

Explore Puerto Rico Update

Spring 2005

1

This update is for readers of **Explore Puerto Rico**, a travel guide published by Manatee Press. Please send all contributions and suggestions to editorial@savethemanatee.com. Please support us by purchasing this guidebook. Readers of this newsletter can receive a copy for US\$15 postpaid. Send a check to Harry S. Pariser, PO Box 225001, SF, CA 94122-5001 **NOTE:** This edition incorporates additions found in previous versions of the Puerto Rican update.

The latest version of our update supercedes all previous versions and covers all of the information provided by them along with much new information.

Anibel Acevedo Vila won the governor race in December 2005, following a two-month recount and a court challenge from opponent Pedro Rossello, who served as Puerto Rico's governor from 1993 until 2001. The final count had Acevedo Vila of the Popular Democratic Party receiving 963,303 votes (48.4 percent) compared with 959,737 (48.2 percent) for Rossello. Third-party candidate Ruben Berrios, who supports full independence for the island, won 54,551 votes (2.7 percent).

Puerto Rico has a new gay-oriented online publication.

<http://www.puertoricobreeze.com>

Adventours offers trips for individuals and groups.

<http://www.adventours.tk>

Seaborne Airlines Provides Service to Old San Juan

Seaborne Airlines now provides three daily round trip flights between Old San Juan and St. Thomas. Visitors may depart St. Thomas at 7:30 AM., noon and 3:30 PM and depart Old San Juan at 8:45 AM, 1:15 PM. and 4:45 PM. Seaborne plans to provide service between Old San Juan and St. Croix in upcoming months. The airline is offering a special introductory rate of \$99 round trip, to make island-hopping easy. For additional information or to book a flight, call (340) 773-6442.

<http://www.seaborneairlines.com>

Old San Juan/San Juan (p. 101)

The **Institute of Puerto Rican Culture** now has a website (Spanish only) which highlights activities in Old San Juan: <http://www.icp.gobierno.pr>

Casa Don Q Puerto Rico (☎ 787-977-1721), C. La Marina across from Pier One, is a small museum which offers free rum drinks. It's open Tues. to Sun, and hours vary seasonally.

Puerto Mágico (☎ 787-754-7598) is an amusement park with a boat which takes children around the attractions. It's at Plaza Metropolitana, Ave. Ana G. Méndez, Río Piedras; it's open daily.

On Page 103 (Transport and Tours/Tours), the new telephone number for **Legends of Puerto Rico** is 1-787-605-9060.

<http://www.legendsofpr.com>

Agua Viva (☎ 787-722-0665), C. Fortaleza 364, is a new Old San Juan restaurant, which is run by the same chef who started the Parrot Club. Seafood is a specialty, and the decor is described by *Conde Nast Traveler* as "retro-diner meets Atlantis." Entrees run \$24-\$34, and the restaurant is on Calle Fortaleza. It's open for dinner only.

Borínquen Grill & Brewing Company (☎ 787-268-1900/1910), Ave. Isla Verde 4800, serves brewskis, pub food, and has events ranging from a bikini contest to live jazz.

The moderately-priced **Panorama Restaurant** (787-729-9050) in the Hotel Milano, serves lunch, and dinner.

The Macarios (☎ 787-723-8653), 361 Tetuán, serves casual and elegant lunches and dinners.

The **Escuela de Artes Plásticas** has a small cafeteria and art gallery.

rio piedras

In Río Piedras, **Guajanas Arte Café** (☎ 787-766-0497), C. Amalia Marin 4, is set at the campus's SW corner. It's inexpensive and features sandwiches to munch on while viewing the artwork.

In Río Piedras, **Country Health Food** (☎ 787-763-7056), C. Robles 53, is set near the market and offers vegetarian entrees.

In Río Piedras, Cafetería **Los Rosas** (☎ 787-274-1261), C. Monseñor Torres 112, is clean and offers a good buffet. It closes at 3 PM.

In Río Piedras, **Los Mexicanos** (☎ 787-282-8007), Ave. Universidad 52, serves inexpensive burritos and the like. It closes at 3 PM.

hato rey

In Hato Rey, **Al Salam** (☎ 787-751-6296), Ave. F. D. Roosevelt 239, is an inexpensive Middle Eastern Restaurant. It has belly dancing on Fri. evenings.

nightlife

The **Nuyorican Cafe** (☎ 787-977-1276), Callejón de la Capilla (off of C. Fortaleza), serves food and has a number of events nightly.

In Santurce, **Stargate/Pleasure** (☎ 787-725-6446) is a popular disco. Cover is an outrageous \$25 for men; women are free. It's on Ave. R. H. Todd and Nof Ave. c de León.

The **Havana Club** (☎ 787-722-1919), C. Condado 303, is next to Stargate and is *the* place to go for salsa dancing. Cover ranges from \$5-\$20.

Spring 2005

In Hato Rey, **San Juan Reggae**, C. Chardón 9, is very popular with college students. Cover is usually around \$10. Get there early on weekends.

bike rental

Adrenalina (☎ 787-727-1233) in Isla Verde rents bikes as does **Local Riders** (☎ 787-403-8055), Ave. Ashford 1106, and **Hot Dog Cycling** (☎ 787-982-5344), Ave. Isla Verde 5916. Expect to pay around \$20–\$25 pd. (Note that Piñones has a bike path).

balloon race

In the nearby town of Toa Alta, the **Puerto Rico Hot Air Balloon Regatta** (☎ 787-261-0202) starts here and ends in Arecibo. It takes place in June.

Vega Baja (Tortuguero) (p. 157)

Reader Bill Morstein reports that the caimans in Vega Baja (p. 157) are no longer on the menus there.

Laguna Tortuguero is now **Reserva Natural Laguna Tortuguero** (☎ 787-858-6617). Its ecotourism office offers information and tours (reservation required: Wed. to Sun., 6:30 AM–4 PM). The office is open from 8 AM–5 PM Mon. to Fri.

The **Casa de Cultura y Turismo Carmen González Santiago** (☎ 787-858-6447), Vega Baja, offers reservation-only city tours as well as trips to the beach, lagoon, springs, and river. It's open Mon. to Fri. from 8 AM–4:30 PM.

Museo de Arte Casa Alonso (☎ 787-855-1364), C. Betances 34, Vega Baja, is a neoclassical building which the US Dept. of the Interior designated a National Historic Site in 1996. It's open Tues. to Fri. from 9 AM–noon and 1–4 PM, Sat. 10 AM–noon, and Sun. from 1 PM–4 PM.

Dorado

Dorado now celebrates "Gallery Night" on the first Thurs. of each month. The museums open with new exhibits and a party atmosphere prevails in the plaza.

The **Costa de Oro Guest House** (☎ 787-278-7888, fax 278-7892), C. H #B28, charges from around \$80 d. It has clean

rooms, a pool, and is within walking distance to the beach.

Sixto Escobar Cultural Center and the **Sixto Escobar Electronic Library** are in Barleonesa, a city named after Barcelona. They're named after a local who was the first Puerto Rican to win the world bantamweight boxing championship. Barleonesa is also called Ciudad de las Piñas because it is surrounded by pineapple plantations. Its Isla de Roque is under renovation. Take Carr. 381 to get here.

Río Grande (p. 165)

The **José Hernández Poster Museum**, C. Pimintel 37, has opened. The town of Río Grande now has two trolley routes. One route runs between the Westin Río Mar and El Portal (visitor's center) in El Yunque and runs Mon. to Fri. from 7 AM–3 PM. The second runs from the center of town to three residential areas.

The **Paradisus Sol Melía** is now open. It offers nine themed restaurants and bars as well as two 18-hole golf courses, full-service spa, olympic-sized pool, and amphitheater.

The 412-rm. **Fairmont Coco Beach** is scheduled to open on 27 acres in Río Grande sometime in 2006 and will have an 18-hole golf course.

Canóvanas

Be sure to see the **Antigua Lechería**, an old dairy. The **Belz Factory Outlet World** is Puerto Rico's largest enclosed outlet mall. It's at Rte. 3, Km 18.4.

Vieques (p. 187)

The **Wyndham Martineau Bay Resort & Spa** is open.

Celebration in Vieques following the Navy's end of bombing in Feb. 2003.

<http://www.prorescatevieques.org/celebracion.html>

<http://www.prorescatevieques.org>

Culebra (p. 205)**A bit of Culebra history:**

During the time (until 1975) that Culebra's Playa Flamenco was used as a bombing target for US naval ships, it was the only beach accessible by road to the island's residents. Before heading down the dirt road which led to it, locals would check and see if a red flag was flying. If it was, it meant that the Navy was shelling the island, so they should stay away.

The Culebra clinic is now called the **Culebra Community Emergency Health Center** (☎ 787-742-0001, 787-742-3511). It has 24 hr. emergency care. Otherwise, it runs Mon. to Fri. during daytime hours. A dentist visits on Tuesday. Prices are reasonable and insurance is accepted.

The **Public Library** has moved to the kindergarten classrooms, and the computers are not available. However, it is a nice a/c place to read. It's open Mon. to Fri. from 7 AM–9 PM and on Sat. from 7 AM–3 PM. A new community library is in the planning stages. Internet access remains available at eXcetera.

Gardenias Gallery, C. Escudero down the block from Rafy's store in Dewey, sells work by local artists.

Villa Coral opened in March 2003. They offer two-bedroom waterfront apartments in town near the municipal dock on Ensenada Honda. They are fully equipped with kitchen and laundry service. Daily maid service, catering, and babysitting are available. Call Vacation Planners for information: 1-866-285-3272.

Camping at Playa Flamenco is now \$20 per tent.

A free internet connection may be available in the library after school hours soon. It was available in the past.

Two new ferry boats may be purchased. **Yoko's Young Adventures**, a children's book, instructs children about Culebra. Children connect the dots, color, plot a map, conquer the squares, and find a word. It is available on the internet as an e-book and is available at stores on

Spring 2005

Culebra. John Reinhardt, a father who spends part of the year on Culebra, wrote and designed the book.

john@reinhartdesigns.com

<http://www.mikiosko.com> (e-book version)

A trial project, the **Sea Stations**, underwater aquaculture farms resembling space ships, are anchored in deep ocean waters several miles from the coast. The effort is a partnership between the Culebra Fishermen's Association and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association. Cobia and mutton snapper are grown. A fish hatchery is in the works.

<http://www.snapperfarm.com>

Cayey (p. 229)

Jájome Terrace (☎ 787-738-4016), Carr. 15 at Km 18.6, is just after Carr. 741 near Cayey. It has ten rooms with mountain views. There are no TVs or phones, but there is a restaurant. Rates run around \$100 d.

<http://www.jajometerrace.com>

Aibonito (p. 235)

The Swiss Inn Guesthouse (☎ 787-735-8500), Carr. 14, Km 49.3, is 3/4 mi. W of the plaza and offers functional rooms but friendly management. Rates run around \$50 d.

Barranquitas (p. 235)

Hacienda Margarita (☎ 787-857-8116) is set in the suburb of Quebrada Grande, a 15-min. drive from town. To get here you head E on Carr. 156, pass the Shell Station, and then turn L on Carr. 152, drive up to the top of the hill and turn R at Km 1.7, directly before the wooden restaurant.

Yauco (p. 259)

The Centro de Arte A. Franceschi (☎ 787-856-0350) is a museum of art and culture housed in a 1907 home.

Utua Area (p. 311)

Casa Grande (p. 312) is now **Casa Grande Mountain Retreat**.

from the owner: "We have a freshwater pool and Jungle Jane's, a terrace-side restaurant, etc. etc. We do not serve *pin-iono* at Jungle Jane's but we do serve other *comidas criolla* such as *chuletas*, *abumadas* and *biftec lomillo*. Also, the telephone number for Rancho de Caballos is 787-894-0240."

<http://www.hotelcasagrande.com>.

La Parguera (p. 270)

Parguera Divers (Route 304 KM 3.3, La Parguera, Lajas; ☎ 787-899-4171) has a new fax (☎ 787-899-6023), cell ☎ 787-616-8543, e-mail, and web page.

<http://www.pargueradivers.com>
dive@pargueradivers.com

Quebradillas (p. 303)

The **Barbie Museum** is now the **Museo de Muñecas** (☎ 787-356-4360) and is at Carr. 482, Km 1. More than 800 Barbies are featured here. It's open Sat. and Sun. from noon to 5 PM. Admission is \$3 adults, \$2 children up to age ten.

Aguadilla (p. 298)

Hotel Villa Forin (☎ 787-882-8341), Carr. 107, Km 2.1, rents clean rooms from around \$65 d.

Ramey Guest House (☎ 787-890-4208, 431-2939) rents three-person studios (\$75) and one- to four-bedroom homes with a/c and TVs (\$120 and up). Tax is included in rates.

<http://rameyguesthouse.com>

Cayey (p. 229)

The **Museo Dr. Pio López Martínez** (☎ 787-738-2161), Ave. Antonio R. Barcelo, displays some of the most famous work this artist did between 1897–1953. Lorenzo Homar's work is also exhibited. It's open Mon. to Fri. from 8 AM–4:30 PM and on Sat., Sun., and holidays from 11 AM–5 PM.

Juana Diaz (p. 247)

Juana Diaz has the **El Salto de Collores**, a waterfall in Barrio Collores; **le Cueva Lucera**, which features ancient Taino stonecarvings. It's at the end of Carr. 552, and a reservation (☎ 787-837-2120) is required. **Sanctuario Schoenstatt** (☎ 787-837-8907) is a mountaintop Catholic sanctuary. It's on Carr. 14 at Carr. 574 and is open daily from 6:30 AM–9 PM.

<http://www.juanadiaz.org>

Ponce's **Holiday Inn-Ponce** and the **Howard Johnson** have their addresses transposed.

Toa Alta

Toa Alta was founded in 1751 and is one of Puerto Rico's oldest towns. Its agricultural prowess gave it the name of Granja de los Reyes Católicos (Farm of the Catholic Kings) during Spanish rule. It is also known as Ciudad del Josco, after the novel *El Josco*, penned by famous local novelist Abelardo Díaz Alfaro and is the hometown of *cuatro* master Tomás "Masso" Rivera. The town has the **Parroquia a San Fernando Rey** (1772), a historic church which stands in the plaza. The **Plaza de Recreo Egoscue** has an *arbol bala de cañón* (cannonball tree). To get here, take Carr. 165 from Carr. 22 or 2.

Mayaguez (p. 279)

Restaurante Vegetariano La Familia (☎ 787-833-7571), C. de Diego 151 Este, is an inexpensive, buffet-style vegetarian restaurant.

Lares (p. 318)

The **Museo Marianna Bracetti** (☎ 787-636-7198), C. San Pablo, is a small art and history museum which exhibits paintings, historic photos and shows small crafts. It's open from noon–3 PM.

The **Festival del Guineo** (Banana Festival, info ☎ 787-897-3290) takes place in early June. Different foods and pastries made from bananas are featured.

Spring 2005

The **Certamen Cultural Mundial** (☎ 787-897-3290) is an international festival featuring traditional costumes, handicrafts, music and food of Puerto Rico and other invited nations. A parade is held on the Sunday of the festival. It's usually held around late August.

Rincón (p. 289)

For livecam images of the surf at Rincón check out:
<http://www.ecosurfpuertorico.com>

Dos Angeles del Mar Guest House (☎ 787-837-8907), is a two-storey home with four a/c rooms equipped with microwave, refrigerator, and TV. Rates run from \$85 d.
<http://www.dosangelesdelmar.com>

Set to the S of town, **Amirage Apartments** (☎/fax 787-823-6454), Carr. 429 at Km 4, offer three completely-equipped rooms with kitchen (dishwasher!), cable TV/VCR, and balcony. There's a Jacuzzi and garden. Rates run from \$125 d. Credit cards not accepted.
<http://www.proceanfront.com>

The 112-rm. **Rincón of the Seas–Grand Caribbean Hotel** opened on Feb. 8, 2003 and is on six acres.
<http://www.rinconoftheseas.com>

Broadway's Deli and Bagels (☎ 787-823-7641), Carr. 115 at Km 11.3, is a bagel joint which also features salads.

Restaurante Bambino's (☎ 787-823-3744) serves Italian meals at reasonable prices. It's open Fri. to Wed. from 11AM–10 PM.

Explore Puerto Rico Update

(date)

5

Pintos "R" Us (☎ 787-598-8614), next to Casa Verde, offers trail rides for \$25 ph.