



## Discover with Nature trip to Puerto Rico

Discover the vibrant culture, rich biodiversity, and inspiring conservation work of Puerto Rico on this immersive journey across the island. From the historic streets of Old San Juan to the glowing waters of La Parguera's bioluminescent bay, we explore coastal habitats, lush forests, and critical restoration sites alongside dedicated local experts. Witness rare endemic birds like the endangered Puerto Rican Amazon, visit coral reef and mangrove conservation projects, and experience the island's natural wonders while savoring its warm hospitality, flavorful cuisine, and tropical beauty.



Photos: Puerto Rico beach © Chrsitina Colondres; Sea turtle © Pichón Duarte

### Trip Highlights

- Witness critically endangered Puerto Rican Amazon in its native Rio Abajo Forest Habitat.
- Experience the glowing waters of La Parguera's bioluminescent bay, with the option to swim.
- Visit coral reef restoration projects and meet local conservation leaders.
- Explore the second-largest mangrove forest and Medio Mundo y Dagua.



## Island of Enchantment

Puerto Rico is home to a stunning archipelago of natural habitats, including rainforest, mangroves, bioluminescent bays and one of the largest underground cave systems in the world. Tree-covered mountains span the length of the main island, overlooking white sandy shores and over 5,000 square miles of luminous blue ocean.

There are nearly 300 plant and animal species endemic to this special place, including the endangered and iconic Puerto Rican parrot, one of the rarest birds in the world. Puerto Rico's natural riches support other endangered animals, including serene beaches that provide nesting sites for sea turtles and vibrant waters that serve as breeding grounds for manatees.

## A Vibrant Natural and Human History

Volcanic activity nearly 200 million years ago formed Puerto Rico, and the land mass lies on the boundary of the Caribbean and North America tectonic plates. The region's stunning geology has created a range of different landscapes across the archipelago from Puerto Rico's coastal lowlands to the lush peaks of the iconic Central Mountain Range (Cordillera Central.)

The Indigenous Taíno people have lived on Puerto Rico since around 1200. Their lively culture, beliefs, music and more still persist today. The Taíno called the island Borikén, which some historians believe translates to "Land of the Valiant and Brave Lord," reflecting the Taíno people's respect for their leaders and deep connection to the land. The derivative of Borikén, "Boricua," refers to a person of Puerto Rican descent—another testament to the persisting legacy of Taíno language and culture.

Photo: Wave breaking on Puerto Rico beach © Pichón Duarte

# Itinerary Overview

## DAY 1

Monday, March 23

Welcome to Puerto Rico!

Arrive at Luis Muñoz International Airport (SJU) at your leisure. For those arriving by 2:00 PM, enjoy an optional walking tour of Old San Juan. We gather tonight for a welcome dinner at a local restaurant to meet our Nature Conservancy hosts, guides, and fellow travelers and enjoy our first taste of delicious Puerto Rican food.

Accommodations in San Juan (D)

## DAY 2

Tuesday, March 24

Enjoy breakfast at our hotel and then head to La Parguera, located in the southwest part of the island. The drive is about two hours and we have lunch at a local restaurant upon arrival. We check into our lovely, boutique hotel, located on the outskirts of the city. After some time to relax during the hottest part of the day, and perhaps a dip in the refreshing pool, we head to some coastal areas for some light birding amidst beautiful views of the bay. Birds we could spot include Magnificent Frigatebird, the striking endemic Puerto Rican Woodpecker, and even the tiniest Bananaquits.

After dinner, we head out on boats for our bioluminescence experience! La Parguera is one of three bioluminescence bays found along the coastline of Puerto Rico. Micro-organisms called dinoflagellates emit bursts of light when disturbed, creating the glowing effect. Unlike the other two bio bays found in Puerto Rico, swimming is allowed in La Parguera, so if you're feeling adventurous, remember to bring your bathing suit so you can take a dip!

Accommodations at La Jamaca (B,L,D)

## DAY 3

Wednesday, March 25

This morning, we head to the ISER Caribe site, about 30 minutes from La Parguera. We take a guided tour of Centro de Investigación y Restauración de Organismos Marinos (CIROM) (Marine Organism Research and Restoration Center) to learn more about their conservation efforts in Puerto Rico, which include extensive coral reef restoration.

After an immersive morning spent learning about local conservation projects, we enjoy lunch and then head to Hatillo. Situated near the Rio Abajo Forest, Hatillo is about an hour and a half drive, on the coast of the northwest quadrant of the island; we spend the night in a quaint hotel to be close to one of the best locations to see the critically endangered and endemic Puerto Rican Amazon, the only native parrot on the island.

Accommodations in Hatillo (B,L,D)

## Conservation Highlight:

### Local Livelihoods Rely on Nature

Like most islands in the Caribbean, the fishing and tourism industries sustain Puerto Rico's households, communities and local economies. The health and productivity of the resources that support fishing and tourism—including the ocean, coasts and coral reefs—are vital to the wellbeing and prosperity of the 3.2 million residents living here.

### An Ocean Teeming with Life

The ocean supplies more than 50% of our oxygen and provides food and livelihoods for 3 billion people. It is also our greatest ally against climate change, absorbing about 30% of global CO2 emissions and capturing excess heat.

Puerto Rico has some of the Caribbean's most expansive coral reef systems, with almost 200 square miles of reef area and shallow reef ecosystems that include mangroves and seagrass beds fringing most of the coastline. We have already lost more than 30% of the world's coastal mangrove forests, 50% of coral reefs, and 85% of shellfish reefs—all habitats that support marine biodiversity and communities. Throughout the Caribbean, TNC is working with governments, science organizations and communities to conserve these vital systems.

Our work in this region is contributing to our global goal to develop sustainable solutions for thriving oceans. By 2030, TNC will conserve 4 billion hectares of ocean—more than 10% of the world's ocean area.

## Itinerary (cont.)

### DAY 4

Thursday, March 26

We have an early morning to have the best chance to find the Puerto Rican Amazon. Leaving by 6:00 AM with a packed breakfast, we head about 30 minutes to the Rio Abajo Forest. This forest is home to one of only three populations of the parrot and a crucial site for conservation efforts with hopes of increasing the population enough to downlist the species to threatened. The World Parrot Trust (WPT) and the United States Forest Service (USFS) are collaborating to restore and maintain critical habitats, crucial for the recovery of the Puerto Rican Amazon. Efforts include strategic habitat planning, tree planting, erosion control, invasive species management, artificial nest installation, and continuous monitoring of parrot populations. By involving local communities and implementing sustainable practices, the partnership aims to build a strong foundation for the species' recovery and future habitat stability. In addition to seeing this special parrot, we may also see a few other endemic species including the adorable Puerto Rican Tody, the noisy Puerto Rican Tanager, and the Puerto Rican Woodpecker.

After a morning in the forest, we head back to Hatillo for lunch at a local restaurant. We spend the afternoon visiting a few other locations, looking for birds, exploring the local floral, and possibly even seeing Caribbean Hermit Crab, or soldier crab, while we're out and about. The hermit crabs can grow to the size of softballs, and it's fascinating to listen to and watch their different defense mechanisms.

Accommodations in Hatillo (B,L,D)

### DAY 5

Friday, March 27

After breakfast in Hatillo, we depart the northwest part of the island and head back to San Juan. We enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and then spend the afternoon visiting the historic fort, Castillo San Felipe del Morro. One of the most iconic landmarks in Puerto Rico, this fort was built by the Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to defend the island.

Accommodations in San Juan (B,L,D)

### DAY 6

Saturday, March 28

Today we head outside of the city to visit Medio Mundo y Dagua, which contains the second largest mangrove forest in Puerto Rico. We take a tour of the area to learn more about conservation efforts from staff of Para la Naturaleza.

After the site visit and a local lunch, we head back to San Juan for a break to relax before our final dinner together tonight.

Accommodations in San Juan (B,L,D)



## Itinerary (cont.)

- DAY 7

Sunday , March 29

Enjoy a sit down breakfast at the hotel this morning, followed by airport taxi transfers and your journey home. You can depart at your leisure today. (B)

Itineraries are guidelines; variations in itinerary may occur to account for weather, road conditions, closures, etc. and to maximize your experience.

Photo: Grunts near Guanica, Puerto Rico © Pichón Duarte



## Trip Cost

Double Occupancy: \$5,990/person

Single Occupancy: \$6,650/person

### This cost includes:

- Accommodations
- Group airport transfers
- Group ground transportation
- All meals beginning with dinner on Day 1 and ending with breakfast on Day 7
- Park, preserve, and other activity fees
- Miscellaneous program expenses
- Professional guide services
- TNC hosts

### This cost excludes:

- Travel to and from Puerto Rico
- Travel insurance (Highly Recommended)
- Incidentals
- Alcohol

**Registration: Please email [travel@tnc.org](mailto:travel@tnc.org) to register.**



Photos (from top to bottom): Colleagues overlooking the water © Chrsitina Colondres; Puerto Rico night life © Chrsitina Colondres; Sealife © Pichón Duarte; Seaside boardwalk © Chrsitina Colondres



## Payment & Cancellation Terms

To make trip payments or cancel your registration, please contact Naturalist Journeys at [travel@naturalistjourneys.com](mailto:travel@naturalistjourneys.com) or call 866-900-1146.

### Deposit:

- A deposit of \$750 per person is due at the time of registration.
  - Cancellation 121+ days prior to trip start: Deposit is refundable, less a \$250 per person cancellation fee (and 3% payment handling fee, if applicable).

### Full Trip Payment:

- Full trip payment is due 120 days prior to trip start.
  - Cancellation 0-120 days prior to trip start: Full trip cost is non-refundable.

## Contact Information

As you plan for your journey with The Nature Conservancy and Naturalist Journeys, please feel free to reach out with any questions.

**TNC Discover with Nature Team**

[travel@tnc.org](mailto:travel@tnc.org)

**Naturalist Journeys Team**

[travel@naturalistjourneys.com](mailto:travel@naturalistjourneys.com)

866-900-1146

## TNC Travel Values

### ● Access

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

### ● Impact

Witness how your commitment to our planet and your passion for conservation are making a difference in the wild places and 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 observing first-hand how TNC and our partners act locally and how we turn local results in to global impact by scaling solutions that work.

Photo: Davis Mountain Preserve, TX © Jerod Foster



## TNC Traveler Expectations

Group travel with The Nature Conservancy provides our donors with the opportunity to experience, alongside fellow supporters, the places TNC is working collaboratively to advance our conservation mission. Within these curated trips is the chance to engage with a community of active individuals and conservation staff who enjoy teaching and learning about the important conservation work we do and exploring the outdoors.

In order to ensure an enjoyable trip environment that supports learning and enrichment, we need your partnership. We ask that all participants review TNC's Code of Conduct prior to joining a trip. We also encourage you to carefully review all trip information to make an informed decision as to whether travel with TNC and a specific trip's characteristics and activities are right for you. Following the Code is an expectation and responsibility for everyone in the larger TNC community, including our staff, partners, vendors and supporters. To that end, by registering for a TNC trip, you agree to uphold the Code.

While the entire Code of Conduct is important, the tenets that are especially relevant to TNC group travel are:

- respect for each other,
- respect for the world around us, and
- acting with integrity.

The following traveler expectations are intended to provide guidance for how those tenets translate to group travel but are by no means an exhaustive list. By participating in a TNC trip, you make a commitment to act in accordance with the TNC Code of Conduct to your fellow travelers, as well as to TNC staff, partners, community members and vendors. Any violation of or disregard for the Code of Conduct may result in removal from a trip and/or denial of future TNC travel participation.

## TNC Traveler Expectations (cont.)

### ● **Respect all people, places and perspectives.**

Each participant on a trip is an integral part of the travel experience. Demonstrating respect and consideration is imperative not only for nature, local communities and cultures in the places we visit, but also for fellow travelers, staff, partners, community members and vendors. Everyone will bring different goals, backgrounds, experiences and abilities, and it is important that the group respect each individual's perspectives and needs throughout the trip. Sometimes trip participants become lifelong friends, and we encourage the camaraderie and community built through these shared experiences!

### ● **Harassment in all its forms, including discrimination and microaggressions, is not tolerated.**

There is no place on any TNC travel experience for disrespect to or bullying or intimidation of fellow travelers, TNC staff, partners, community members or vendors. All travelers agree to support an environment free from any behavior that could make an individual feel unsafe or diminish their dignity. If you experience or observe this type of behavior on a trip, please report it to your trip host or guide.

Examples of behavior that will not be tolerated include, but are not limited, to:

- Racial discrimination in any form (jokes, comments and/or actions)
- Verbal abuse of any traveler, staff, partner, community member or vendor
- Actions or statements that exclude or divide people because of their differences or differing perspectives
- Jokes about gender or sexual orientation or that include sexual innuendo
- Discriminatory actions or statements based on gender or sexual orientation
- Unwelcome physical contact or physical intimidation of a sexual nature

### ● **Act in accordance with the applicable law of the location(s) of the trip.**

Your trip location(s) may have different laws from your home location. You are expected to be aware of and adhere to the trip destination's laws throughout the experience, even when locations change throughout a trip.

### ● **Employ an attitude of flexibility.**

At times, there may be changes in the itinerary when deemed necessary or advisable for the comfort and well-being of trip members. We appreciate your understanding, flexibility and adaptability in order to make the trip safe and enjoyable for you and everyone else.

**TNC and its tour operators reserve the right to deny registration or remove a tour participant from a trip should such person's behavior, health or mental condition impact the safe and equitable operation of the trip.**

**Thank you for your attention and understanding, and please let a TNC travel representative know if you have any questions in advance of registering at [travel@tnc.org](mailto:travel@tnc.org).**

