

NATURE & ADVENTURE

With nine distinct ecological zones, Dominican Republic has one of the most diverse ecosystems in the region. This natural variety offers a wide range of exciting adventures and ecotourism activities.

LANDSCAPES

Dominican Republic, a land of dazzling and spectacular contrasts, home to the highest and lowest sea level points in the Caribbean, possesses the most impressive, exotic and captivating natural scenarios.

Pico Duarte rises about 3,087 meters (10,128 feet) within the mountainous chain of the Central Cordillera, being the largest peak of the Antilles. Located mostly in the Armando Bermúdez National Park, Pico Duarte is one of the top sought-after attractions by adventurous spirits who can opt for different hiking routes characterized by impressive intramontane valleys, streams and crystalline rivers, trails and paths bordered by coniferous forests.

As for the lowest point in the Caribbean, Lake Enriquillo of 42 meters (138 feet) below sea level, is the largest of the Antilles and is characterized by being the only neotropical island ecosystem that has three universally recognized categories of superior management: National Park, RAMSAR Wetland and Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO).

These are joined by other natural spaces of extraordinary beauty, such as the Natural Monument Las Calderas, the largest and most important dune system in the Caribbean; the Anthropological Reserve Cuevas El Borbón or El Pomier, a unique geological formation in the country, preserving more than 4,000 pictographs and petroglyphs of the Taino culture; and the scientific reserve of Ébano Verde, with 29 square kilometers (11 square miles) of a lush forest with oscillating cool temperatures from -5°C to 20°C (23°F - 68°F).

ADVENTURES

Each area offers multiple adventures and ecotourism activities that will help revive the senses, such as mountaineering, rafting, paragliding and hiking in Jarabacoa and Constanza. On the other hand, Puerto Plata stands out for its water sports such as surfing, windsurfing, kitesurfing, and Stand Up Paddle (SUP), while Samaná is renowned for its humpback whale mating season, stunning waterfalls and diving areas. In the south coast, Barahona, Pedernales and Baní are known for its virgin beaches, lagoons and dunes. In Punta Cana and La Romana, visitors can enjoy ziplines between forests, snorkeling and catamaran trips.

FLORA & FAUNA

Dominican Republic has more than 6,000 species of plants, where 2,050 are endemic, such as the exotic rose of Bayahibe, the national flower. Its territory is the base for an exuberant presence of flora, with places like Los Haitises National Park, an area of the highest biodiversity in the country and the Caribbean, with beautiful exhibits of precious wood trees such as mahogany and cedar; the Luis Quinn National Park, with varied vegetation including grasses, shrubs, trees and lianas with mostly open and sunny environments; and the Loma Quita Espuela Scientific Reserve, located in the northern ridge, characterized by a high showcase of endemic flora, being the Palo de Vela (*Tabebuia ricardii*) the specie that most stands out.

With more than 7,000 species, the country is characterized by having the greatest fauna diversity throughout the Caribbean. Around the territory, the options abound with live unique encounters with the animal kingdom. During the first quarter of the year, herds of humpback whales reach the waters of the Atlantic Ocean to reproduce, with the Sanctuary of Humpback Whales in Samaná and the Banco de la Plata in Puerto Plata being the go-to destinations for admiring this magnificent spectacle. Throughout the country it is easy to spot the national bird, the cigua palmera.

In the capital city of Santo Domingo, the National Botanical Garden is a refuge of natural life that, during the year, provides the opportunity for sightseeing birds like the yaguaza and the barroncolí. At the other corner of the country in the city of Montecristi, specifically in the Cayos Siete Hermanos keys and during the months of May to August, more than 15 species of seabirds nest and mate in the territory, highlighting the locally denominated bubíes (*Onychoprion anaethetus*, *Onychoprion fuscatus* and *Anous stolidus*), which represent a bulk of the birdlife of major interest, since they contribute to the ecology of the IBA.