



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



alicesoup

A coastal tour

Puerto Rico, San Juan, 8 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: This trip takes you into some favorite local spots. Definitely not in San Juan, you'll hear a lot more Spanish. We flew into Ponce and left via Aguadilla, which requires a little bit more planning. You can fly in and out of one airport, but you would have to backtrack 2 to 3 hours, and we preferred to spend the time at the beach. This trip is done by staying at paradores, which are independent inns and guest houses that run about \$60 to \$100 a night, and were all clean and charming in our experiences. This is a trip for exploration, gorgeous views, and real Puerto Rican character.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Puerto Rico

DAY NOTE: We flew into Ponce and rented a car, a must to get around the island. Ponce is a quaint city, but not much to do. We headed about 40 minutes east to Patillas. The coastal route along the southeast corner is breathtaking. This is one of the least developed areas on the island, and is definitely local (be prepared to exercise some Spanish!).



Caribe Playa Beach Resort

Caribbean coast experience

Day 3 - Puerto Rico

DAY NOTE: Heading over to the west side of the island, which means backtracking through Ponce. But we stopped at Tibes, just 10 minutes north of downtown and well worth the detour with informative and enthusiastic personal guides.



La Montserrat

Culinary institution



El Parador Guanica 1929

Close to southwest attractions

Day 4 - San Juan, Puerto Rico



Guánica Dry Forest

Spectacular natural reserve



El Bohio

Local favorite



El Parador Guanica 1929

Close to southwest attractions

Day 5 - San Juan, Puerto Rico



Combate Beach (El)

Fishing town frequented by locals



Boqueron Public Beach

Great for swimming and windsurfing

Day 6 - San Juan

DAY NOTE: Headed North to the west end corner of Rincon. There are more American tourists here, but they tend to be surfers and others looking for an offbeat adventurer. Rincon's got great beaches and some scattered nightlife and excellent (but casual) restaurants.



Punta Higuero

Famous Surf



Villa Cofresí Hotel & Restaurant

Awesome vacation packages

Day 7 - San Juan



Crashboat Beach

Nice sleepy beach



El Faro

Lighthouse and park



Villa Cofresí Hotel & Restaurant

Awesome vacation packages

Day 8

DAY NOTE: Heading out by way of the Aguadilla airport. There were extra charges to leave the car, but it was worth it for the greater freedom to travel around the island.

Day 1 - Puerto Rico



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contact:
tel: 787-839-6339
www.caribeplaya.com

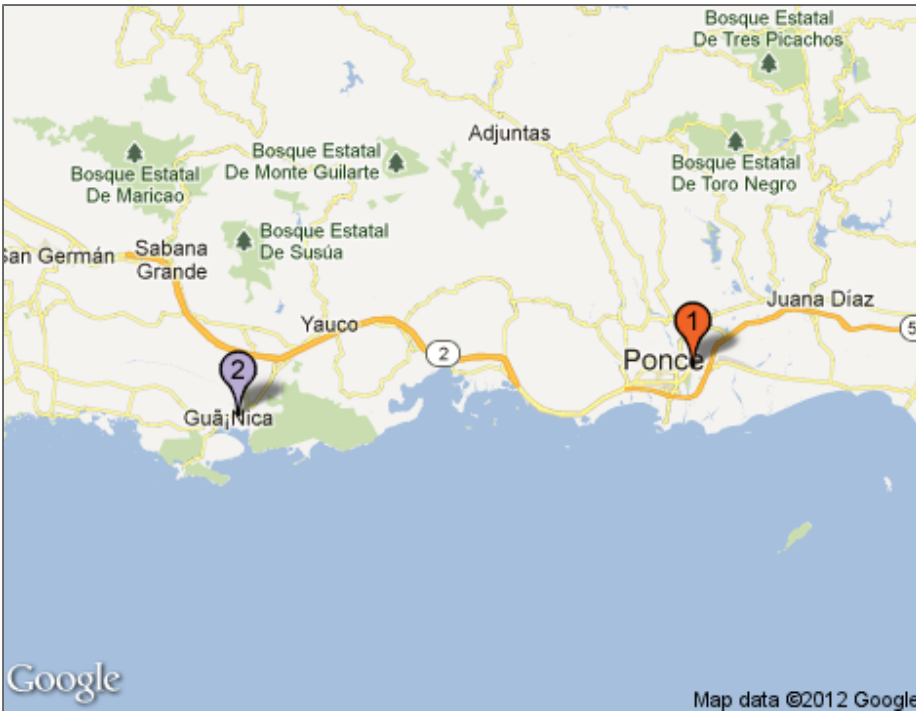
location:
Route 3, Km. 112
Patillas PR 00723

1 Caribe Playa Beach Resort

DESCRIPTION: Located on the Caribbean's southeast coast, this oceanfront resort is 12 miles from Patillas Lake and the Guavate Forest. All 30 air-conditioned guestrooms have balconies or patios with Caribbean views, ceiling fans, and windows that open. The resort provides towels, hammocks, and lounge chairs for guests to use while swimming in the pool or in the ocean.



Day 3 - Puerto Rico



QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Heading over to the west side of the island, which means backtracking through Ponce. But we stopped at Tibes, just 10 minutes north of downtown and well worth the detour with informative and enthusiastic personal guides.

contact:

tel: 1 787 841 2740

location:

Sector Las Cucharas, Route 2
Ponce PR 00716

hours:

11a-10p

1 La Montserrat

DESCRIPTION: Located by the ocean, this restaurant draws a loyal clientele from the surrounding residential neighborhood. A culinary institution in Ponce for the last 20 years, the restaurant occupies a large, airy, modern building divided into two dining areas, one slightly more formal than the other. Specialties, concocted from the catch of the day, might include octopus salad, four kinds of asopao, a whole red snapper in Créole sauce, or a selection of steaks and grills. The cuisine is standard Puerto Rican fare, and it's a family favorite. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: 17878210999

fax: 17878211842

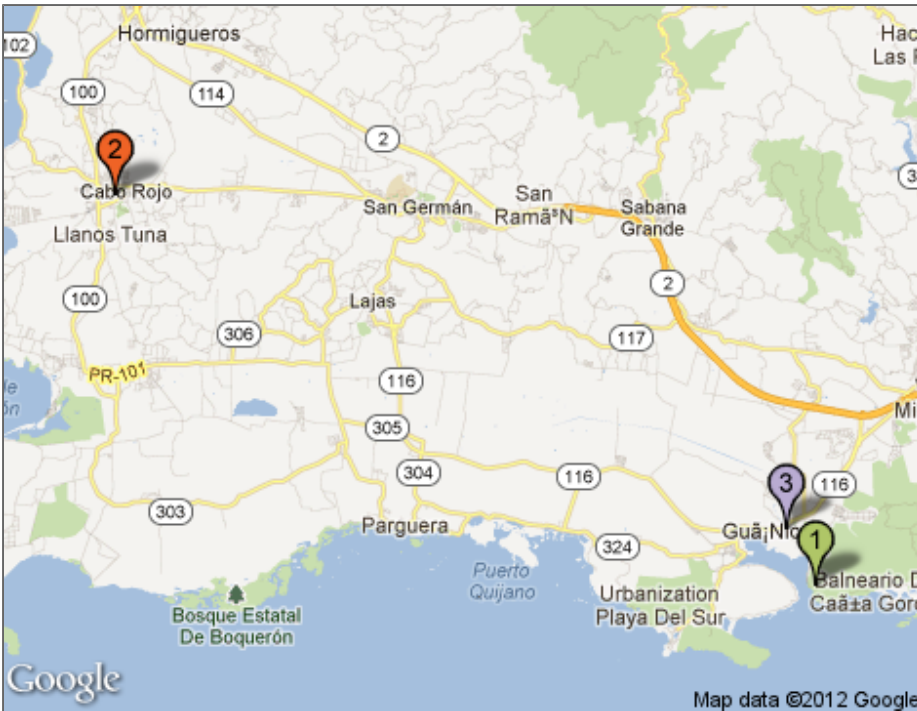
location:

Carr. 116, Int. 3116 Km.2,
Guanica
Guanica

2 El Parador Guanica 1929

DESCRIPTION: Simple, clean accommodations in a restored plantation style-setting that once served as a hotel and tourism school. The hotel is situated on a bay, has a fairly large outdoor swimming pool, and 27 air-conditioned rooms with television; the onsite-restaurant serves complementary breakfast. It's located a quick jaunt from the recreational Playa Santa beach, and a short drive to other Guanica beaches and Cabo Rojo attractions. It's a nice, quiet alternative to the busier accommodations in La Parguera and Boqueron.

Day 4 - San Juan, Puerto Rico



QUICK NOTE

contact:
tel: +1 787 821 5706
<http://www.gotopuertorico.com/guanica-puerto-rico.php>

location:
Off Highway 2
Guánica 00653

hours:
9a-5p M-Su

1 Guánica Dry Forest

DESCRIPTION: Guánica Dry Forest is a vast and tranquil natural preserve dominated by cacti, low canopies, and hundreds of bird species. Guánica is primarily a nature and bird-watcher's paradise. Tucked away in the southeast corner of the island, the forest's many trails are rarely traversed by locals or tourists, and are great for non-strenuous peaceful hikes. Bring plenty of water and mosquito repellent, and afterwards head to nearby beaches at Cabo Rojo or Boquerón to cool off. © NileGuide



Photo courtesy of Oquendo

contact:
tel: 1 787 851 2755

location:
Route 102, Km13.9
Cabo Rojo PR 00623

2 El Bohio

DESCRIPTION: Located in Cabo Rojo, this is a local favorite and informal restaurant that is 15 minutes south of Mayaguez. It serves steaks and a variety of seafood, all cooked to order. Dining is available on an enclosed wooden deck that is built out over the sea or in the dining room inside. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 17878210999
fax: 17878211842

location:
Carr. 116, Int. 3116 Km.2,
Guanica

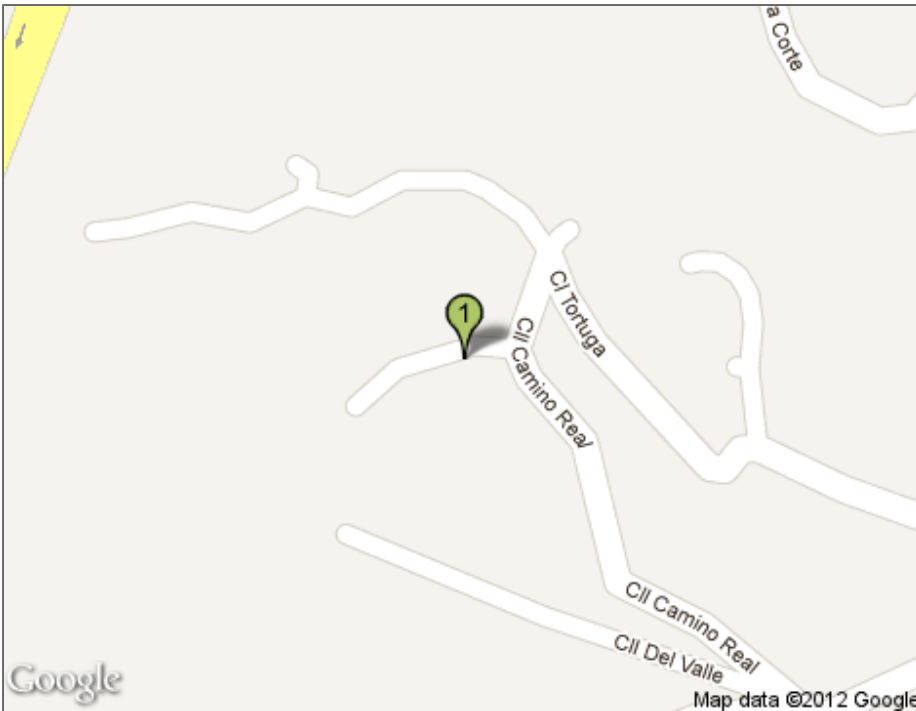
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Guanica

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Day 5 - San Juan, Puerto Rico



QUICK NOTE

contact:

tel: +1 787 721 2400 (Puerto Rico Tourism Company)
<http://www.gotopuertorico.com/beaches-puerto-rico.php>

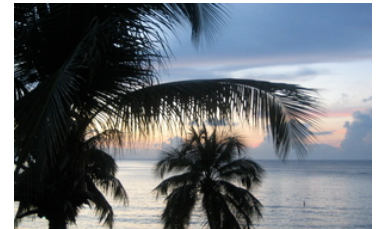
location:

Route 3301
Cabo Rojo 00623

1 Combate Beach (El)

DESCRIPTION: Located in the town of Cabo Rojo, Combate is a favorite among the young and old. El Combate beach is one of the most beautiful beaches on the south side of Puerto Rico. Its tranquil waters, perfect for swimming, are just one of the many things that make it worth visiting. There are picnic area, restrooms and parking. The beach is also close to nearby attractions such as Boquerón's fishing village and the bioluminescent bay.

© NileGuide



by Melissa Alvarado Sierra

contact:

tel: +1 787 721 2400
<http://www.gotopuertorico.com/beaches-puerto-rico.php>

location:

Route 101
Boqueron

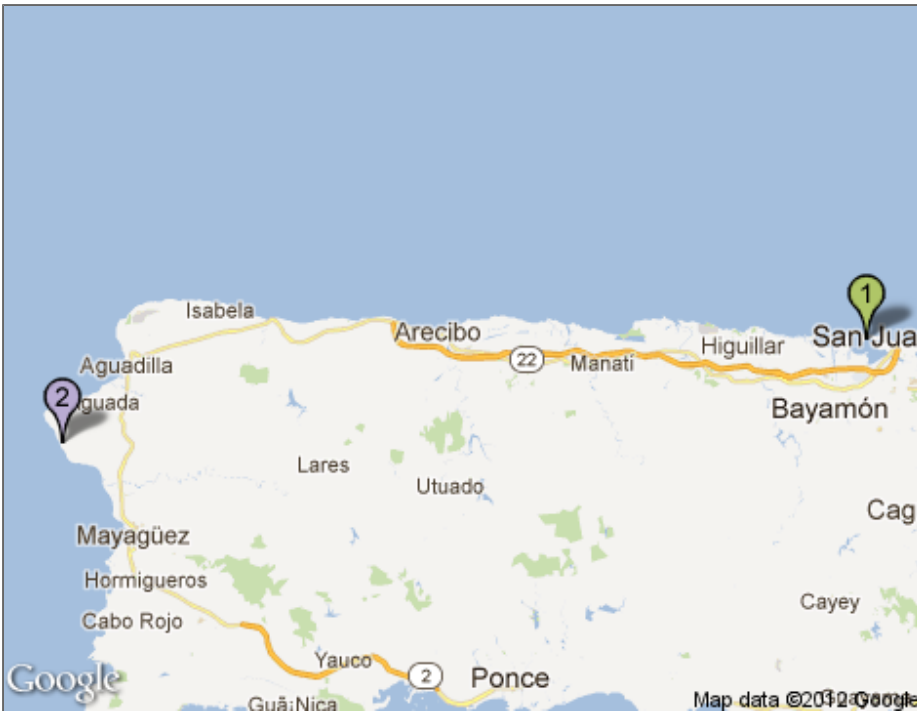
Boqueron Public Beach

DESCRIPTION: The Boquerón public beach is a favorite vacation destination for locals and boaters. Boquerón is on the true Caribbean side of the island, so the waters here are calm and clear, and the attitude here (as in nearby Guanica and Cabo Rojo) is distinctly more islander. As the locals say, "the west side is the best side." At night, the cozy, funky square of hotels, restaurants, and bars alongside the harbor jumps alive. Stroll through the streets, but stop to dance, sip piña coladas, and slurp down fresh clams. Boquerón is a gay and lesbian friendly area, and many of the establishments are gay and lesbian owned. © NileGuide



Photo courtesy of oquendo

Day 6 - San Juan



QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Headed North to the west end corner of Rincon. There are more American tourists here, but they tend to be surfers and others looking for an offbeat adventurer. Rincon's got great beaches and some scattered nightlife and excellent (but casual) restaurants.

contact:

tel: +1 787 721 2400 (Puerto Rico Tourism Company)
<http://www.puertorico.com/blog/punta-higuero-lighthouse-in-rincon>

location:

Route 413
Rincón

hours:

24 hours daily

1 Punta Higuero

DESCRIPTION: Since hosting the Surfing World Championships in 1968, surfers have flocked to Rincon and never looked back. Punta Higuero is one of the favorite spots for professional surfers, as the waves here are the most challenging. Waves can even reach a colossal 15- to 25-foot range in the winter season. There are several eateries and surf shops nearby. © wcities.com

contact:

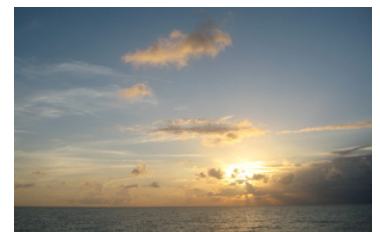
tel: +1 787 823 2450
fax: +1 787 823 1770
<http://www.villacofresi.com>

location:

Road 115 Km 12.3
Rincón 00677

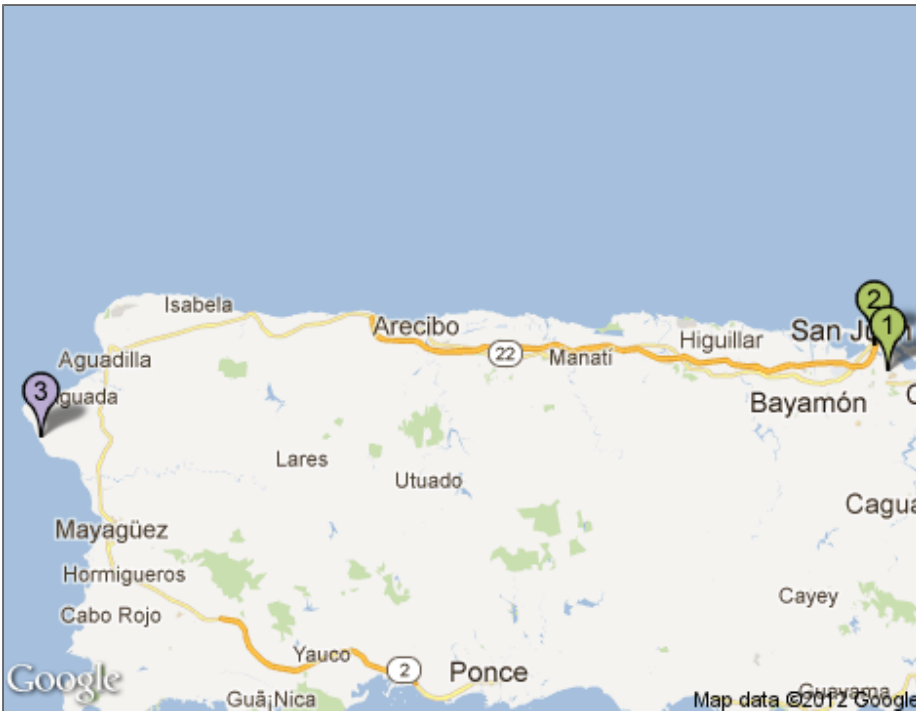
2 Villa Cofresí Hotel & Restaurant

DESCRIPTION: Villa Cofresi is a simple, sort of blandly decorated hotel in the town of Rincon. Its location is good compared to other hotels in the area. The beach is right in front of the property and most rooms have ocean views. There's a decent restaurant in the hotel and the pool area faces the beach. The hotel in general is very good, with friendly staff and family oriented amenities.



by Melissa Alvarado Sierra

Day 7 - San Juan



QUICK NOTE

contact:
tel: +1 787 724 2500
<http://www.gotopuertorico.com/beaches-puerto-rico.php>

location:
Aguadilla
San Juan

1 Crashboat Beach

DESCRIPTION: This beach is famous for the colorful fishing boats found across the sandy shore and for providing decent waves for surfers. The beach is clean and the water is clear. Because of the facilities that the area provides, such as restaurants, boardwalks, picnic areas and showers, locals flock every weekend to spend entire days between family and friends here.

© NileGuide



Photo courtesy of NeitherFanboy

location:
Westernmost town in Puerto Rico
Rincón PR

2 El Faro

DESCRIPTION: El Faro is a lighthouse located in the town of Rincón on the western tip of Puerto Rico. El Faro was built in 1892 and has lived through many natural disasters. Today, the lighthouse still stands and guides ships entering the Mona passage. There's a museum inside that is only open during winter time.

© NileGuide



Photo courtesy of Oquendo

contact:

tel: +1 787 823 2450
fax: +1 787 823 1770
<http://www.villacofresi.com>

location:

Road 115 Km 12.3
Rincón 00677



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Day 8

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San Juan Snapshot

Local Info

Many believe San Juan is a small Spanish colonial town with but a few bustling avenues. However this impression does not aptly describe the breath and depth of this fine old-world city. Modern-day San Juan encompasses a vast metropolis that covers seven unique and distinct districts. This makes for an eclectic combination of sights and sounds that is essential to the wonder and joy of visiting San Juan.

Old San Juan/Puerta de Tierra

San Juan is a traditional, colonial city that is bordered by walls. As the seat of the island's bicameral government, it houses La Fortaleza, home of the Governor and El Capitolio, the seat of the House of Representatives. The Senate, on the other hand, is located in nearby Puerta de Tierra. However, both districts can be found on the islet of San Juan and are connected to the mainland via several bridges. Old San Juan itself consists of narrow streets encompassing over four hundred years of history and tradition. Dine in one of the great establishments on Fortaleza Street, party in San Sebastián until dawn, or simply stroll along the charming avenues and thoroughfares. Similar to Europe, a famous tradition in Old San Juan is to people-watch, and there is no better place to indulge in this activity than from one of the several plazas that are located throughout the city. This town has something for all ages, young and old. A must-see is the impressive Spanish fort El Morro located

on the north side of the islet. Puerta de Tierra houses hotels such as the famous Caribe Hilton. While a lot of Old San Juan has been in a state of disrepair, the current renovations are making this once decrepit community an acceptable tourist destination.

Condado

El Condado, as the locals say, is the island's most glamorous district, featuring boutiques, a variety of restaurants, and some of the finest hotels on the island. Contrary to popular belief, many nationals do reside here in the exquisite turn-of-the-century mansions. You'll notice the populace on any given day to be a good balance between tourists and locals. If you are an avid jogger, you'll love the expanse of open area. This district spans from the Condado Plaza Hotel & Casino in the west to the Ocean Park area in the east.

Isla Verde

Isla Verde is home to high-rise apartment buildings, huge clubs and luxurious hotels. This area is actually part of the municipality of Carolina, connected to San Juan via several highways and streets. It spans from the Punta Las Marías area (adjacent to Ocean Park) to the land just beyond the International Airport. Isla Verde hosts world-class hotels that include the Ritz-Carlton and El San Juan. Its nightlife is exciting, and the enormous balneario, or public beach, is where locals and guests come to sunbathe and get their fill of people-watching.

Hato Rey

Hato Rey is several miles from Old San Juan but is easily accessible. It is the island's central commercial district, where the local wheelers and dealers conduct their business. Thus, its restaurant scene caters to more business people than anywhere else on the island. Roosevelt, the district's residential area, can be found just off Highway 52. It is one of the most famous venues for nightlife in San Juan, and the Plaza Las Américas, the Caribbean's largest mall, is also located here.

Santurce/Miramar

Both the Santurce and Miramar districts are located just off Condado and Old San Juan, but north of Hato Rey. Santurce was originally an upper-class neighborhood and entertainment. Today, there are office buildings and abandoned structures with a small but very good marketplace (Plaza del Mercado). A major campaign is under way by City Hall to restore the sector's vitality.

Río Piedras

This district is known as University City because it houses the University of Puerto Rico. Visiting Río Piedras is enlightening for those who want to explore the real Puerto Rico first-hand. The district has a traditional Plaza del Mercado and a very hometown atmosphere.

©