

**KITEBOARDING, WINDSURFING, SURFING**

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The Dominican Republic (DR) is known as the "kiteboarding capital of the world" among those who travel the water sport's circuit. In fact, the Kiteboarding World Cup has been held in the town of Cabarete the past four years, and will be again in 2006.

In this area on the north coast, the perfect blend of wind, water and waves create incomparable kiteboarding conditions. Windsurfers also flock to the water, coming out in large numbers for the annual World Cup Windsurfing Competition held in Cabarete every June.

Hotels that cater to kiteboarders and windsurfers are found up and down Cabarete's "Kite Beach." The opportunity to mingle with some the world's greatest athletes and tales of catching the perfect wind are around every corner.

The southern coastal waters just west of Santo Domingo are also speckled with the bright colored sails of windsurf boards. But, these are not the only boards to be found in the DR. Surf boards also hit the waves in search of the perfect point break and to ride on the barrels.

**Kiteboarding**

One of the fastest growing water sports, this surfing-like activity uses a huge kite to capture the wind as participants balance on a board. Kiteboarding rentals are available all along Kite Beach in Cabarete. Visitors looking to try the sport can easily find experienced kiteboarders offering instruction. A variety of techniques are used at the schools including radio helmets allowing instructors to provide immediate feedback to the student, resulting in quicker learning and more time on the board. Newcomers should block out about three days for kiteboarding instruction, with the third day spent taking the reins of the kite and heading out to the waves.

**Windsurfing**

Equipment is available for rental through most hotels in Cabarete and lessons can be arranged with a variety of vendors. Two of the main providers are the Carib Bic Center, which has been providing instruction and boards for nearly 20 years, and Iguana Mama.

In addition to Cabarete on the north coast, the southwest coast also provides excellent windsurfing. The beaches of Las Salinas and Las Calderas Bay are windsurfing launching points for many locals as the

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area is less crowded than Cabarete. While the policy is bring-your-own-board because at present time there are no rental facilities in the area, the benefits of finding the perfect wind are well-known among locals.

### **Surfing**

From the area of Puerto Plata and east to Playa Grande, 16 surfing spots have been identified along the north coast for their regional wave quality. The best season to surf along the north coast is December through March when the region gets waves up to 14-feet high. El Encuentro is one of the most famous reef breaks in the DR and is on the western edge of Cabarete. Additional breaks are just left of El Encuentro, such as Coco Pipe and La Preciosa, which has often been referred to as a world class point break surfing location.

The southern coast is also a magnet for hanging ten. Over 20 identified surfing spots dot the coastline from at the Haitian border in the west to La Romana in the east.

Either coast has locations for various levels of surfers: beginning, experienced and professional, or “kamikazes,” as some surfers say. And the DR’s menu of waves is appealing to just about every surfer including: point break, beach break, reef coral, sand bar, reef rocky and rivermouth.

Several surf camps, lasting from one day to two weeks, are popping up on the lush north coast. Cabarete’s Surf Camp, also known as “Ali’s Surf Camp,” is one of the best known and even offers surf accommodations in cottages and apartments. ([www.cabaret surfcamp.com](http://www.cabaret surfcamp.com).) Another reputable surf school on El Encuentro beach is 321TakeOff. They provide lessons from one morning to several days in length with an amazing breakfast at a local hidden gem of a cafe. ([www.321TakeOff.com](http://www.321TakeOff.com).)

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