



Santo Domingo

In its infancy five hundred years ago, Santo Domingo was the capital of the New World – a launching pad for the transformation of history and a clash of civilizations that today's social scientists could only dream of. Over its storied history, Santo Domingo has been invaded, defeated in battle, and burned to the ground. Nevertheless, a resilient local population never gave up, and Santo Domingo has grown into a proud daughter at the melding of worlds. The capital city's historical apex might have come in the early 1500s, but today it is as vibrant as ever.

Without an understanding of Santo Domingo's long and colorful history, we are lost as to its significance, which led UNESCO to declare this lively city a world heritage site. To truly appreciate Santo Domingo, visitors must immerse themselves in its grand patrimony.

History

Santo Domingo's founding came about only because Christopher Columbus and his crew had failed twice in finding a suitable location to settle. First, the men he left at La Navidad in 1492 fought with local Taínos and were killed; later, the men living at La Isabela were growing restive (and dying at an alarming rate) in an inhospitable and unfriendly locale. Bartolomé, Christopher's brother, led a group of explorers down the middle of the island and set up a fort in 1496 when he reached the southern coast, on the eastern bank of the Río Ozama where it meets the Caribbean Sea. He called the fort Santo Domingo de Gúzman, and though he named the neighboring settlement La Nueva Isabela, the colonists stuck with the name of the fort, shedding the bad memories of the original Isabela.

The Spanish crown
officially recognized Santo
Domingo as a city in 1498.

Christopher Columbus quickly ran afoul of powerful interests on two continents. He was removed from his post as governor and replaced by Nicolás de Ovando in 1502. After a destructive hurricane, Ovando moved Santo Domingo to the opposite side of the river, which is where the remains of the colonial city are found today. It was also under Ovando that Santo Domingo began its ascent to New World prominence. Exploration and energy radiated from this city oriented towards discovery and conquest. The Spanish crown established its colonial headquarters here, creating a building boom reflective of the late medieval period – imposing forts of stone and wood and grand, arching cathedrals. Many of the famous Spanish conquistadors spent time in Santo Domingo, planning their journeys, raising funds,

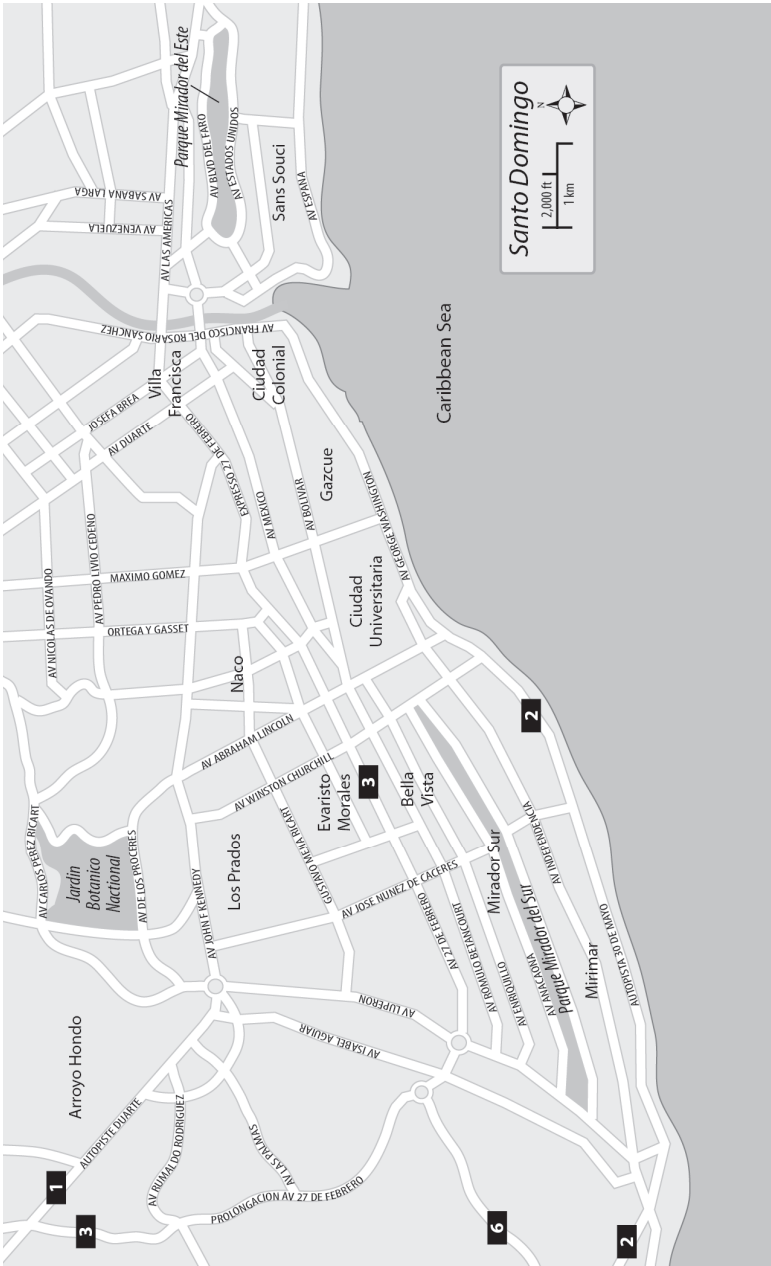
and hiring explorers. By 1509, Ovando was gone, replaced by a familiar face, that of Diego Columbus – Christopher’s son. Over the course of just a few decades, Santo Domingo came to be the proving ground of many men who set off to claim lands and conquer peoples in the name of the Crown: Ponce de León hopped to Puerto Rico and Florida; Diego Velázquez set off for Cuba; Hernán Cortéz vanquished Mexico; and Vasco Nuñez de Balboa landed on Panama, crossed its isthmus and glimpsed the Pacific for the first time by a European.

Santo Domingo, as the first New World capital, came to be known as the city of firsts. It was home to the first American cathedral, university, paved road, convent, hospital, and factory, among other distinctions. Santo Domingo as a seat of power and prestige, however, was not to last. New and exciting lands farther south drew people and resources away from Hispaniola. The English and French, covetous of Spain’s colonial supremacy, moved to take their share. A valiant colonial government built walls and forts to protect the city, but in time Santo Domingo fell, both physically and in importance. In 1586, Santo Domingo sunk to its nadir, as the pirate and English nobleman Sir Francis Drake invaded and sacked the city. He held it for ransom, pillaged with vigor, and left half of Santo Domingo in ashes. The Spanish colony did not recover for many years. France also took advantage of the powerless Spanish authorities by landing on and then claiming the western third of the island, calling it Saint Domingue (present-day Haiti). Santo Domingo itself came under French colonial rule in 1795 as part of a peace treaty between France and Spain.

Six years later, Toussaint L’Ouverture and his revolutionary Haitian army cross the colonial border, and then captured Santo Domingo. After the Haitian rebels declared independence from France in 1804, they eventually ceded back to Spain its former colony. The Dominican Republic declared independence from Spain in 1821, with Santo Domingo as its capital, but fell back under Haitian rule from 1822 until 1844. During the repeated invasions, Santo Domingo suffered ignominiously, its buildings torched and inhabitants driven from their homes.

Dominicans finally saw victory in 1844, when independence forces led by Juan Pablo Duarte drove out the Haitian army for the last time. The Dominican Republic became an independent state, and Santo Domingo took its rightful place as a national capital. Of course, this lasted just until 1861, when the feckless military government under General Pedro Santana allowed Spain to re-annex the country. The rest of the country, displeased, supported a rebellion, which then threw off the unwanted neo-colonial yoke in 1865. The city then became home to a restive population under constant threat from outsiders and endured endless political intrigue.

While European prominence in the Caribbean declined, the United States moved in to claim regional supremacy. Ostensibly for the sake of peace and security, the US invaded and occupied the Dominican Republic from 1916 through 1924. Rafael Trujillo, having been trained by Americans with the new Dominican army, soon rose to power, humbly renaming Santo Domingo after himself – calling it Ciudad Trujillo. Under the dictator, the city experienced industrialization and modernization while being stifled under political and cultural repression. The Trujillo regime built businesses and infrastructure, and Santo Domingo attracted a flow of migrants from rural areas. After Trujillo’s fall, the US again invaded to quell political instability and protect against a supposed potential communist threat, sending tens of thousands of marines into Santo Domingo in 1965.



Santo Domingo

2,000 ft
1 km

N

Over the past half-decade, the Dominican capital city has experienced enormous growth, doubling in size several times over. The tight grids of la Zona Colonial have morphed outwards into large, traffic-choked avenues lined with gleaming skyscrapers and trendy bars and restaurants directly alongside horse-drawn carts and vendors hawking everything under the hot Caribbean sun. Endlessly jumbled suburbs to the east, north, and west provide homes for the city's three million inhabitants. Santo Domingo, bursting at its seams, is back in action, thrilling, energetic, and alive.

Transport

AIR

All international flights to the capital come into **Aeropuerto Internacional Las Americas** (SDQ) (549-0328; 947-2225), located 22km (14km) east of the city on the Caribbean Sea. Licensed taxis from the airport to the center of Santo Domingo cost around RD\$1,600, but hotels often offer airport transport; check on this when making reservations. Taxi drivers will try to flag down passengers and give them similar prices, but there is a taxi office immediately to the left when walking outside with a printed price list. A trusted taxi driver used by Peace Corps Volunteers is named Wilson, a friendly character who can pick up passengers in his weathered yet dependable station wagon for prices well below the going rate at the airport (494-7935). Try to call him the day before arrival to arrange for pick-up (Spanish only).

Airlines servicing SDQ

Air Canada
 Air France
 American Airlines
 British Airways
 Continental
 Copa
 Delta
 Iberia
 Jet Blue
 KLM
 Spirit
 US Airways

To catch a *guagua* from the airport, go upstairs to Departures. Step outside, turn to the left and walk to the end of the building. This is where the *guaguas* pick up passengers. The vehicle should have a *carro público* seal on the doors. The *guagua* enters downtown through C/ 27 de Febrero, continuing towards C/ Duarte and C/ Paris, which is a major transfer point to pick up *carros públicos* heading towards la Zona Colonial, Gazcue, and other neighborhoods. Tell the driver where you are trying to go, and he will direct you to the best place to get off and transfer.

To get to the airport from Santo Domingo using public transportation, take the bus that leaves from Av. Sabana Larga in Santo Domingo del Este, on the east side of the Ozama River. To get there, catch a Corredor 27 bus anywhere along Av. 27 de Febrero, and then get off at Av. Sabana Larga. Look for the Airport Terminal route, a yellow bus that goes directly to the airport (there is a sign painted on a small corner building, though not easily visible from the street). Be sure to double check with the driver about his route (RD\$50).

Another option, albeit a bit more expensive, is to take a Boca Chica bus that generally does not stop at the airport (only a few go to the airport in the morning and afternoon), so you'll have to hop off at the entrance to Route 66 (Sammy Sosa highway) and catch a *motoconcho*. It's not as cost effective as the Sabana Larga route because the *motoconcho* is generally RD\$300 and up.

Located in Higüero, Santo Domingo, **Aeropuerto Internacional Dr. Joaquín Balaguer** (AZS – formerly Aeropuerto La Isabela) replaced Aeropuerto Internacional La Herrera in 2006. Still sometimes known as La Isabela, this airport was renamed after former Dominican President Dr. Joaquín Balaguer. Domestic flights, and those to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, depart from this airport. *Located north of Parque Mirador del Norte at the end of Av. Presidente Antonio Guzmán Fernández in El Higüero; 826-4019 ext. 112/826-4003*

Airlines servicing AZS

Aerodoma
Air Century
Helidosa
Servicios Aéreos
Profesionales (SAP)
Volair

RENTAL CARS

Numerous rental car companies have offices in the Dominican Republic. The best way to find a good deal is to do a simple search on orbitz.com, priceline.com, or any other preferred rental company's direct site.

See the **Transportation** section (pg. XX) in the introduction of this book for major rental car companies and more information on driving in the Dominican Republic.

BY BUS

As described in the **Transportation** section (p.XX), the entire country is well connected by both private bus companies and *sindicatos de guaguas* or bus unions. Below are some of the major private companies that connect Santo Domingo to towns and villages across the DR, as well as important bus stops where *guaguas* congregate before heading to their respective destinations.

Caribe Tours Offering the most comprehensive coverage in cool comfort, Caribe Tours runs bus routes across the entire country, as well as one to Port-Au-Prince, Haiti. Check out the website or visit the station in Santo Domingo for destinations and departure times. Prices range from RD\$50 to RD\$350. The bright, busy, but highly functional central terminal is located on the corner of Av. 27 de Febrero and Av. Leopoldo Navarro. 221-4422; www.caribetours.com.do

Metro Tours Slightly cleaner, more organized, and more expensive than Caribe Tours, Metro services several cities in the north, including Santiago and Puerto Plata. Av. Churchill at C/ Francisco Prats Ramírez; 227-0101; www.metroserVICIOTURISTICOS.COM

Transporte Espinal Espinal is an additional, though not as highly regarded, coach bus service that runs from Santo Domingo north to Bonao, La Vega, Santiago, and Puerto Plata. In Santo Domingo, buses depart from the downtown terminal (69 Av. París between C/ Juana Saltipopa and C/ Dr. Betances), and also at Kilómetro 9, every twenty minutes from 5am to 8:40pm. Prices are similar to the aforementioned two lines. 689-9301 or 560-1463; www.transporteespinal.com

Expreso Bavaro runs a direct coach bus service between the capital and Bavaro, with a stop in La Romana. Departure times in both directions are 7am, 10am, 2pm and 4pm. Arrive early, as the buses tend to sell out quickly, and the company does not sell tickets in advance. RD\$400; Corner of C/ Juan Sánchez Ruiz & Av. Máximo Gómez; Santo Domingo: 682-9670; Bavaro: 552-0771

MAJOR BUS STOPS

Kilómetro 9 (also simply called “Nueve”)

Located on kilometer nine of Autopista Duarte north out of Santo Domingo, buses leave every 15 to 30 minutes (except to Cotuí) for the Cibao from this “terminal,” which is best described as a loud, chaotic cluster of *guaguas* and street vendors. To get there, all cab drivers know where Kilómetro 9 is and many *carro público* routes service the terminal. In private vehicle, it is located where Autopista Duarte and Av. Luperón meet. *Guaguas* leave Km. 9 to the following destinations:

Bonao: (on the Tarea Bus company) RD\$115; 1 hr.; 560-7779

Cotuí: RD\$170; leaves every hr.; 2 hrs.

Moca: RD\$180; 2hrs.15min.

San Francisco Macorís: RD\$220, 2hrs.15min.

Santiago: RD\$220, 2hrs. 45min.

The same bus services: **La Vega** (RD\$150, 1hr. 30min.), **Villa Tapia** (RD\$180, 1hr. 45min.), **Salcedo** (RD\$200, 2hrs.), and **Tenares** (RD\$200, 2hr. 15min.).

Parque Enriqueillo

Parque Enriqueillo is another hub for long-distance *guagua* departures, mostly to the East. Numerous bus collectives are tucked around the surrounding blocks of the park, so the best way to find yours is by asking a local. An important distinction to keep in mind is that nearly all locations offer an *expreso* and a *voladora/caliente*. *Expresos* generally go straight to the location clearly labeled on the windshield, with a few stops in major towns on the way. *Voladoras/calientes* stop wherever a *doña* wishes, so unless traveling to a particular rural area or small town, take the *expreso* and save time. A/C is generally available on the buses, but it's often hard to notice on those packed with passengers' packages and the occasional animal. If you get stuck standing, it may be worth asking when the next bus leaves and wait it out, or else you might be standing for the entire trip.

Baní: RD\$85; every 15 min., 5am-10pm; 1.5hrs.

Boca Chica: RD\$70; caliente every 15 min., expreso hourly, 6am-8pm; 45 min.

El Seibo: Caliente/expreso RD\$160/175; 6am - 5:30pm; 2.5 hrs.; *guaguas* leave from Parque Enriqueillo on C/ José Martí between C/ Ravelo and C/ Caracas

Higüey: Caliente/expreso RD\$150/170; caliente every 20 minutes, expreso hourly, 6am-7pm; 2.5 hrs.

Juan Dolio: RD\$80; every 30 minutes, 6am-9:30pm; 1hr.

La Romana (with stops in Juan Dolio and Boca Chica): Caliente/expreso RD\$150/160; caliente every 20 min., expreso hourly, 5am-9pm; 2 hrs.; on C/ Ravelo between C/ Duarte and C/ 19 de Marzo.

Las Galeras: RD\$325; 6am, 7:30am, 12pm, 5pm; 4 hrs.; (see Samaná below for location)

Las Terrenas: RD\$285; 8:30am, 9:30am, 11am, 1:40pm and 3pm; 3.5 hrs.; (see Samaná below for location)

Samaná: RD\$275; every 30 min. 6am-5:30pm with some exceptions in the morning; 3 hrs.; 129 C/ Barahona near Parque Enriquillo across from the Plaza Lama parking lot

San Cristóbal: RD\$90, every 30 min., 6am-10pm; 45 min.; along C/ Duarte

San Pedro de Macorís: RD\$90; every 30 min. 6am-9:30pm; 1hr.; along C/ José Martí

Sosúa: RD\$320; nine departures 6:30am-3:30pm; 5hrs.

Pintura

Named for the adjacent paint factory, Pinturas Popular, Pintura is the final departure point for all *guaguas* leaving for the Southwest. Most of them originate in Parque Enriquillo or near Parque Independencia along Calle Bolívar, but all pass through here. Generally the *guaguas* are full by the time they arrive to Pintura and so to ensure a seat, it's best to hop on one closer to their origin. There is no terminal, but rather a jumble of buses waiting for passengers while zealous vendors jump on trying to sell passengers cakes, cheese puffs, and rainbow lollipops the size of a child's head. Pintura is located just west of the Plaza de la Bandera (flag) when traveling along Avenida 27 de Febrero near the entrance to the Highway 6 de Noviembre, which eventually unites with Highway 2/Sánchez. Some of the *guaguas* that pass through Pintura include Azua, Bani, Barahona, Jimaní, Pedernales, San José de Ocoa, and San Juan de la Maguana.

INTERURBAN TRANSPORT

The motley public transport system in Santo Domingo is comprised of *guaguas* (run by *sindicatos* or unions), green government OMSA (Oficina Metropolitana de

Ten "Must Know" Dominican Phrases

Pégate como anoche – Press yourself (against someone) like last night: get real close

Anda el Diablo – The devil walks: whoa, damn, that's crazy

Dique (diz que) – It is said: supposedly, I heard people say

Qué lo que? – What is what: what's up?

Ya tú sabe – You already know: You know (what I mean), no need to explain

Y entonce?: So, what do we do?, What's up?, What's going on here?

Bueeeno: Well (then), hmm...: Used as a way to agree or disagree without involving or implicating oneself. For example, if Neighbor A says to Neighbor B, "I think José is stealing mangos from my tree," Neighbor B can respond, "Bueeeno," to participate in the conversation without having to actually agree or disagree.

Dime a ver – Tell me to see: What's up?

Pero ven acá! – But come here!: Oh, come on!, really!?

Ah po' tá bien – Ah well its fine: OK or You'll see (I'll get you back)

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Servicios de Autobuses) buses, the new underground Metro, *carro públicos*, and *motos*. Below are some tips to make sense of this organized chaos. Favorite travel stories often find their roots in public transport, so don't be shy, and as Dominicans say, *pégate como anoche* (press yourself [against someone] like last night)!

LOCAL BUSES

Known in the Dominican Republic as *guaguas*, these vehicles can be anything from minivans to minibuses to large buses. A trip to Santo Domingo would not be complete without sharing a three person-seat with four others as *bachata* music roars, the *cofrador* yells catcalls to bystanders, and passengers swap *chisme* (gossip) of the day. *Sindicatos de guaguas* (bus driver unions) connect the entire city, but the routes are not posted, so the best way to learn them is by asking a local, who are always eager to assist. RD\$20-40 per trip

SHARED PUBLIC CARS – CARROS PÚBLICOS

Japan's auto trade agreements with the Dominican Republic have resulted in a vast sea of Toyota Corollas in various states of disrepair that make up the *carro público* brigade. The *carros* are easy to spot because of their distinctive green or yellow-painted roofs, the signs affixed to the roofs displaying their route and the windshield and door stickers denoting them as an official *carro público*. RD\$20-40 per trip

Public Transport Hand Signals

A key element to understanding the public *guagua* and *carro público* routes are the drivers' hand signals, which are always made outside their left-hand window. These signals often take the place of destination banners or signs on the windshield of these vehicles, though most do have some type of signage. The following signals describe which route that vehicle is taking, how far they will travel and if they are full:

Finger point left or away from the driver: Routes that cover that direction of the city, depending upon which direction the vehicle is heading. For example, if a *carro público* is heading west along Av. Bolivar and the driver points left, he will be turning left/south at some point along his route.

Finger point right or towards the driver: Using the same ideology as the left point, the right point means the vehicle will eventually turn the direction that is to the right of the driver at some point in the route. For example, if a *carro público* is heading west along Av. Bolivar and the driver points to the right, he will be turning right/north at some point along his route.

Finger point straight: this vehicle will continue straight (*derecho*) on its current street for the majority of the route.

Similarly, many savvy Dominicans will use these hand signs to signal to the *carro público* drivers which car routes they want to catch and the drivers will stop in response.

Piratas

Be wary of *piratas* (pirated cars), which function as *carros públicos* but are not registered with the union. *Piratas* often have the same painted roof, but lack the route sign and registration sticker. Unfortunately, robberies can occur in *piratas*, during which the passengers and driver are all in on the plot and demand money and valuables. Don't let this deter you from using *carros públicos*. They are a fast and inexpensive way to get anywhere in the city, and like *guaguas*, give you a unique perspective on the daily lives of Dominicans. Just be sure to look for the official *carro público* insignia.

Another key thing to remember is *carro público* etiquette. That front seat may have a seat belt for one, but it is meant to hold two. This means the passenger closest to the driver must negotiate between the emergency break and the remaining bit of seat left by the other passenger. In order to fit four in a three-seater, the rule for the backseat is the third person from the right door must slide forward. Don't worry about forgetting – the driver or the other passengers will scoot any newcomers into place.

OMSA (OFICINA METROPOLITANA DE SERVICIOS DE AUTO-BUSES)

These government sponsored lime green buses are the cheapest travel option (RD\$10-15) around the city, but coverage is limited. Stops can be found on major thoroughfares signaled by covered benches. Try to avoid them at rush hour because they get dangerously packed. For route information, visit www.omsa.gob.do.

METRO

The infamous brainchild of President Leonel Fernández is a sleek and silent subway system that puts other lines to shame, at least if rated on aesthetics alone. Currently, there is but one north-south line with few stops, with rides costing RD\$25. The metro therefore is rather useless, especially to visitors, until the longer east-west line running from Los Alcarrizos to San Isidro is completed. Construction for this line began in 2009, at a cost estimated above US\$1.5 billion. It is not scheduled to be completed for several years. See Transport (p XX) for more information.

TAXIS

For a break from the initially confusing public transport system or for night travel, call up one of the many cab companies in the city. In the name of safety and to prevent getting ripped off, always call a trusted cab company. Do not flag them down on the street. Taxis do not have meters, but rather charge a flat rate of around RD\$150. A taxi should never cost more than RD\$200, unless the ride reaches outer neighborhoods. Avoid taxis parked near the Conde, as they charge nearly double the going rate. Taxis located at

Motoconchos

Though available to ride in Santo Domingo, the risks far outweigh the benefits. Take public transport or a taxi and leave riding on a motorcycle for the countryside.

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major hotels can charge up to triple the local rate because they claim that other companies are unsafe, which is not true. Be sure to ask the dispatcher the fare to avoid any misunderstanding with the driver before setting out.

One of the oldest and most dependable taxi companies, **Apolo Taxi** is available 24/7 (537-0000).

Other trustworthy companies are **Aero Taxi** (686-1212; 829-688-1212) and **Amarillo Taxi** (620-6363; 368-3333).

Gas Stations

Gas stations (called *bombas*) can be found throughout the city. Some of the ones that may come in handy are the Texaco Station on Máximo Gomez across from the Teatro Nacional in Gazcue and the Texaco Station across from Parque Independencia in the Colonial Zone.

Medical & Emergency Services

Peace Corps Volunteers and embassy employees living in the Dominican Republic use the following centers. English is spoken at these locations and many of the doctors were trained in the United States.

HOSPITALS

Clínica Abreu Corner of C/ Beller 42 and Av. Independencia; 688-4411; www.clinicaabreu.com.do

Hospiten Corner of C/Alma Máter and Av. Bolívar; 541-3000 (Consults: ext. 2500); Fax: 1 (809) 381-1070; santo.domingo@hospiten.com; www.hospiten.es

Doctors

Dr. Fernando Contreras 45 C/ Rafael Augusto Sánchez (near C/ Lincoln); Edificio Medical Net; 6th floor; 567-1815; Mon. and Tue. 9:30am-12:30pm and 3:30pm-6:00 pm; Thu. 9:30am-6pm

DENTISTS

Dr. Hector Read 7 C/ Rafael Augusto Sánchez; Naco; 566-7892; Mon., Wed., and Fri., 9am-5pm.

Dr. Ursula Maratos 8A Pablo Casals, Piantini; 549-3108; Mon.- Fri, 9am-5pm.

Dr. Fauato Gonzalez de Chavez Av. Winston Churchill and Paseo de los Locutores; Plaza las Americas II, 3rd level suite 6C behind Metro bus station.; 732-9106.; Mon., Tues., Thurs. 9:30am-1:30pm and 3-7pm; Wed and Fri 9:30am-1:30pm

PHARMACIES

Small pharmacies (*farmacias*) can be found throughout the Zona Colonial and Gazcue, especially concentrated around Clínica Abreu. For a wider selection and later hours of operation, try the following chains with locations throughout the city.

Farmacia Carol There are multiple branches with one in Gazcue at 251 Avenida Bolívar. 689-6000; gazcue@farmaciacarol.com; www.farmaciacarol.com

Farmacia Farmax's Gazcue branch is located at the corner of Av. Independencia and Dr. Delgado. 333-4444; info@farmax.com.do; www.farmax.com.do



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POLICE

The occasionally helpful tourism police station, **Politur**, is located on the corner of El Conde and C/ José Reyes (689-6464).

The central **National Police** station is located in Gazcue on C/Leopoldo Navarro between Av. Francia and Av. Mexico. For emergencies, dial 911. *National Police*: 682-2151/685-2020; *info@policianacional.gob.do*; *www.policianacional.gob.do*

Banking

Santo Domingo has numerous bank options to serve its growing international population and business industry. Check with your personal bank to see if it has any affiliates in the Dominican Republic to avoid international charges, ATM fees, and to ensure the best exchange rates. Each of the following banks has multiple branches and ATM locations. Below is a list of full service branches in the Zona Colonial and Gazcue; take a quick look at bank websites to locate other ATMs outside this area.

Banco BHD *Corner of Av. Máximo Gómez and C/ Santiago; 243-5516; www.bhd.com.do*

Banco del Progreso *Corner of Av. Independencia and C/ Socorro Sánchez; 378-3212; www.progres.com.do*

Banco León *65 C/ Isabel La Católica by C/ Las Mercedes, Zona Colonial; 476-2000; www.leon.com.do*

Banco Popular *357 Av. Bolívar, Gazcue; 682-2343; or C/ Isabel Católica and C/ Hostos, Zona Colonial; www.bpd.com.do*

BanReservas *201 C/ Isabela la Católica, Zona Colonial; 960-2000; www.banreservas.com.do*

ScotiaBank *(reciprocal relationship with Bank of America) C/ Las Mercedes and C/ Isabel la Católica, Zona Colonial; 689-5151; 689-5152; www.scotiabank.com/do*

Wachovia Bank *Representative Office: Torre Piantini, Suite # 702; Avenida Abraham Lincoln and Gustavo Mejía Ricard Ensanche Piantini; 412-0557; www.wellsfargo.com*

Communication

Below are the nearest offices or kiosks for each cell company in the Zona Colonial and Gazcue or their central headquarters. See Communication section for more details (P. XX).

TriCom (Codeltel) *www.tricom.net; Comercial Office Lope de Vega; Lope De Vega, no 95, Naco; 476-6000; Mon. - Fri.: 8:00am - 6:00pm; Sat.: 8:30am - 1:00pm; Teller Services: Mon.- Fri.: 8:00 am - 7:00pm; Sat.: 8:30am - 2:00pm*

Claro (Verizon) *www.claro.com.do; Claro: Bella Vista Mall; Av. Sarasota, Bella Vista Mall, 2nd floor; Mon-Fri: 8am- 8pm; Sat: 9am-8pm; Sun & Holidays: 10am- 2pm; Claro: Acrópolis; Av. Winston Churchill, Plaza Acrópolis; Mon-Fri 9am-9pm; Sat: 10am- 9pm; Sun & Holidays: 11am-6pm*

Orange *www.orange.com.do; Orange: El Conde; 688-8101; 829-723-8901; Corner of El Conde and Av Duarte, Supermercado Jumbo; Orange: Zona Colonial; 221-3997; 829-770-2823; 402 C/Arzobispo Nouel (near corner of Pina); Panadería Colonial Antigua, Casa Perez; Gazcue; Corner of Av. Independencia and Dr. Delgado, Farmax.; 412-8434*

Viva *www.viva.com.do; Call Center: 503-7500; Toll-free: 1-809-200-7500; Viva Winston Churchill; 73 Av. Winston Churchill near Max Henríquez Ureña, Piantini; Mon.-Fri.: 8am-7pm; Sat.: 9am-6pm*

INTERNET

This website has a great list of universities, plazas, restaurants and cafes with free Wi-Fi: <http://duarte101.com/2007/06/26/wi-fi-gratis-en-santo-domingo-hotspots/>
Here are some free Wi-Fi favorites:

Centro Cultural de España (see Eat P. XX) Also has computers. *Calle Arzobispo Meriño & Calle Arzobispo Portes; Colonial Zone; 686-8212*

Segafredo (see Eat P. XX) *El Conde & C/ Las Damas; Colonial Zone*

Thesaurus (see Bookstores P.XX) *Ave. Abraham Lincoln & C/Sarasota; 508-1114*

POST OFFICE

Below are post office locations in and around the Colonial Zone, as well as the central office. For all locations, visit: www.inposdom.gob.do (Spanish).

Santo Domingo, Central Office *C/ Héroes de Luperón at C/ Rafael Damirón; 534-5838; 533-1407*

Ciudad Nueva *510 C/ Arzobispo Portes at C/ El Número; 333-6987*

Zona Colonial *103 C/ Isabel la Católica*

If mailing something valuable or time sensitive, try these mail couriers:

Mail Boxes Etc. *10 Ave. Tiradentes, Naco; 333-2002; Fax: 809-412-2442*

UPS Dominicana, S.A. *Km. 25 Autopista Las Americas; 549-2777; 1-809-200-5177 (toll free); Fax: 809-549-9561*

UPS Customer Centers *Plaza Andalucía II, Local 47-A, Ave. Abraham Lincoln*

Tourism Offices

Secretaría del Estado de Turismo *Av. Mexico & 30 de Marzo; 221-4660; www.dominicana.com.do;
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Palacio Borghelia, Office of Tourism *103 C/ Isabel la Católica, Parque Colón; 686-3858; Weekdays:
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For more information about Santo Domingo, visit the Santo Domingo Sustainable Tourism Cluster's website at www.gosantodomingo.travel or contact their office by calling 687-8217.

Eat

Dining out in Santo Domingo runs from styrofoam trays piled high with rice and beans, to fine-dining, multi-course meals. On the surface, the city's culinary options may appear to be dominated by the Dominican starchy staples, but the city's diverse expat population, as well as some inventive locals, has contributed to a tremendous variety of restaurants.

The "Eat" Section is divided by both price (Plato del Día, Inexpensive, Mid-Range, Upscale) and location (Zona Colonial, Gazcue, El Centro) to accommodate all travelers' wallets and tastes. Though the city is peppered with restaurants, the Zona Colonial, Gazcue, and El Centro have the most diverse and quality representations of what Santo Domingo has to offer. Steep competition due to the tremendous volume of food options helps maintain the high quality and ingenuity of dining

establishments in Zona Colonial. These attributes, along with the stunning and romantic backdrops of the colonial city, particularly in the evening, make la Zona Colonial a requirement for all visitors.

Just a short walk or ride west from la Zona Colonial is the bordering residential neighborhood of Gazcue. Shady tree-lined streets and Trujillo-era mansions mixed with tasteful middle class homes contribute to Gazcue's charm, making it a lovely place to take a stroll while contemplating its few (but solid) casual or upscale dining options.

Further west, from Avenida Tiradentes and on, is the area the writers have loosely defined as "El Centro." El Centro incorporates various *ensanches* or neighborhoods, including Piantini and Naco, which have exploded in the last few decades with high-rises and chic restaurants. Though there are some affordable food choices in El Centro, the majority of the restaurants cater to the wealthy clientele that live in these neighborhoods and so the menus – and the prices – seem imported. For those who want authentic Dominican food, El Centro is certainly not the place to start, but it is perfect for a dressy night on the town amongst Santo Domingo's rich and beautiful.

TOP PLACES FOR A *PLATO DEL DÍA*

The *plato del día* is a set lunch special that revolves around the much-loved *bandera dominicana*: rice, beans, and chicken. Many places also have options that include other meats and side dishes; all for an established price, starting at around RD\$100. ¡Qué rico!

Zona Colonial

Esquisiteces Virginia Sweet plantain casserole, stewed eggplant, and richly layered lasagna are among the mouthwatering accompaniments to the consistently delicious *plato del día* served at this inviting neighborhood joint. Come hungry, because there is a case full of irresistible baked goods to end the meal. RD\$70-250; 102 C/ Santomé and C/ Arzobispo Portes; 333-9001

Mimosa Family-owned-and-operated for 31 years, Mimosa serves up a solid *bandera dominicana* well as other Dominican favorites such as *arepitas* (fried cornmeal fritters). The menu also includes some international options. RD\$130-250; 51 C/ Arz. Nouel between Calles Duarte and Hostos; 866-0911; Mon-Sat 10am-7pm

Gazcue

Pollo Provocón Ask any local – this is the best rotisserie chicken in town. Golden brown on the outside, moist on the inside, and with a splash of the special *wasakaka* sauce makes this *pollo* a nationwide favorite. The midday hours are packed with locals taking advantage of a superb meal deal that includes all of the classics: either dark or white meat, a choice of *moro* or rice and beans, a side of boiled bananas or *yuca*, a small salad, and on good days, *arepitas*, or fried sweet plantains. Meals here are not complete without a rich papaya *batida* or a fresh squeezed tamarind juice. Provocón also has branches in other major cities like Santiago and Puerto Plata. A top choice for lunching locals is the outlet in Gazcue because of the large, breezy patio seating under a leafy canopy of beautiful trees. RD\$100-200; C/ Santiago and C/ José Joaquín Pérez, Gazcue; 238-5125

Miel y Canela Miel y Canela adds a gourmet twist on the typical plate of the day. This popular lunch spot for professionals has a varied menu offering fish, chicken, and meat, as well as delicious side items like ripe plantain casserole or lasagna, and a great selection of vegetables and salads. Don't forget to order a freshly squeezed glass of passion fruit or another bright tropical juice. RD\$100-200; C/ Santiago 302, Gazcue; 682-1204

INEXPENSIVE

Zona Colonial

Neux Bar This closet-sized restaurant uses its space and diners' pesos efficiently. Serving up a simple Mexican menu on ping-pong paddles, this local favorite is perfect for grabbing a cheap bite while admiring the owner's Dali-inspired clock paintings. If there is no space on the benches, order to go and enjoy the filling burritos or quesadillas next door in Parque Duarte. *RDS100-200; C/Duarte 53 between C/ Padre Billini and C/ Arzobispo Nouel; 6pm-12am Mon-Thu, 6pm-2am Fri-Sat*

Barra Payan It's tough to get any more local than this 24-hour diner serving up hot-pressed sandwiches, freshly squeezed juices, and *batidas*. Try a *pierna con gouda* sandwich (shredded pork with Gouda cheese) or a *derretido* (grilled cheese with tomato) alongside a *batida* with "Ca," which is Payan's shorthand for Carnation milk. If arriving in a car, roll down the window and a waiter comes by 1950s-style, minus the roller skates. *RDS 100-200; C/ 30 de Marzo 140; Colonial Zone; 689-6654; Everyday 24 hours*

La Cafetera Follow the aroma of freshly ground coffee into this watering hole for Dominican artists, philosophers and lovers of debate. Sound like a regular and order a *medio pollo* (espresso with steamed milk) or a grilled ham and cheese sandwich with a juice or *batida* made before your eyes. *253 El Conde at C/ Duarte; no phone; Mon-Sat 8am-11pm, Sun 10am-5pm*

Gazcue

Hermanos Villar This busy and celebrated deli, bakery, and restaurant offers several dining areas: the hustle and bustle of a diner in the front, a quiet and relaxed environment in the back, and dining al fresco in the gazebo. They all offer the same menu, but service is fastest in the front. Try the *sancocho* (meat stew) or their rotisserie chicken with *pastelón de berenjena* (eggplant casserole). Finish off the meal with a *cafecito* and a treat from the bakery such as *dulce de coco y leche* (coconut and milk candy). *RDS100-300; 312 Av. Independencia at C/ Pasteur; 682-1433; Mon-Sun 8am-12am*

Ensanches and Barrios

When asking for directions in Santo Domingo, it is always helpful to know both the neighborhood and streets' names because locals generally know places by geographical markers or neighborhoods verses the official address. *Ensanche* and *barrio*, both meaning neighborhood, are used to describe locations because the same streets names are often used more than once or are not terribly memorable or descriptive, such as the commonly used Calle A or Calle 1. The word *ensanche* is typically used for the newer and often wealthier neighborhoods in the center and western parts of the city like Ensanche Piantini or Naco, whereas *barrio* has a more humble connotation and its residents tend to share a more collective spirit.

El Centro

Los Huaraches Los Huaraches offers the surprisingly hard to find combination in Santo Domingo of authentic Mexican flavor and reasonable prices. With vegetarian options to tacos or burritos filled with succulent *ropa vieja* (pulled beef) or well-seasoned chicken, this place is sure to please any crowd. *RDS150-300; C/ David Ben Gurion near Winston Churchill, Paraíso; 566-4023; Mon-Sun: 4:30 pm-11:30pm*

Baladi Located in the owner's casual home in Ensanche Julieta, this Lebanese restaurant is by far one of the most authentic in the city, serving halal meat butchered by the owner himself and imported Lebanese wines, beers and other

specialty products like shanklish – a tangy fermented goat cheese – or Arak – a traditional grape-based aperitif. The Baladi Mix – an assortment of hummus, baba ghanoush, shanklish, labneh (a yogurt herb dip), and pita – is perfect for sharing. The chef features weekly specials based on the fish or vegetable of the season, but the regular offerings are consistently delicious, such as the lamb shawarma – succulent, marinated cubes of lamb dressed with yogurt, tomatoes, parley and onions and wrapped in a warm pita. *RD\$150-320; 19B C/David Masalles, Ens. Julieta; 567-0070; baladirestaurant@gmail.com; Tues.-Sun. 12pm-12am*

La Cuchara de Madera Decadent and irresistible, this café with two locations in the neighborhood of Piantini is known for its sumptuous desserts such as Marifer cheesecake with Oreos, pralines and Nutella, or mango and passion fruit mousse. The ten-layer chocolate avalanche cake, with rich chocolate ganache and covered with whipped cream and white chocolate, curbs any craving and the fresh-squeezed juices or espresso drinks are the perfect pairing. *RD\$60-350; 63 José Amado Soler and Federico Gerardino; 683-6544; or 86 Freddy Prestol Castillo near Max Henríquez Ureña, Piantini; 566-2420; info@lacucharademadera.com.do; lacucharademadera.com.do; Mon.-Sat. 8am-7:30pm, Sun. 10am-5pm*

La Vecindad This small Mexican restaurant quickly developed a loyal following for its traditional and artisanal tacos. Though the menu is varied, offering interesting combinations such as quesadillas with squash blooms or Caldo Loco (a beef and shrimp soup), patrons cannot leave here without trying a few tacos stuffed with a array of ingredients from ribs to chorizo or fish. *RD\$150-350; Corner of Ave. Tiradentes and Cub Scout, Plaza Damaso, Naco; 633-2121*

MID-RANGE

Zona Colonial

El Rey de Falafel This charming Middle Eastern restaurant has come a long way from its roadside stand roots. The Israeli owner gutted an old colonial home, knocked down the ceiling and created a terraced, open-air dining room. Its walls are painted a crisp white, adorned with Haitian and Dominican metal sculpture. Dine under the stars on falafel or grilled kebabs while enjoying a local brew. The restaurant also has a full-service bar and a gallery supporting local artists on the second floor. *RD \$200-450; 352 C/ Padre Billini and C/ Sanchez, Colonial Zone; 688-9714; Sun.-Thurs. 5pm-12am, Fri.-Sat. 5pm-2am*

Segafredo Whether it's for Segafredo's thin-crust pizzas, simple but flavorful pastas, or the daily two-for-one happy hour, patrons regularly flock this Italian restaurant/bar. During the day, this is one of the few spots that allows lovers of café culture to read while sipping an espresso in the umbrella covered outdoor tables. Owing facing buildings along El Conde, the northern building extends out into a softly lit patio with chez lounges and arching tropical plants great for a romantic evening rendezvous or a spirited group of friends. *RD\$200-500; 54 El Conde near C/ de las Damas; 685-4440; Facebook: Segafredo Caffè Zona Colonial; info.segafredo@gmail.com; daily 11am-12am and until 2am on weekends.*

El Centro

Aka In a city where plantain and chicken wrapped in seaweed is called sushi, this Japanese restaurant is a godsend for sushi purists. Try the sashimi platter featuring a variety of fish along with conch shell and scallops or any of the traditional rolls. *RD\$200-400; C/ 50 Max Henríquez Ureña near Av. Lope de Vega, 2nd floor; 732-9502; www.red.com.do; Sun-Thurs 12pm-12am (until 1am Fri-Sat)*

Chino de Mariscos With over two decades in business, this Cantonese restaurant has won loyal customers with its authentic and flavorful cuisine such as hot pots with tofu and seafood or baked lobster with ginger and scallions. On Sunday, Chino

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de Mariscos features dim sum, including a large array of dumplings, eggrolls and other delectable Chinese finger foods. *RD\$70-480; 38-A Av. Sarasota, Bella Vista; 533-5249; Thurs-Sun 11am-12am and Fri-Sat 10am-1am*

La Dolceria Pastels and Victorian accents bedeck this upper crust café and bistro serving international fare including pastas and sandwiches along with French pastries and desserts. A sweet and savory special is Natilie's Favorite Crepe with goat cheese, dates, prosciutto, four-cheese sauce, toasted nuts, arugula, and truffle oil. The over-the-top salads – such as the Lady Blue with blue cheese, grilled chicken, bacon, and mandarin oranges dressed with truffle and passion fruit vinaigrette – are big enough for a meal. For the especially hungry, try one of the generous entrees such as the Volcán Mixto, a juicy filet of beef paired with grilled chicken and blue cheese mashed potatoes. *RD\$195-595; 20 C/ Rafael Augusto Sánchez, Piantini; 338-0814; ladolceria@gmail.com; Everyday 7:30am-12am*

UPSCALE

Zona Colonial

Angelo Offering one of the best rooftop views in the La Zona Colonial, Angelo is perfect for sipping a refreshing glass of pinot grigio as the sun sets over the Río Ozama – or for an authentic Italian feast. Angelo's thin crust pizzas are a delicious, economical alternative to the pasta and meat dishes. While a bit overpriced, this place is worth visiting simply for their wacky décor of baroque style furniture, crystal chandeliers, zebra-patterned upholstery, and bold color scheme. *RD\$400-700; 21 C/ Atarazana; Zona Colonial; 686-3586; Sun-Thurs 12pm-12am, Fri-Sat 12pm-2am*

Café Bellini (Author Recommended) A candlelit tropical garden gives way to this whimsical Italian restaurant specializing in handmade pasta, such as the Tris di Ravioli della Casa, pumpkin, beet and spinach raviolis harmoniously brought together in a vine-ripe tomato sauce. Take time to peruse the Italian owner's impressive modern art collection ranging from a gargantuan, mirrored sculpture of Italy, doubling as a wine rack to the equally quirky yet functional light fixtures. The Filete alla Bellini – an impeccably prepared cut of beef served in a truffle cream sauce – is beyond decadent especially when followed by a chocolate flan soaked in Amaretto. *RD\$450-980; Corner of C/ Arzobispo Meriño and C/ Padre Billini in Plazoleta Padre Billini; 686-3387; Tues-Sat. 12pm-12am, Mon dinner only, closed Sun.*

Mesón de Bari Known for its *cangrejo a la criolla* (Dominican-style crab) or *chivo guisado* (stewed goat), this restaurant marries down-home Dominican cooking with a fine dining atmosphere. The walls are covered with splashes of color, adorned with numerous paintings by local artists. For a more intimate dining experience, go straight to the second floor. Or stay on the first with the elegant yet lively locals. Lucky diners can catch a live band playing Cuban *son* music, usually on Thursday evenings after 9pm. *RD\$300-600; 302 C/ Hostos and C/ Salome Ureña; 687-4091; Everyday 12pm-12am*

La Bricola Though its enchanting setting in a colonial coral and brick home softened by tropical plants and twinkling lights may have played a role in this Italian restaurant's long-term success, the artfully prepared food is what keeps patrons coming back for decades. Details such as the herbed butter served with the fresh baked bread before a timbale of crawfish, frisée greens, avocado and orange sections are what set this restaurant apart from other upscale Italian restaurants. Delighting the senses are such second courses as the Ravioli Agnolotti – hand-rolled ravioli delicately stuffed with minced sirloin in sage butter and a red wine reduction – or the Risotti Briciola – shrimp and arugula folded into creamy risotto. *RD\$450-1200; Corner of Arz. Meriño and Padre Billini; 688-5055; labricola@codetel.net.do; www.labricola.com.do; Mon -Sat. 12-3pm and 6pm-12am*

Pat e' Palo Soak up the ambience of Plaza España and enjoy the international fare of this pirate-themed restaurant that offers a range of salads and pasta, as well as meat and fish dishes. If dining on a Friday evening, sit outside and enjoy the free music and dance performances in Plaza España. *RD\$400-700; 25 C/ Las Atarazanas, Plaza España; Sun-Thurs 12pm-12am, Fri-Sat 12pm-2am*

Gazcue

La Cava del Rey This quaint French restaurant is tucked away on a quiet, upper-middle class residential street. Try one of the reasonably priced and delicious pastas or crepes, or splurge on a filet mignon paired with cabernet. Around the corner is a French bakery with excellent *pan au chocolat*, paninis, fresh-squeezed juices, and espresso, as well as a few specialty items like French wines, homemade pasta, and pâté. *RD\$300-500; C/Pedro Ignacio Espaillat and C/ Abelardo Rodríguez Urbaneta; Gazcue; 412-7918; Everyday 6pm-12am*

El Centro

Caffé Milano After embracing the brassy décor exemplified by the red Porsche showcased in the entrance window and photos of supermodels toying with cigars plastered around the bar, this exquisite Italian dining experience begins. Inventive combinations – like homemade pasta made with cacao sautéed with mussels, zucchini, and coconut or red bell pepper tagliatelle served with rabbit, olives, and tomatoes – make this restaurant anything but the run of the mill Italian cucina. *RD\$400-995; 11 Av. Tiradentes; 540-1572; 540-3000; caffemilano@codetel.net.do*

Mesón de la Cava Featuring an international menu of hearty seafood and meat dishes such as juicy rib eye steak or Spanish paella and an extensive wine list, Mesón de la Cava's patrons flock here not only for the food, but also for its unique setting in an underground cave. Locals and tourists have enjoyed the restaurants' atmosphere since 1967, but the cave enjoys a rich history. It has supposedly been utilized by several groups: Tainos; buccaneers hiding out before sacking colonial Santo Domingo; guerillas (known as *gavilleros*) fighting against the foreign occupation in 1930; and troops with the Organization of American States, who used the cave as a warehouse during the U.S. occupation of 1965. *RD\$400-800; 1 Av. Mirador del Sur, Bella Vista; 533-2818; www.elmesondelacava.com; Daily 12pm-12am*

Cane Cane's lively happy hour (weekdays 5pm-8pm) featuring the best mojito in town and sleek yet island influenced interior draw Dominican young professionals looking to unwind after work. Nibble on delicious Latin fusion finger foods such as fried plantain cups topped with juicy *ropa vieja*, or try the indulgent main plates like the Napoleon layered with creamy shrimp and crab or the beef filet encrusted with macadamia nuts. *RD\$300-700; 1059 Av. Abraham Lincoln, Piantini; 368-2200; Sun-Thurs 12pm-1am, Fri-Sat 12pm-3am*

Marocha One of the only places serving an authentic brunch in the city, expats and well-traveled Dominicans alike frequent this international bistro to join in the weekend tradition of make-your-own omelettes, eggs Benedict, and buttermilk pancakes for lunch. Weekdays, young professionals take advantage of the two for one bottles of Cava until 8pm while sharing the house bruschetta – a mozzarella-filled calzone topped with bruschetta – followed by one of their world tour entrees from Pad Thai to Moroccan glazed chicken breast or braised short ribs. *RD\$225-800; 124 Av. Gustavo Mejía Ricart and Manuel de Jesús Troncoso, Piantini; 473-4191; marocha.rd@codetel.net.do; Daily 7am-12am*

Gallo Pinto Restaurante & Bar (Author Recommended) Upon entering this gourmet Latin-inspired restaurant, the first thing to catch the eye is a wall-sized chalkboard illustrated with the bar's latest cocktail creations including the popular Ron Romero, a refreshing cocktail with rum, ginger, lemon juice and honey,

garnished with rosemary. Red industrial fixtures mix with slim black furniture and wood paneling create a casual yet funky atmosphere to enjoy some *antojos* (appetizers) like duck taquitos, an inventive salad like chicken with artichokes, avocado, pistachios, and strawberries. Or try some of the main plates, like beef tenderloin and gnocchi tossed in pistachio pesto. RD\$225-795; Plaza Dorada, Corner of C/ Manuel de Jesus Troncoso and Roberto Pastoriza, Piantini; 567-4345; gallopintofood@gmail.com

VEGETARIAN

Crudo Crudo is an organic vegetarian restaurant and natural products store. The restaurant prepares salads, juices, and vegetarian dishes, including a reasonably priced *plato del día*. The store carries natural remedies, vitamins, incense, and aromatherapy oils that waft outside into the street. Dr. Felix F. Casas, doctor of holistic medicine, owns and operates the establishment. RD\$150-250; 152 C/Arzobispo Portes near C/ 19 de Marzo, Colonial Zone; 689-0796; Mon.-Sun. 12pm-7pm

Delicias Integrales at El Instituto de Medicina Inovativa y Bioquímica Funcional Though the selection is limited at this doctor-owned restaurant, the daily options are always quality. Try the *plato del día*, which generally comes with brown rice, beans, salad and a side such as vegetarian lasagna or veggie meatballs for RD\$140. Beverages are not served save for hot anise tea, but there is a small health food store next door that sells juice and water. If a hint of cinnamon wafts through the air, ask for the delectable cinnamon bread (*pan de canela*), generally sold out within minutes of leaving the oven. RD\$140-200; 31 C/ Caonabo between Calles Felix M. del Monte and Leopoldo Navarro, Gazcue, 947-8312; Mon-Fri, lunch only

Ananda Vegetarian Restaurant/Centro Cultural Yoga Devanand This tucked-away yoga studio and vegetarian eatery offers a large variety for reasonable prices. Meals are charged per item, so take a minute to check out the options in the buffet line before being shuffled along by the working professional crowd that frequents the spot. Vegan options are available, as well as yoga and vegetarian cooking classes. RD\$100-200; 7 C/ Casimiro de Moya, Gazcue; 628-7153; Open for all meals Mon-Sat until 10pm and Sun until 3pm

Raíces An unlikely spot to find an excellent variety of vegetarian-only options, this Seventh-Day Adventist Church has a cafeteria open to all. There is no sign, so keep a look out for people entering through the glass doors in the middle of the complex. There's also a health food store on the far right of the church that is open weekdays and on Sundays 9am to 1pm. RD\$80-150; C/Juan Sanchez Ramirez near the corner of Av. Máximo Gomez, in the Adventist; Church complex around the corner from the Supermercado Nacional and across from the Embassy of Haiti; Mon-Fri 8am- 3pm, Sun. 11am-3pm, Closed Sat.

Jardín Verde This organic, Chinese-vegetarian restaurant offers a pleasant patio to sip on inventive Eastern teas infused with tropical fruits and flowers while waiting for one of Chef Suzuki's meat-free creations, such as chontz, a savory rice-based pastry stuffed with Chinese mushrooms and garnished with peanuts. Handmade noodles served with tofu, bok choy, and carrots in a flavorful brown sauce serve as an excellent way to follow any of the scrumptious starters, which include fried mushrooms or vegetable eggrolls. RD\$150-300; 18A Salvador Sturla, Naco; 565-2084; Mon.-Sun. 11am-10 pm

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