best interest.

Consider how far you are willing to travel.

There is a big difference between traveling 6 hours and 20 hours. Airports and flights can wear down even the most physically fit travelers. For a patient, long flights can pose health risks, so it is important to talk to your doctor before you make a decision to travel for care. The Dominican Republic is only a short flight from many cities in the U.S. (particularly from the East coast) and Latin America.

Make sure you are comfortable with the destination.

The Dominican Republic has a reputation as a warm, friendly country that is used to hosting tourists from all around the globe. There are colorful sights to see, new cultures to explore and a multitude of mouth-watering

local dishes that will tantalize your taste buds. While it is difficult to imagine why you would not be enamored with the Dominican Republic and its friendly people, the fact is some people are more comfortable with certain destinations and cultures than others.

Are you a seasoned traveler used to experiencing new cultures and ways of doing things? Or do you prefer the familiar? Will it be an issue if you can't understand the language (or if the majority of the population can't understand you)? Are you someone who is more comfortable with homeopathic or alternative therapies? Would you like several family members with you in the hospital assisting you with your needs? If so, make sure you communicate this to the medical providers you are considering for treatment.

Although your primary purpose for traveling may be health-related, your trip will be more enjoyable if you know a little about the history, culture, language, cuisine, and attractions of the destination you will be traveling to. Did you know that in the Dominican Republic, strangers often greet each other as *amigo* or *amiga* (friend)? Or that “*Mi amor*” (my love) is used commonly among men and women – even if they don't know each other? Make sure to look at the section: “Dominican Republic Destination Information” for more interesting details about the Dominican Republic.

Talk to other medical tourists

One of the best ways to prepare for your medical trip is to speak with other patients about their experience. What was their recuperation like? Did they experience any language barriers? What restaurants do they recommend? Nothing beats listening to somebody that has already been there and done that. Talk to your doctor or hospital contact and request to speak to past patients. In many cases, they will have a list of patients who have granted authorization to be used as referrals.

Allow enough time for your recuperation before traveling home.

Regardless of the procedure or treatment you have undergone, it is always advisable that you wait a few days before traveling. Doing so will minimize your risk of medical complications and improve the healing process. This will also give your doctor time to spot any potential problems before you head home.

It is not uncommon for patients to feel fine a few days after a procedure, especially if you are young and in good shape. However, don't think this means you are well enough to hop on a plane and fly home. Travel puts a lot of stress on your body; early morning wake-up calls, crowded airport shuttles, long waiting times at the airport, and then the long flight home. You can minimize the discomfort by flying in business class or choosing bulkhead seats, but regardless of this, your body pays a heavy price every time you travel.

DON'T FORGET

- Bring your medical history file and relevant medical reports
- Bring ATM cards, credit cards, insurance card if applicable
- Bring enough cash
- Make sure to have the contact information for your hospital representative and/or doctor
- Bring your prescriptions

Medical

A. Your personal details
Please complete the following details for yourself as the main applicant.

Title (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, other title)
First name(s) (please include all forenames in full)
Surname
Address
Sex at birth ☐ Male ☐ Female
Membership number

B. Additional member details
Please give details of additional members you wish to be covered.

Title, surname, first name(s)	Relationship to you (partner, dependant)	Date of birth Day Month Year	Sex at birth
1			☐ Male ☐ Female
2			☐ Male ☐ Female
3			☐ Male ☐ Female
4			☐ Male ☐ Female

Did someone else? Please give us their name(s) and the full details for this section and sections C and D on a separate sheet.
If you know you have included additional family members, please tick this box. ☐

C. Your medical history
This section asks for health and medical details, past and present, about yourself and for each person named in section B. Please tick **Yes** or **No** to every question for each person. If you tick **Yes** to a question, please give full details in section D on the next page. If you are unsure whether any details are relevant, you must include them.

For any of the following conditions, please indicate if:

	Main applicant	Dependant member 2	Dependant member 3	Dependant member 4	Dependant member 5
1. Heart or cardiovascular disorders eg coronary artery disease, chest pains, circulatory problems, varicose veins, high blood pressure, venous ulcers	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
2. Glandular disorders eg diabetes, thyroid, hormonal problems	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
3. Breathing or respiratory disorders eg asthma, bronchitis, chronic cough, chest infections, colds, flu	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
4. Ears, nose, throat, or eye problems eg sinusitis, cataracts, eye infections, deafness, ear infections	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Getting sufficient rest is particularly important if you are flying long distances where there is a risk of developing a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism.

DVT may be defined as a blood clot that forms in a vein deep in the body. If the blood clot breaks off and travels through the blood stream to the lungs, a pulmonary embolism may occur which is potentially fatal. Although rare, there are effective measures that traveling patients can use to reduce the risk of DVT. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends:

- Getting up and walking around every 2 to 3 hours;
- Exercise your legs while you're sitting; and
- Drink plenty of water, and avoid drinking anything with alcohol or caffeine in it.

Your doctor may also prescribe anti-clotting medication and/or compression stockings to reduce the risk of DVT.

Waiting a few days before traveling also allows you to enjoy the local culture and attractions. Perhaps not jet skiing or scuba diving, but you can visit the theater, try the local cuisine, or engage in a few “soft” tours that will enhance your overall medical tourism experience.

It is also advisable to plan your trip so that once you return home you have a few extra days to rest before going back to work or your regular routine. Not only will this allow you to be fully recovered before going back to the grind, but it will also allow you a little buffer time in case you must spend more time in the hospital than you originally planned for.

Finally, make sure to talk to your doctor before traveling for any medical treatment in order to understand the potential risks of combining surgery with travel.

Obtain a recommendation from your primary care practitioner

You may feel more comfortable asking your local doctor to contact or recommend a facility or doctor in the country you are traveling to. Often, doctors will have affiliations or relationships with institutions or colleagues abroad. Going through your local doctor will speed up all the little details and transfer of information that goes along with coordinating a medical procedure abroad. You will also have the peace of mind of knowing that you are being referred by one medical professional to another.

Make sure a family member or friend will accompany you.

Having the physical and moral support of a companion is one of the most important ingredients of a successful medical trip, particularly during



Kayaking the Chavón River, La Romana

the recovery process. However, not everyone is ideally suited to being a medical travel companion. Your companion must be willing to put your needs ahead of his or her own and assist you during the recovery process. This does not mean they cannot have some leisure time to enjoy the local culture and attractions, but they should understand that their primary purpose is to provide support.

Be transparent and specific about any medications or substances you may be taking

Traveling abroad for surgery or treatment is a serious business. Don't compromise your health or the success of your procedure by hiding things or being less than truthful about any medications or substances you may be taking. Some substances can interact dangerously with the anesthesia or medications administered to you prior to surgery; this includes some natural or homeopathic remedies. Your doctor will likely require you to stop taking Aspirin or other anti-clotting agents as they can cause bleeding during the surgery. Make sure to tell your doctor if you are unsure about any medication or substance you are taking.

Once you have confirmed your procedure, you will need to choose a date and complete a number of documents including a medical history questionnaire, informed consent forms and hospital waivers.

Your hospital or clinic in the Dominican Republic will provide you with a detailed itinerary, lodging information, contact numbers, and suggested packing list. You will also be instructed to bring your medications and medical records.

During your trip

Arrival at the airport

After arriving in the Dominican Republic, you will head through immigration and customs and then meet a hospital/clinic representative at a specified location outside the airport. If you require assistance or the use of a wheelchair, make sure to inform your local contact so they can coordinate this with the proper airline authorities prior to your trip. The hospital/clinic representative will be standing outside holding a sign with your name. He or she will assist you with your luggage to a vehicle that will transport you to your hotel or the medical facility, depending on your itinerary. Please review your itinerary and healthcare provider instructions carefully as you may have to fast before undergoing pre-operative exams or your treatment. Depending on your itinerary, you may have a chance to take in some sights or even engage in a tour. Please take note that the welcome process can vary depending on the medical provider so make sure to have everything in writing prior to your trip.



Arrival at the medical facility

Once at the hospital or clinic, you will be met by a hospital/clinic representative - sometimes called a healthcare or patient coordinator, who will be your main contact during your stay. He or she will help you with the admission process (if required), pre-operative exams and doctor consultations. Most patients who travel to the Dominican Republic for care are amazed at the high quality and cleanliness of the hospital facilities and the personal attention they receive. Patients traveling for medical tourism often receive VIP treatment that is designed to reduce their anxiety and make them feel as comfortable as possible. This includes a fast-track admission and pre-operative process, a lot of hand-holding and much more quality time with their surgeon than they may be used to at home.

Depending on the type of procedure you are undergoing, you will spend anywhere from several hours to a few days in the hospital or clinic. During this time, nurses and your health coordinator will be available to assist you with your needs.

Discharge

At discharge you will be provided with your medical records as well as pain medications, antibiotics and instructions for an optimal healing process. Check to see that the medical records are in your language and that you can understand all instructions. Some patients may be discharged to a hotel to continue the recovery process. During this time, you may be required to

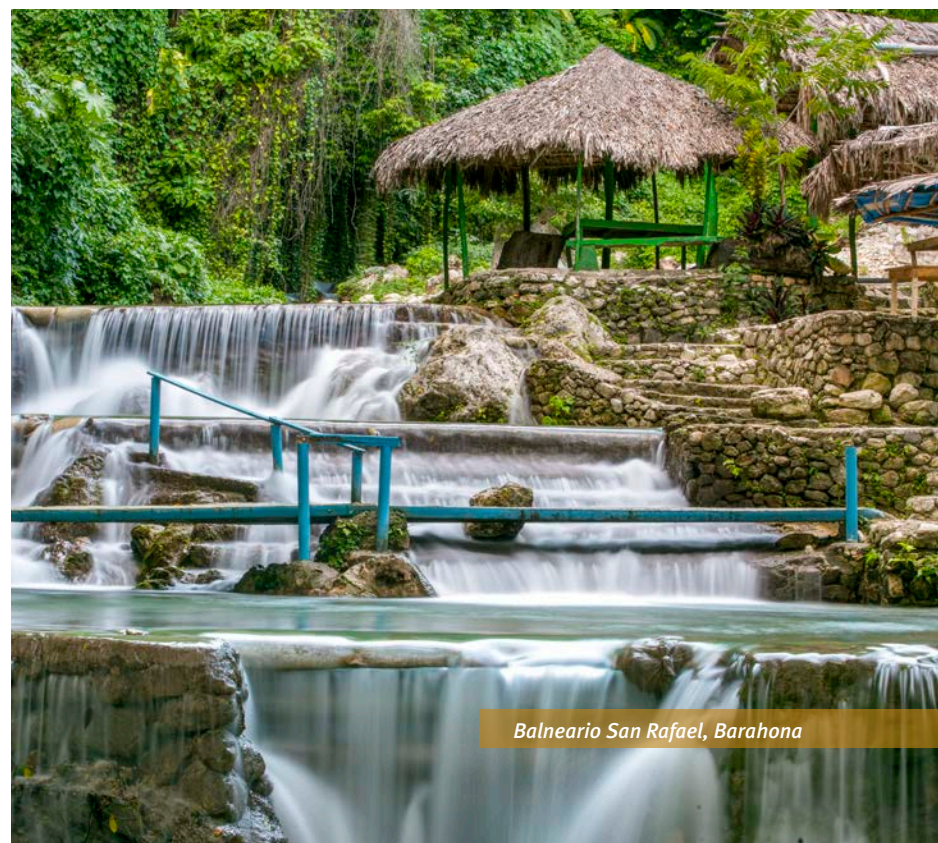
take blood thinning medication, undergo rehabilitation therapy, or follow a special diet. The first few days after surgery are critically important for your recovery, so be sure to follow all your doctor's instructions. Make sure you take care of your incision area and contact your doctor if you have excessive pain, soreness, redness or fever. The medical facility will assign a representative who will be in close contact with you during this time, and will arrange any special services you may require.

Departure home

A day or two prior to your departure home, you will go back to the medical facility for a post-treatment check-up by your surgeon. He or she will make sure you are healing properly and are ready to fly home.

After your trip

Once you return home, continue to follow your doctor's post-treatment instructions to the letter. This includes medications, wound care (in case of surgeries) and any physical therapy or exercises he or she may have prescribed. If you notice any signs of trouble go see your primary practitioner or seek emergency care. Make sure to have all your medical records handy and translated into your language.



Balneario San Rafael, Barahona

As stated previously, you should have arranged a post-treatment appointment with a local doctor before your trip. If not, then do everything possible to coordinate an appointment immediately after your return home. Your Dominican Republic doctor will often stay in touch with you and provide recommendations should you experience any problems with your recovery.

Overview of a typical medical tourism experience:

1. Jessica Barnes is interested in full face lift. She searches the internet and finds a clinic in the Dominican Republic that specializes in cosmetic surgery.
2. Jessica fills out an inquiry form on the clinic website requesting information about the procedure.
3. Amelia, from the clinic's international office, responds to Jessica with a price range for the procedure and information about the clinic and the recommended plastic surgeon. Amelia may also request front and profile photos of Jessica's face and ask that she fill out a comprehensive medical history questionnaire.
4. Dr. Fernandez, the plastic surgeon, reviews the information and determines that Jessica is an ideal candidate for the full facelift procedure. Amelia coordinates a conference call between Dr. Fernandez and Jessica so that both parties can ask questions and get to know each other.
5. Amelia then sends Jessica a more precise price quote and the surgery is scheduled for a date three weeks later. Flights are arranged by the patient and Amelia coordinates her lodging at a nice hotel in Santo Domingo located ten minutes from the clinic. Amelia then sends the patient a detailed itinerary, recommended packing list and pre-operative instructions.
6. Jessica and her husband Leonard arrive in the Dominican Republic and are met outside the airport by a smiling clinic representative named Esperanza. They are then taken to their 5-star hotel to relax.
7. The next day Esperanza picks up the couple and takes them to the clinic. There they are warmly greeted by Amelia who takes them to a well-appointed lounge to begin the pre-admission process. Jessica is then taken to get her blood work and an EKG done. In the afternoon she meets with Dr. Fernandez for the first time to discuss the details of her surgery and aftercare instructions. Once the consultation is over, Jessica is taken back to her hotel where she enjoys a light supper and a relaxing evening by the pool.
8. Early the next morning Jessica and Leonard are picked up at their hotel and taken to the clinic to be prepped for surgery. Less than an hour later she is unconscious and under the expert care of Dr. Fernandez who deftly makes incisions and sutures. After

recuperating in an adjoining area, Jessica is taken back to a private room to recover overnight.

9. The next day she is discharged to a hotel to recuperate for the remainder of her stay.
10. Seven to 10 days later, Jessica returns to the clinic for a final evaluation with Dr. Fernandez to confirm that her face and neck are healing correctly, and to ensure that she is fit to travel home.

While the previous description should give you a good idea of what to expect during your medical trip to the Dominican Republic, it is important that you communicate with your Dominican medical provider for specific details related to your treatment plan.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I BUDGET FOR MY MEDICAL TRIP TO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC?

The amount of money you will need to budget for your medical trip will depend on many factors, including procedure costs, length of stay, accommodation choice and lifestyle preferences. To get an accurate estimate of the costs associated with your medical trip, try breaking down your trip into its principal elements and then adding up the costs.

Let's take as an example a patient traveling from New York to the Dominican Republic for a face lift procedure. The approximate costs including a companion would be as follows:*

- Surgical procedure: \$4,000 USD
- Flights: \$800 USD (patient and companion)
- Lodging: \$700 USD (\$100 x 7 nights)
- Transportation: Usually included in procedure package
- Meals: \$350 USD (\$50 per day)
- Sightseeing: \$200 USD
- Shopping and souvenirs: \$100 USD

Approximate Total: \$6,150 USD*

Compare this cost to the \$15,000-\$20,000 you might pay in New York for the exact same procedure. As shown in the above example, most costs can be calculated with a fairly high degree of accuracy. For example, flights from the east coast of the U.S. can often be found for under \$500 dollars.

As far as accommodation, it is not uncommon to find excellent three-four star hotels at under \$100 dollars a night including breakfast. Many medical



Bayahibe seashore, La Romana

providers will include airport pick-up and round trip hotel to hospital/clinic transfers in the procedure package price they quote. Some may even include the cost of your lodging in a package price.

Where meals are concerned, you should budget at least \$50 dollars per day for two assuming that your hotel includes breakfast. Entertainment and shopping costs are never easy to predict, particularly in a high-profile tourism destination such as the Dominican Republic. However, as a patient it is important for you to remember that your main focus is to recover from your procedure or treatment.

**These are only approximate costs. Contact your Dominican Republic provider for a precise estimate.*

Unexpected Costs

Whether you are building a house, buying a car or traveling for medical treatment, chances are high that you will run into some unexpected costs. That is a fact of life. The important thing is to try to anticipate these situations so you are not caught unprepared.

Some common culprits are:

- Extra airline luggage fees
- Additional rental-car fees for insurance coverage or for extra perks such as a child seat or a GPS navigation system
- Credit card fees (for example, if you are traveling from abroad, your bank might tack on a fee for a foreign transaction)
- Unexpected medical costs

Make sure you have checked with the airline you will be using to verify potential baggage fees. It is also a good idea to have a credit card handy and some extra cash in case you do run into any problems.

WHAT TO PACK

Don't wait until the last day to pack. As your departure date approaches, you will want to make a list of the items necessary for your trip. The last thing you want is to arrive at your destination without important medical records, medications, or appropriate clothing. Make sure to ask for packing recommendations from the hospital or facilitator you are using.

The following check-list will help you get organized:

- For medical treatment: Medical history file and relevant medical reports, contact information for your hospital representative, prescription medication, your medical travel itinerary, and a digital or hard copy of correspondence between you and the hospital/facilitator.

**It is important to keep important information handy at all times. Be especially careful not to pack medical records, prescriptions or important contact information in checked baggage in case your luggage is lost or temporarily delayed.*

- Must have: Identification (driver's license or passport), credit cards, and cash.
- Clothing: Dominican Republic's weather is mild throughout the year without extreme cold or heat. During the summer (June – September) choose loose fitting cotton clothing, linen shirts, a Cardigan or light jumper and sundresses are recommended. From December to February a light sweater or jacket may be needed in the evenings. An umbrella and raincoat are useful during the rainy season which runs from May to November. Also make sure to bring comfortable shoes or sandals as these will come in handy for walking around a hospital.

- Toiletries: Sunscreen, lip balm, moist towels or facial wipes.
- Photo Equipment: Digital camera, spare card, PC cable, spare rechargeable batteries, battery recharger, case.
- Miscellaneous: Knapsack or fanny pack, sun glasses, water bottle, hat or cap to protect your head from the sun, umbrella and raincoat or poncho for the summer months.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO GO?

The Dominican Republic is a great place to visit most any time of year. However, it is more crowded during the winter months (December to January) when tourists come to escape the cold. The rest of the year brings fewer crowds and more affordable prices, particularly at hotels and beach resorts.

If you travel between June and September, make sure to purchase flight tickets with flexible dates in case a hurricane or tropical storm decides to pay the island a visit. Fortunately, hurricanes don't hit often, but if they do it will definitely pay to have the option to change your flights without incurring any penalty fees. If you plan to travel during the high season, make sure to book your flights two to three months in advance to get the best rates.



Humpback whale, Samaná



ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

If you are traveling to the Dominican Republic, you will require a valid passport during your stay and departure from the country and a tourist card (already included in the airline ticket). Depending on your country you might require a visa.

Tourists staying beyond the usual 30-day period need to pay a proportional fee depending on the extension, which can be paid online before departure or at the airport's immigration section, after check-in and past security upon departure <https://migracion.gob.do/en/servicio/stay-extension/>

For travel information visit: <https://www.godominicanrepublic.com/> and if you have any questions, the Ministry of Tourism has a platform that provides a list of frequently asked questions and a live assistance via chat: <https://www.drtravelcenter.com/>

E-TICKET

The Dominican Republic adopted a free electronic system providing digital versions of the Traveler's Health Affidavit, Customs Declaration, and International Embarkation/Disembarkation forms, combined in a single digital form.

All passengers entering and departing the country on commercial flights will be required to fill out and submit their digital forms through the Electronic Ticket Portal <https://eticket.migracion.gob.do/> either before or upon their arrival to the country. For additional information and to watch an instructional video, please visit: <https://viajerodigital.mitur.gob.do/english/>

VISAS

The Dominican Republic issues tourist, business, work, student and residency visas. Tourist visas can be issued for one or several entries and can be extended to 60 days.

Any person, regardless of their nationality, can visit Dominican Republic if they are a legal resident of or, if they have one of the following valid visas in their passport: United States, Canada, United Kingdom or Schengen. For more details on visas, visit: <https://www.mirex.gob.do/servicios/visas/requisitos-para-el-extranjero>

A list of consulates can be found at the top right-hand corner of the page of the Ministry of Foreign Relations website <https://www.mirex.gob.do/contacto/directorio/consulados-exterior>



GETTING THERE

A large number of major international carriers fly to the Dominican Republic from North, Central and South America, and Europe. These include: Air Canada, Air France, American Airlines, Avianca, British Airways, Condor, Delta, Iberia, JetBlue Airways, Spirit, United Airlines and U.S. Airways.

Below are approximate flight times to the Dominican Republic from major cities in North America, South America and Europe:

Miami: 2 hours and 15 minutes

Bogota: 2 hours and 30 minutes

New York: 3 hours and 35 minutes

Chicago: 4 hours and 20 minutes

Mexico City: 4 hours and 20 minutes

Los Angeles: 6 hours and 50 minutes

London: 9 hours and 15 minutes

Berlin: 10 hours and 20 minutes

Airports and travel

Negotiating airports and flights on the way to or from a surgical procedure can be a stressful business if you do not take the necessary precautions ahead of time.

Ask your hospital in the Dominican Republic if it can provide you with a 'traveling letter' that includes a brief description of your condition or disability and, if appropriate, details of any difficulties that could occur and what assistance you might need. Most disabled travelers do not need to get medical clearance before travelling. However, some airlines may ask for evidence of fitness to travel and satisfy themselves of the patients' ability to attend to their personal needs.

Before traveling and depending on your needs, you should inquire about:

- Available assistance at check-in, moving around the terminal, on boarding and disembarking.
- Airline policy on taking equipment such as wheelchairs, portable machines, batteries, respirators or oxygen.

Airport security

- Inform officers of the medications you are carrying and separate them from other belongings before screening begins.
- If you have metal implants, such as artificial knees or hips, inform a security officer before screening begins.

**Note that U.S. airports allow medically necessary liquids through a checkpoint in any amount once they have been screened.*

Flights

- If at all possible, try to book your seat on the aisle, bulkhead or in business class (especially for your return trip).
- Take your medical prescriptions in your carry-on luggage.
- Make sure your prescriptions are properly labelled.

Informing yourself and making a few preparations ahead of time will go a long way toward making your travel time less stressful.

The Dominican Republic has seven international airports; however, the vast majority of international travelers enter the country through Punta Cana International Airport, located on the sun-soaked east coast of the island or Las Americas International Airport, outside Santo Domingo.

Punta Cana International Airport

TPE airport has two terminals connected by a small skytrain. Both terminals have signs in English for every service and facility. There is also a tourist information booth in each. You can contact the booth in Terminal 1 on 03-383 2790, or Terminal 2 on 03-398 3341. Both are open from 7am to 11.30pm and can help travelers with hotel bookings and bus information. Once out of immigration and customs, follow the airport signage to parking lots and access to transportation.

Las Americas International Airport (Santo Domingo)

The Las Americas International Airport (SDQ) is an international airport located in the Dominican Republic nearby Punta Caucedo and Boca Chica. Often your surgery or treatment package will include transportation to and from the airport, but if not, make arrangements with a shuttle service prior to arrival for better rates. A normal taxi ride into Santo Domingo will cost approximately \$40 USD. Rental car counters are located near Terminal B near the exit door after Customs. ATM's and cash machines are available at this airport as well as three different currency exchanges.



Metro in Santo Domingo

GETTING AROUND

Getting around Santo Domingo, where many of the major hospitals and clinics are located is quite simple and convenient. Santo Domingo's metropolitan area has a subway line that runs for 15 kilometers in a north-south direction passing through 16 stations, as well as an east-west line (Line 2A) that begins at the ninth kilometer of the Duarte Highway and travels all the way to the Francisco del Rosario Sánchez Bridge, stopping at 14 stations. There is also a safe and efficient secondary public transportation service provided and regulated by the Development of Land Transport (FONDET).

The city of Santo Domingo also has permanent public transportation inside the metropolitan area that is provided and regulated by the Oficina Metropolitana de Servicios de Autobuses (OMSA). There are eight different bus routes covered by Mercedes Benz and Volvo BUSCAAR buses, which transport passengers for a fee that ranges from RD\$10 (US\$0.21) to RD\$15 (US\$0.32) from 6:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Taxis offering transportation services in the city of Santo Domingo are easily located at airports, ports, the Colonial Zone and all hotels, where visitors can usually also find a sign with information regarding taxi rates. Most taxi cabs are cream-colored or yellow and are identified by a sign reading "TAXI TURÍSTICO" along with the vehicle code assigned by the Ministry of Tourism painted on its doors.

Whether you are in the city or in smaller towns, it is not advisable to utilize

the services of vehicles that are not properly identified as taxis. Also, the motoconcho (motorcycle taxi) might be a popular transportation mode for some locals, but these vehicles not recommended for tourists as they may be unsafe and possess no liability insurance to cover accidents or injuries.

For transportation from one city or town to another there are several reputable companies that have a long and distinguished track record in offering safe, efficient and timely transportation via comfortable air-conditioned buses.

Visitors will find car rental offices and services conveniently located in all airports. The minimum required age for renting a car in the country is 25. For renting vehicles, a valid driver's license - whether local, international or issued at the renter's country of origin- and a credit card are required.

The Dominican Republic has right hand traffic (RHT). Gas stations measure fuel in American Gallons. Tolls are paid on highways.

Source: from "La Cotica" and its related website: <http://dominicanway.com>, reviewed and authorized by the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic.

AFTERCARE

Just because your procedure or treatment is over does not mean that you are ready to pack your bags and head back home. Your doctor will recommend several days of monitored rest in order to ensure an optimal



recovery and the best possible outcome to your surgery or treatment. This process is often referred to as aftercare. In more technical terms it can be defined as "the process of maintaining the integrity and quality of a patient's care as he or she transitions from one setting (or set of circumstances) to another."

The actual aftercare process occurs in several different phases. It will also differ significantly from patient to patient depending on the nature of the treatment and the patient's condition and needs. A patient who has undergone open heart surgery, for example, will require much more follow-up and assistance than a patient who has traveled for plastic surgery or a hernia repair.

Where surgery is involved, phase one of the aftercare process begins the moment you leave the treatment center. If you are staying at a hotel then you may need to return to the medical facility for rehabilitation therapy, removal of stitches, nutritional counseling or simply for general monitoring of your post-procedure progress. Phase two begins once you return home. Here it is important to schedule a follow-up appointment with your doctor to ensure that your recovery is headed in the right direction.

Tips for an Optimal Aftercare Process

- Make scheduled appointments before and after treatment with your local doctor. Also make sure your doctor knows that you are traveling and that he or she is aware of the details of your procedure or treatment
- Before traveling, find out if a companion is recommended for the aftercare process

- Find out about the type and extent of the aftercare provided by the hospital
- Contact the hotel you will be staying at to inform them about your procedure and your needs after surgery. Ask them what type of facilities and services are available for patients with special needs (e.g. wheel chair accessibility, handicap accessible rooms and bathrooms, availability of nursing assistance)
- Don't leave the hospital without your complete medical records and a doctor's report that details the procedures performed and specifies recommendations for an optimal recovery process

It is important for both patients and providers to be proactive with the aftercare process as it is an integral part of a successful procedure outcome and promotes a positive medical tourism experience.

HOTEL CONSIDERATIONS: WHERE SHOULD I STAY AFTER MY PROCEDURE?

The type of medical procedure or treatment you are undergoing will play a large part in your decision of where to stay. A patient undergoing open heart surgery or a knee replacement, for example, will require extra care and very comfortable conditions after leaving the hospital. Not so for someone coming for a dental bridge or an executive physical. Below are some recommendations when booking a hotel:

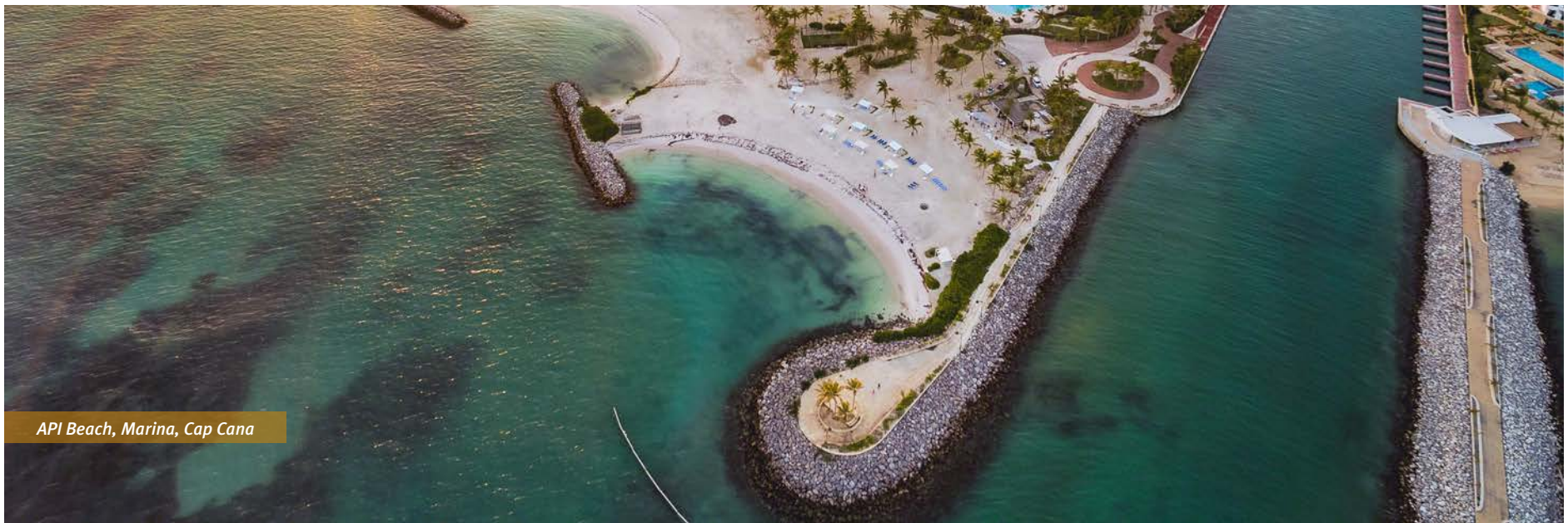
- If possible, choose a hotel or apartment located near the hospital.
- Choose a handicap access room (for patients with limited mobility)

- Make sure the front desk is aware you recently underwent a medical procedure
- Ask if there is a nurse or doctor on call
- Make sure the hotel can satisfy your post-surgery dietary needs
- Keep some clean towels, bandages and alcohol swabs handy

APPROPRIATE TOURISM

Although the Dominican Republic is a world-renown tourism destination, it is important to remember that your primary reason for visiting is to correct a medical condition or to renew your health. Therefore it is extremely important that you follow your doctor's advice regarding rest and leisure activities.

It is advisable that you schedule tourism activities before your treatment or surgery. If this is not an option due to a tight schedule, then make sure to talk to your doctor before booking any tours. Depending on your procedure your doctor may allow you to book some "soft tours" or short sightseeing excursions. If you've undergone a triple heart bypass in the last week, don't expect your doctor to allow you to engage in any strenuous activities or to stay out long in the heat. Refusing to follow your doctor's indications even in the smallest detail could lead to a slower healing process or even a medical complication. Don't take any chances with your health!



API Beach, Marina, Cap Cana



CONCLUSION

Looking to the Future

Medical tourism is a growing multi-billion dollar industry that is changing the face of healthcare around the world. Each year, an increasing numbers of patients turn to international providers in search of high quality, affordable medical. Governments, insurance companies and employers around the world are also discovering the benefits of allowing patients access to travel for the healthcare of their choice. Old barriers are eroding as individuals and companies alike discover the high quality of care and ultra-modern facilities available at a premier medical tourism destination such as the Dominican Republic.

As a country invested in attracting patients from around the world, the Dominican Republic welcomes you to research our medical facilities and take the next step to improving your health and wellbeing. You can do so by contacting any of the facilities listed in this guide or by getting in touch with the Dominican Health Tourism Association or the Medical Tourism Association®:

Dominican Health Tourism Association

Calle Elipse No. 3, Plaza Elipse, Local 203,
Urbanización Fernández, Santo Domingo, Distrito Nacional.
Phone: 809-544-0524
Website: adtusalud.org

Medical Tourism Association®

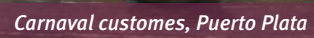
USA 001-561-791-2000
8845 N Military Trl #200
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410
info@MedicalTourismAssociation.com

The Dominican Republic Health and Wellness Destination Guide can also be accessed at www.medicaltourism.com.

Dominican Republic's healthcare services are gaining recognition the world over for high quality and affordability. As a world leader in medical tourism, we encourage you to explore the many healthcare options available for medical travelers in Dominican Republic. Regardless of the medical services you seek, it is our goal to make your medical travel experience an outstanding one.

To your Health!

Dominicus, La Romana





Dominican Republic

Health & Wellness Destination Guide

An information-packed how-to guide for individuals and employers seeking to learn about health and wellness opportunities in the Dominican Republic. As a rising medical tourism star, the Dominican Republic beckons medical travelers with cutting-edge medical technology, affordable prices and a culture of service second to none. From Health check-ups to knee replacements and most everything in-between, the Dominican Republic has firmly established itself as leading medical tourism destination.

Medical tourism offers an exciting new world of possibilities for individuals and companies to lower their healthcare costs!

- » Discover what makes the Dominican Republic a great medical tourism destination
- » Find out how much you should budget for your medical trip to the Dominican Republic
- » Important tips for planning your Dominican Republic medical trip
- » Learn which are the best medical facilities for your procedure or treatment

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