

**TRAVELERS' FYI**  
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**Airports**

The Dominican Republic (DR) has a total of seven international airports throughout the country. These include:

1. Las Americas International Airport (serves Santo Domingo, the largest airport)
2. La Romana International Airport
3. Punta Cana International Airport (the busiest airport)
4. Gregorio Luperon International Airport (serves Puerto Plata)
5. Santiago International Airport
6. Maria Montez International Airport (serves Baharona)
7. El Catey International Airport (serves Samana, opened November 2006)

**Climate**

The DR enjoys warm tropical weather year-round. Depending on the location, an average day may see full sun or a sun/cloud mix. The average year-round temperatures are 78 to 88 F. The cooler season is November through April, while the temperature is at its warmest from May through October.

**Currency**

The Dominican peso is the official currency of the DR. However, the U.S. dollar is accepted at most tourist establishments and is often preferred. Because the dollar is very strong in the DR, American travelers can expect to find a good exchange rate. Currency may be exchanged at Casas de Cambio (general hours: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) and banks (general hours: 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.). Daily rates can be found at <http://www.xe.com/ucc>.

Major credit cards and travelers cheques are accepted at many tourist areas in the country. While ATMs are found in cities and at most resorts, they aren't as readily available in the DR as they are in the states. To avoid carrying a large amount of cash (not recommended), travelers should bring a mix of payment options.

**Documentation**

Currently, American residents need to provide a passport to gain re-entry into the United States following a trip to the DR or any other Caribbean destination. For further information visit [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc\\_2223.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2223.html).

**Drinking Age**

The drinking age in the DR is 18 years old.

**Driving**

Americans over age 25 can easily rent a car in the DR as long as they have a valid driver's license. In fact, most of the popular rental agencies in the United States have offices in major cities in the DR.

**Electricity**

Electricity in the DR operates at 110 Volts/60 Hertz as it does in the United States. Therefore, converters are not necessary. However, because voltage irregularities are common in the DR – sometimes providing less voltage, sometimes surging – it is important that any appliances or computers you intend to use have surge protection

**Immigration**

Before entering the country at ports or airports, visitors are required to fill out embarkation/disembarkation forms. These must be filled out before entering the immigration line where a passport must be presented.

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Prior to immigration, a tourist card must also be purchased. (See "Tourist Card.")

**Language**

Spanish is the official language of the DR. Despite this, most employees in hotels and tourist destinations speak relatively good English. If visitors intend to venture out beyond the tourist hubs it will be helpful to learn a few basic Spanish phrases.

**Medical Precautions**

While the water is potable in many parts of the DR, travelers are still advised to drink bottled water, which is readily available, as a precaution. Because of the strength of the Caribbean sun, it is recommended that vacationers drink water throughout day to avoid dehydration.

It is essential for travelers to the DR to pack sun screen of SPF 15 or higher, again, due to the strength of the Caribbean sun. In addition, for those traveling to jungle locales, mosquito repellent is strongly recommended.

Should a medical emergency occur during a stay most hotels and resorts have onsite medical care. In addition, emergency rooms are found throughout the country.

**Telephone**

Several cellular phone companies offer service in the DR. Telephones are widely available at resorts throughout the country. To call to the United States, visitors need only dial an area code and phone number as they would at home.

**Time**

The local time zone is Eastern Caribbean Time (GMT -0400). In the winter this is one hour ahead of Eastern Time. The DR does not observe daylight savings time.

**Tipping**

Tipping is widely practiced throughout the DR. While restaurants automatically add a 10 percent tip to the bill, it's customary to give a bit extra – up to 10 percent. Tips are also given to taxi drivers, hotel maids (even at all-inclusives) and porters.

**Tourist Card**

Prior to entering the immigration line visitors are required to purchase a Tourist Card. **It's essential that visitors have \$10 USD for each member of their party to pay this tax.** No coins or other currency, including Dominican pesos, can be used. In addition, ATMs are usually found only outside the immigration area making it nearly impossible for visitors to get cash upon arrival. Travelers cheques and credit cards are also not accepted.

Tourist Cards are available at booths near the immigration lines. The card, which looks similar to a credit card and has a micro chip, will be collected prior to entry into the country.

**U.S. Embassy**

The U.S. Embassy is located at the U.S. Consular Section at the corner of Calle César Nicolás Pensón and Avenida Máximo Gómez. (Located across from the National Theater.) Offices are open to the public on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., but U.S. citizens must arrive prior to 7:30 a.m. for assistance. (809) 221-2171

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