



PHOTO: © CONNIE GELB/TNC

Dominican Republic

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

DATES

March 1 - 7, 2020

PRICE

\$4,867/person (double occupancy)

\$5,822/person (single occupancy)

The Dominican Republic's vibrant diversity of plants and animals attract scores of visitors from around the world. It is home to more than 5,600 plant species and 300 bird species. Residents appreciate the natural environment for its beauty but also depend upon it for food and as a source of livelihood. This is why The Nature Conservancy has helped establish national parks and marine managed areas around the country from areas around Samaná Bay to Parque Nacional del Este. These protected areas promote sustainable fisheries and coral reef and mangrove conservation, and also support the government's commitment to protect 20% of its marine and nearshore environment by 2020 through the Caribbean Challenge Initiative.

This journey will take you to the white beaches of Punta Cana and the Samaná Peninsula, and the best hiking and bird-watching spots at Parque Nacional del Este. You can also get a closer look at colorful reefs teeming with sea life at the numerous snorkeling and dive sites along the coast. Along the way, learn from our staff and local partners how TNC conserves nature to support the lives and livelihoods of the island's population.

Thank you for your interest in traveling with The Nature Conservancy.



PHOTO: © TIM CALVER/TNC

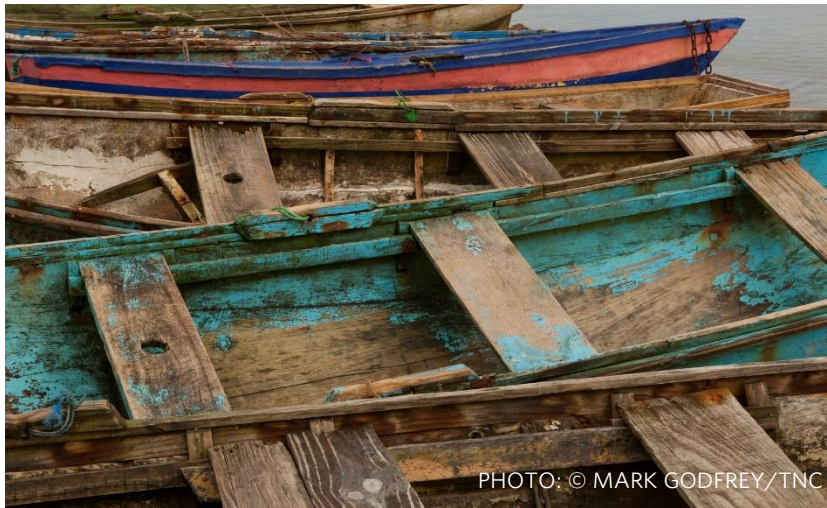


PHOTO: © MARK GODFREY/TNC

TNC TRAVEL VALUES

ACCESS:

Travel with renowned Conservancy experts and local partners for an exclusive, behind-the-scenes experience. You won't just see amazing places, you'll see how you are helping save them.

IMPACT:

See how your commitment to our planet and your passion for conservation are making a difference. You will see the wild places and the communities you are impacting.

KNOWLEDGE:

Learn how we are applying the latest cutting-edge science to affect global change and drive conservation.

INSPIRATION:

Immerse yourself in local cultures and awe-inspiring landscapes to foster your own connection to our world.

GLOBALLY MINDED:

Elevate your understanding of our work by seeing first-hand how TNC and our partners act locally and how we turn local results in to global impact by scaling solutions that work.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CORAL RESTORATION

Don snorkeling gear for a close-up look at how The Nature Conservancy is using cutting-edge science to restore diverse, resilient reefs and helping ensure their protection throughout the Caribbean and beyond.

PARQUE NACIONAL DEL ESTE

Explore one of the Dominican Republic's most treasured national parks and visit beautiful Saona Island for a chance to swim in the protected blue waters of the Caribbean Sea.

WHALE WATCHING

Search for humpback whales in Samaná Bay, a critical sanctuary and calving ground for these majestic mammals.

Your trip supports the local communities you're traveling in and The Nature Conservancy's efforts locally and globally. This trip has been planned specifically by The Nature Conservancy's team of scientific experts and travel liaisons to immerse you in the work the Conservancy is doing on the ground that has global consequences.



PHOTO: © MARK GODFREY/TNC

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS

SNORKELING
WHALE WATCHING
BOATING
BIRD WATCHING
NATURALIST LED EXCURSIONS

PUNTA CANA

Purchased by American investors in 1969, Punta Cana has become one of the Dominican Republic's most important tourist destinations and a critical part of the country's economy. Innovative sustainability practices have been developed here, and the area serves as a model for global ecotourism.

PARQUE NACIONAL DEL ESTE

Encompassing both land and sea on the southeastern tip of the Dominican Republic, Parque Nacional del Este is home to over 500 species of flowers and over 140 species of birds. Sea turtles nest on beautiful Saona Island and dolphins, humpback whales and manatees can be found in the surrounding seas. The park was founded in 1975 with support from The Nature Conservancy.

SAMANÁ BAY

At over 75,000 hectares, Samaná Bay is the largest semi-enclosed bay in the Caribbean and contains the most extensive mangroves and shrimp fisheries in the country. The bay is also the most important sanctuary for humpback whales in the North Atlantic, serving as critical calving and nursery grounds, and whale watching provides a substantial contribution to the local economy. Approximately 2,000 fishers depend on the bay for their livelihood and as a source of food for their families, however unsustainable fishing practices have significantly depleted fish stocks.

To reduce threats to marine biodiversity in Samaná Bay, The Nature Conservancy and the Center for Conservation and Eco-Development of Samaná Bay and Its Surroundings (CEBSE), are actively working with collaborating partners to protect critical fish habitat, establish new locally managed marine conserved areas and promote the growth of ecotourism to foster alternative livelihoods.

ITINERARY

DAY 1 | Arrive in Punta Cana International Airport (PUJ) by the afternoon. Upon arrival at the airport, you will be welcomed by your guide and transferred to your hotel. After settling in, enjoy a welcome reception and group dinner at La Yola to kick off the trip.

OVERNIGHT AT THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

DAY 2 | After breakfast this morning, visit the resort's Center for Marine Innovation for an introduction to Grupo Puntacana Foundation's work with coral and their partnership with TNC. Then don snorkeling gear to check out nearby coral gardens to see coral outplanting at work. Break for lunch at a beachfront restaurant before continuing on to the Center for Sustainability, another initiative run by Grupo Puntacana Foundation in partnership with TNC. Here, learn about the resort's sustainability practices and related projects in the Punta Cana area.

This afternoon, choose to explore the Indigenous Eyes Eco-Reserve, a 1,500-acre protected area dedicated to conservation, scientific research and recreation. Or, head to the beach or pool for a swim. We will reconvene for dinner as a group.

OVERNIGHT AT THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

DAY 3 | After breakfast this morning, transfer to Bayahibe, approximately one hour southwest, to meet with TNC partner FUNDEMAR and explore the famed Parque Nacional del Este (now referred to as Parque Nacional Cotubanamá). Visit FUNDEMAR's coral laboratory to learn the science behind their coral restoration work then board a skiff for a water-based tour of the park. The tour will take you past rocky shoreline, mangroves filled with frigate birds and protected swimming spots before reaching beautiful Saona Island. Enjoy a picnic lunch and free time on the beach before the return trip to Bayahibe and then Punta Cana.

Tonight, dine seaside at The Westin's Brasserie Grill.

OVERNIGHT AT THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

DAY 4 | For those interested, get up early for birdwatching in the Indigenous Eyes Eco-Reserve. After a final breakfast at The Westin, transfer to Punta Cana Airport for a charter flight to the northern side of Samaná Bay (approximately 35 minutes) followed by a shuttle to The Bannister Hotel & Yacht Club, just outside of Samaná town, and your home base for the next two nights.

LODGING



PHOTO: © THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB
The Westin is part of Puntacana Resort & Club's, pioneering approach to sustainable tourism, which includes a Zero Waste program, sustainable agriculture initiatives and ridgeway hawk and turtle conservation efforts, among others.



PHOTO: © THE BANNISTER HOTEL & YACHT CLUB

THE BANNISTER HOTEL & YACHT CLUB
Nestled between the mountains and the sea on Samaná Bay, this boutique hotel is a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World.



PHOTO: © HODELPA NICOLÁS DE OVANDO

HODELPA NICOLÁS DE OVANDO
Dating from 1502, this hotel in the heart of the Colonial Zone was originally home to Santo Domingo's founder and the first Spanish governor of the Americas, Nicolás de Ovando.

This afternoon, we're back on skiff boats for the quick trip to Cayo Farola, a small cay near Samaná that TNC is helping to turn into an eco-tourism site along with partner CEBSE. A short nature trail takes you around the beautiful cay, including to the whale monitoring platform. Hop in the water for some snorkeling along the cay's protected north side, or enjoy the sun and breeze from the shore.

Dinner tonight is at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT AT THE BANNISTER HOTEL & YACHT CLUB

DAY 5 | Today, go out in search of humpback whales, an experience that is sure to be on any bucket list. Join a whale watching tour with Whale Samaná, led by the esteemed Kim Beddall, who also serves on the Board of Directors of CEBSE. We recommend grabbing a seat up top, near Kim, so you can pepper her with questions.

After lunch, the afternoon is yours to enjoy as you choose. Stroll along the waterfront in Samaná town, visit the local Whale Museum or relax at the hotel. We'll regroup this evening for dinner in town.

OVERNIGHT AT THE BANNISTER HOTEL & YACHT CLUB

DAY 6 | Enjoy one last breakfast overlooking the water before departing for Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, about a 2 ½-hour drive.

After settling into your hotel, enjoy lunch in Santo Domingo's Colonial Zone, the city's historic core and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This afternoon, explore the winding streets, pop into museums and churches or shop in local boutiques.

Tonight we'll gather for a final, celebratory dinner and reflections on the week together.

OVERNIGHT AT HODELPA NICOLÁS DE OVANDO

DAY 7 | Breakfast this morning is at your leisure. Transfers to Santo Domingo's international airport (SDQ) will be arranged based on flight itineraries.

PLEASE NOTE: This itinerary is representative of your trip, and like all natural history excursions, activities are subject to modification based on weather and unforeseen. We will do our best to keep you informed on any necessary changes.

When considering whether this trip is right for you, look closely at the itinerary and consider your ability level. Travelers should be able to walk as much as a mile or two over uneven terrain and get in and out of vans and boats in order to participate in all activities. Expect to spend 4 to 8 hours outdoors most days, including significant time on boats. The climate in the Dominican Republic is tropical, so prepare for hot temperatures and the potential for rain and wind. Please pay special attention to the trip materials and pack accordingly.



PRICE DETAIL

Double Occupancy \$4,867
Single Occupancy: \$5,822

Price **includes** all lodging, transportation once in the Dominican Republic, activities, tips, meals, TNC expert staff and local guides. Price does **not include** your outbound flight to Punta Cana (PUJ) or your return flight from Santo Domingo (SDQ), or your chosen nearby airport.