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## **PUERTO PLATA EMERGES AS THE NEW COAST OF ECO-STYLE AND ACTIVITY**

*-The Caribbean's secret is out: Puerto Plata offers affordable luxury in today's economy -*

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – OCT. 22, 2008** – Puerto Plata, the largest city on the Dominican Republic's (DR) North Coast, is seen as a shining star for the country's tourism industry. With the largest number of attractively-priced hotel rooms in the north, championship designer golf courses, shopping, casinos, night life, rejuvenated local beaches and other new developments planned, Puerto Plata is creating a reputation as one of the Caribbean's most popular emerging tourist destinations in the DR attracting international travelers, sports champions and celebrities alike.

Blessed with stretches of pristine beaches, breathtaking countryside, friendly people, diverse culture, raw nature and luxury, Puerto Plata is great for those travelers seeking a vacation out of the ordinary. In 1492, Christopher Columbus described the region as "the fairest land under heaven." Over 500 years later, visitors continue to be captivated by the non-stop unspoiled natural beauty.

Just 800 miles south of Florida, Puerto Plata offers travelers rare and preserved beauty with daily flights from Miami, New York, Atlanta and Puerto Rico. Also, weekly charters from dozens of Canadian and European cities make traveling to and from Puerto Plata easier than ever. In addition, Puerto Plata's centrally located Gregorio Luperón International Airport is less than 20 minutes away from the majority of the area's hotels making the trip home a breeze.

Known as the country's most versatile playground, Puerto Plata is an excellent destination for those seeking fun, adventure and enriching activities. Here vacationers can jump river beds on a mountain bike, fight waves on a kiteboard, test their strength on a rock race or rub elbows with the rich and famous who come for the North Coast's luxurious accommodations.

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Travelers with limited vacation time often find themselves hard-pressed to choose from the vast list of activities Puerto Plata has to offer. Top attractions in Puerto Plata include:

### **Ocean World**

A favorite with kids and adults alike, Ocean World allows visitors to get up close and personal with dolphins, sea lions and sharks. [www.oceanworld.net](http://www.oceanworld.net) ; (809) 291-1111

### **Playa Grande and Playa Dorada Golf Course**

As one of the world's best golf destinations, the DR has a great course tucked into every corner of the country. The North Coast's Playa Grande and Playa Dorada, both by Robert Trent Jones, Sr., are often on best course lists.

[www.playagrande.com](http://www.playagrande.com)

[www.playadoradagolf.com](http://www.playadoradagolf.com) ; (809) 320-3472

### **Amber Museum**

Located in one of Puerto Plata's famous Victorian houses, the Amber Museum takes visitors on a tour of some of the world's rarest pieces of amber. Puerto Plata and the surrounding region contains among the largest deposits of amber in the world. <http://ambermuseum.com>; (809) 586-2848

### **Victorian Architecture**

Take in the beauty of late 19th early 20th century preserved Victorian homes and public buildings in Puerto Plata with gingerbread motifs, wooden lace filigree and pastel colors. Some of the best can be found in Central Park.

### **Taino Art Museum**

The Taino Art Museum provides insights into the lives of the settlers of the island when Columbus and the Spaniards arrived. Located in the Arawak Plaza.

### **San Felipe Fort**

Built by the Spaniards in the 16th century, this 2,000 square meter fort is the oldest standing edifice in Puerto Plata and the only remnant of the colonial time architecture. Developed on the waterfront to fend off pirates, the fort overlooks the statue of General Gregorio Luperon, hero of the war that restored the rule of the country to the Dominicans from the Spanish.

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### **Brugal Factory Tour**

The DR is famous for its rum and Brugal is the favorite of many Dominicans. Visitors to Puerto Plata can participate in a factory tour, complete with a refreshing cocktail finale.

### **El Museo de Sosua**

In the 1940's Puerto Plata became a refuge for several hundred Jews fleeing Nazi Germany. They established a small barrio called El Batey where today visitors can explore a small museum that tells their story.

### **Cable Car**

From Puerto Plata visitors can take a suspended cable car 2,565 feet up to the top of Mount Isabela de Torres. From here, the views of Puerto Plata and the coast are magnificent. In addition, a statue of Christ the Redeemer, a slightly smaller replica of the Rio de Janeiro landmark, is found at the peak.

### **Jazz Festival**

Puerto Plata's annual jazz festival (held each October) is legendary worldwide and for good reason. Each year the event attracts the Caribbean's best musicians and often features American entertainers.

### **Shopping**

One thing is for sure, there's no shortage of shopping outlets in Puerto Plata. Visitors can choose from supermarkets for interesting finds such as tropical fruit marmalades, sweets or quality rum to gift shops, such as the large Grand Factory, to quaint shops along the beach for sports ware and souvenirs.

### **Night Life**

Puerto Plata's night life ranges from meringue to salsa clubs. Visitors will enjoy mingling with new and old friends while listening to the local beats at one of many night clubs, casinos or bars. In addition, the majority of the resorts will have evening shows with dancing, singing, costumed performers, Merengue lessons, karaoke, beauty pageants and more.

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## **Beaches**

Visitors will find some of the most picturesque beaches in Puerto Plata and the surrounding region. Some of these beaches include:

### ***Playa Dorada***

Located just east of Puerto Plata at the foot of the largest all-inclusive resort complex in the Caribbean, Playa Dorada is protected by reefs and features picture-perfect beaches and warm waters. While anyone can drive into the Playa Dorada complex, non-guests have to pay for a day pass.

### ***Playa Cofresi***

Just a few minutes west of Puerto Plata lies one of the most breathtaking beaches in the DR, named after the pirate, Roberto Cofresi. While Playa Cofresi is wonderful for bathing in the sun, the waters provide excellent bodysurfing and boogie-boarding opportunities due to choppier waters.

### ***Cabarete***

On the DR's North Coast, adventure seekers will fall in love with Cabarete. One of the top five kiteboarding and windsurfing beaches in the world, Cabarete's beach (often called "Kite Beach") annually hosts an array of international championships. On any given day, visitors to the area will see the sky filled with hundreds of colorful kites carrying amateur and pro riders through the surf. Beyond the sports sights, the beach is bordered by world class restaurants, discos and lots of shopping. Also nearby is Encuentro Beach. This is a surfer's paradise with several schools and outfitters that can direct enthusiasts to the nearest point break.

### ***Costa Dorada***

Costa Dorada, also referred to as the Golden Coast, offers beach goers a coastline with endless miles of golden sand beaches.

### ***Playa Sosúa***

Located on a crescent-shaped bay, Playa Sosúa is a postcard perfect beach. Featuring a backdrop of towering cliffs, the waters here are calm, clear and a deep shade of turquoise. Playa Sosúa is perhaps one of the Caribbean's most popular beaches, which may explain the crowds. However, with so much to do – shopping or eating in Sosúa, snorkeling or even taking a glass bottom boat tour – the crowds are worth the visit.

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### **Luxury Resorts**

While visiting Puerto Plata, travelers won't find a Marriott or a Sheraton, but will find some very exclusive and beautifully designed owner-operated boutique hotels, deluxe villas and extravagant all-inclusive resorts. Extravagant or intimate, exciting or relaxed, Puerto Plata offers an immense variety of accommodations and options to satisfy every style and budget.

### **Adventure and Eco Activities**

The North Coast is an excellent staging area for numerous adventure activities including whitewater rafting, horseback riding, fishing, cascading, kiteboarding, whale watching, four-wheeling, scuba diving, snorkeling, mountain biking, surfing and windsurfing.

In addition to a vast variety of activities, Puerto Plata offers a beach lover's paradise with the beaches of Playa Dorada, Costa Dorada, Playa Cofresí, Playa Sosúa and Cabarete. "The North Coast boasts some of the world's most breathtaking white sand beaches surrounded with brilliant shades of turquoise," said DR Minister of Tourism Francisco Javier Garcia. "As of late 2008, the DR has put an initial investment of nearly \$25 million into the rejuvenation of seven DR beaches, including a five kilometer stretch of beach east of Long Beach city. In addition, the adjacent stretch from Costa Dorada to Playa Dorada and Cabarete on the North Coast has been doubled in size for traveler's beach relaxation."

The word is out. Puerto Plata is the "it" destination for adventure and eco travel along with affordable luxury. With its laid back and relaxing atmosphere, culture and desirable warm weather, Puerto Plata is an astonishing place that will delight even the most experienced traveler.

Rich in history, the Dominican Republic's first tourist was Christopher Columbus in 1492. Since then, it has developed into a diverse and luxurious destination offering both Dominican and European flavors to more than one million U.S. visitors each year. At 10,000 feet, the Dominican Republic is home to the highest point in the Caribbean. It also features some of the best golf courses and beaches in the world, the largest marina in the Caribbean and is a chosen escape for celebrities, couples and families. For more information, visit the Dominican Republic Ministry of Tourism's official Web site at:

[www.GoDominicanRepublic.com](http://www.GoDominicanRepublic.com) or call 1-888-374-6361.

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**Editor's Note:** For images, email: [hwerblow@bvk.com](mailto:hwerblow@bvk.com) or visit: [www.GoDominicanRepublic.com](http://www.GoDominicanRepublic.com)