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**HOLIDAY CHEER CAN BE FOUND IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (DR) THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON**

*Visitors are invited to celebrate the most wonderful time of the year underneath the Caribbean sun*

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – SEPT. 23, 2009** – This year, escape the cold and hang your family’s stockings by the DR seaside without any cares. Families looking to celebrate the holidays in an untraditional fashion can trade in their wintertime blues for fun in the DR sun.

Not only does the DR offer family-friendly activities entertaining enough to keep all on Santa’s Nice List happy, but the country also features world-class accommodations, award-winning golf, thrilling eco-adventures and relaxing beaches. “With a wide variety of exciting activities, serene beaches and rich cultural experiences, families will find that the DR is the ideal place to celebrate the holidays,” said Magaly Toribio, Vice Minister of International Promotion for the DR. “Visitors can also rest assured that the country’s favorable dollar exchange and luxurious affordability make for the greatest gift of all this holiday season.”

With unique holiday activities and traditions special to the DR, memories will be made and new experiences will be had by all. This holiday season, the DR features numerous festive opportunities, which include:

**Family Golfing**

Teeing off isn’t something most golfers do in the middle of winter, but for Dominicans every day is a beautiful day on the fairway. Resorts and courses of the DR offer experiences for all types of golfers and with abundant golf professionals and kid’s clinics available, everyone can have a jolly old time.

**Merengue**

As part of the holiday festivities, Dominicans ring in the New Year with traditional Merengue dancing and salsa music. Visitors to the DR can learn the Dominican dance just in time for the New Year with lessons offered at resorts and local activity centers.

**Dominican Cuisine**

Food in the DR is succulent and tasty throughout the year, but during December’s festivities, restaurants introduce cuisine exclusive to the holiday season. Visitors can enjoy *puerco asafó* (roasted pork), *coquitos* (hazelnuts, or literally translated as “little coconuts”) and *Anis del Mono* (a popular Dominican drink). In addition, Dominican restaurants offer *sancocho*, a popular Dominican stew that contains plantains, meat and vegetables, which is usually served on Christmas Eve.

### **Cigar Country**

To many cigar enthusiasts the DR is known as “Cigar Country” and the holiday season is the perfect time to learn more about this Dominican delicacy. The DR boasts many cigar museums, like Museo de Tobacco in Santiago, where visitors can explore exhibits and observe how some of the finest tobacco in the world is processed and rolled. Visitors can also visit one of the many cigar shops or markets where visitors can customize and help roll their own cigars – excellent for holiday presents.

### **Colonial City**

Families who plan to stay by the beach must take a trip to the DR’s capital city, Santo Domingo for the holiday festivities. Santo Domingo is surely the place to be throughout the month of December with many holiday events and special activities. The Christmas Craft Fair is scheduled for the second week in December in Colonial City, which is the first known settlement made by Columbus in Santo Domingo. The Nativity of the Lord’s Concert, featuring the National Choir and the National Symphony Orchestra, will be held at the Cathedral Santa Maria de la Encarnación in Santo Domingo. A New Year’s Celebration is also scheduled for Dec. 31, on the Avenida del Puerto and the Malecón in Santo Domingo. For more information visit: [www.dr1.com](http://www.dr1.com).

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*The Dominican Republic’s first tourist was Christopher Columbus in 1492. Rich in history, the DR has developed into a diverse destination offering both Dominican and European flavors to more than one million U.S. visitors each year. Named #1 Golf Destination in Caribbean & Latin America by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators, the DR boasts 25 designer golf courses, upscale resorts, pristine nature, and sophisticated cities and quaint villages filled with warm Dominican people. The DR features the best beaches, fascinating history and culture, and is a chosen escape for celebrities, couples and families alike. Visit the Dominican Republic Ministry of Tourism’s official Web site at: [www.GoDominicanRepublic.com](http://www.GoDominicanRepublic.com).*