

Dominican Republic, the undisputed “it” destination for golf, is widely known as having the most magnificent golf courses in the Caribbean and Latin America. The country boasts a growing list of world-class golf courses designed by some of the game’s most acclaimed course architects, including Pete Dye, P.B. Dye, Jack Nicklaus, Robert Trent Jones Sr., Gary Player, Tom Fazio, Nick Price and Greg Norman. In fact, seven Dominican courses were featured in Golfweek Magazine’s Top 50 courses in the Caribbean and Mexico for 2016, including two in the Top 10, with Nicklaus’s masterpiece Punta Espada taking the number one spot – a position it has held every year since 2009, when it took over from Casa de Campo’s veteran layout, Teeth of the Dog.

Dominican Republic is the second largest country in the Caribbean and also one of the most ecologically diverse nations in the world. Stunning vistas – including waves crashing over dramatic coastlines, coconut palm groves, lush sun-kissed fairways, gentle mountains and exotic nature – set the scene for uniquely designed and distinct golf courses. Golf champions and hobby players alike cannot resist playing the island’s challenging courses blessed with clear blue skies, azure seas and constant beautiful weather.

The country has a wide variety of both inland and coastal courses, including 88 stunning sea-view holes and 39 ocean-side holes – more than any comparable destination – making it a perfect spot for golf travelers of all experience levels. Whether you are a professional golfer or a beginner, playing golf here is a unique experience. Most clubs in the country provide clinics and lessons with some of the sport’s most elite players and a variety of accompanying golf vacation packages. These packages cater to both the serious and recreational player, offering affordable club rentals and often including accommodations, meals and drinks, as well as green fees and cart rentals.

With more than 25 golf courses around the country, these are the 19 most renowned golf courses – recognized by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO).

PUNTA ESPADA GOLF CLUB

Location: Cap Cana

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 7,396

Slope: 137; Rating: 77

Designer: Jack Nicklaus

[Punta Espada Golf Club](#) is Nicklaus’s first signature course in Dominican Republic and now one of two in the region, opened in November 2006 and continues to make top golf course lists including Golfweek Magazine’s #1 course in the Caribbean and Latin America from 2009 to 2016. Nicklaus’s gem boasts eight holes playing either alongside or over the Caribbean Sea – including the stunning par-4 17th, which requires a tee-shot carry over a bay – and a further five with ocean views. The Golden Bear superbly utilizes and incorporates the area’s bluffs, beaches, lagoons and tropical foliage into the course’s design.

Punta Espada also has the distinction of hosting the Official PGA Tour's Champions Tour – The Cap Cana Championship – in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

LA CANA GOLF CLUB

Location: Puntacana Resort & Club, Punta Cana

Holes: 27

Arrecife: Par: 36; Yardage: 3,676

Hacienda: Par: 36; Yardage: 3,768

Tortuga: Par: 36; Yardage: 3,483

Designer: P.B. Dye

The P.B. Dye-designed [La Cana Golf Club](#) was established in 2001 as an 18-hole course, with the new nine-hole Hacienda added in 2010. The Tortuga and Arrecife nines capture the stunning Caribbean scenery with 14 ocean-view holes and four memorable holes that play right on the beach. Arrecife's nine culminates in two spectacular fairways that skirt the azure waters and greens where you try to reach out and touch the sea. Hacienda is both challenging and beautiful in its design as it takes the golfer inland through dense, colorful tropical vegetation. La Cana's well-guarded putting surfaces provide a stern test for even the lowest handicappers. The course's par-3 holes are outstanding – the 200-yard third's narrow green is bordered front and left by a lake; the fifth is La Cana's first hole to play aside the beach; and the 239-yard 14th's long, multi-tiered putting surface is hidden by tall dunes, reminiscent of an Irish links. La Cana is a course that's perfect for golfers of all skill levels and greets all with a relaxing atmosphere complemented by wide, mostly flat fairways.

CORALES GOLF CLUB

Location: Puntacana Resort & Club, Punta Cana

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 7,650

Slope: 140; Rating: 76.9

Designer: Tom Fazio

This Tom Fazio creation, the second oceanfront course at Puntacana Resort & Club, opened in 2010. Featuring six oceanfront holes set on rocky cliffs next to the Caribbean Sea, Fazio's breathtaking and distinctive design has quickly established as one of Dominican Republic's must-play courses. [Corales Golf Club](#) boasts one of golf's most magnificent finishes; the last three holes, called the Devil's Elbow, culminate in a striking, U-shaped 18th that plays around a narrow, bluff-edged bay. The course hosts the Web.com Tour's first tournament in Dominican Republic – the Corales Puntacana Resort & Club Championship – in June each year in a deal set to run until at least 2018. Corales adds another badge of prestige by hosting the 2018 PGA TOUR.

CABEZA DE TORO GOLF CLUB

Location: Catalonia Hotels & Resorts, Cabeza de Toro

Holes: 9

Par: 35; Yardage: 2,622

Designer: Alberto Sola

The Alberto Sola-designed [Cabeza de Toro Golf Club](#) is one of two courses located within the Catalonia Bávaro Resort in Punta Cana and lies adjacent to the Caribe Golf Club course. The challenging nine-hole executive course is surrounded by swaying palm trees, pristine waterways and incomparable views, pampering golfers with a putting green, daily golf lessons, driving range, rental equipment, and clubhouse with a pro shop and bar.

CARIBE GOLF CLUB

Location: Catalonia Hotels & Resorts, Cabeza de Toro

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 6,650

Designer: Alberto Sola & Jack Corrie

[The Caribe Golf Club](#) is also part of the Catalonia Bávaro Resort. Designed by Alberto Sola and Jack Corrie, the well-maintained course is open from October to June and features a large lake — impacting holes 5, 6 and 15 — five lagoons and numerous shade trees. The 6th hole will challenge any golfer with its island green flanked by bunkers and edged by rocks, particularly when the wind blows in off the nearby Atlantic Ocean. Designed for golfers of all skill levels, Catalonia Caribe has ample fairways and blends seamlessly into the landscape. The course also features a nice variation of dogleg holes and an interesting mix of uphill and downhill holes.

THE LAKES BARCELÓ GOLF COURSE

Location: Barceló Bávaro Beach Resort,

Bávaro

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 6,655

Slope: 135; Rating: 72.1

Designer: Juan Manuel Gordillo & P.B. Dye

[The Lakes Barceló Golf](#) Course opened in 1991 at the Barceló Bávaro Beach Resort as the Punta Cana area's first course. The Juan Manuel Gordillo design was revamped by P.B. Dye and open to the public in 2010 to boost its challenge while retaining its character. Set amidst 25 lakes within a lush mangrove

forest, 122 bunkers punctuate its sculpted fairways and protect its manicured greens, some incorporating Dye's trademark railroad ties.

COCOTAL GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Location: Meliá Hotels & Resorts, Bávaro

Holes: 27

Par: 72; Yardage: 7,585

Slope: 131; Rating: 75.2

Designer: José "Pepe" Gancedo

Opened in 2000, [Cocotal Golf & Country Club's](#) three nine-hole courses – Hibiscus, Bougainvillea and Benjamina – possess memorable routings designed by José "Pepe" Gancedo. The six-time Spanish champion utilizes the natural terrain of an old coconut plantation for all 27 holes, including serene lakes and swaying palm trees, with Mother Nature providing the unrelenting wind. The imaginative Gancedo's trademark features at Cocotal include strategically placed trees, bunkers, mounds and gently rolling terrain, with generous fairways. Four sets of tees on the Hibiscus and Bougainvillea nines (three tees on Benjamina) provide low-handicap golfers with a challenging layout, while beginners and intermediate players can continually improve and have fun in the player-friendly environment on a course that is easy to walk.

IBEROSTATE BÁVARO GOLF CLUB

Location: Iberostar Hotels & Resorts,

Bávaro

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 6,897

Slope: 126; 73.2

Designer: P.B. Dye

Golfers of all levels will delight at P.B. Dye's [Iberostate Bávaro Golf Club](#). The inland course resides within the 1,800-room family-friendly Iberostar complex and graces golfers with enchanting natural surroundings such as Dye's signature sand bunkers, lakes and rock work, all relishing among lush landscape and elevated terrain. The uniquely designed course is characterized by its sharp undulations and holes that feature cross winds, promising to put the skills of any golfer to the test. Golfers will love being served out on the course by the beverage cart attendants – who wear uniforms complete with bow ties!

PUNTA BLANCA GOLF CLUB

Location: Macao

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 7,174

Slope: 123; rating: 74.1

Designer: Nick Price

[Punta Blanca Golf Club](#), the first design in the Caribbean by three-time major championship winner Nick Price, is a fairly open inland course inaugurated in 2007 and uses salt water-tolerant paspalum grass. Although within Macao's Punta Blanca residential development, the course is built around natural wetlands and features wide fairways with large bunkers and several lakes. Holes are edged by thick tropical vegetation, ensuring it is a challenge for all abilities. It also offers a golf academy with a PGA professional instructor if visitors want to learn perfection in the art of golfing.

HARD ROCK GOLF CLUB AT CANA BAY

Location: Hard Rock Hotel & Casino,

Macao

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 7,253

Slope: 135; Rating: 76.1

Designer: Jack Nicklaus

The Nicklaus-designed golf course, which opened in March 2010, presents golfers with a challenge at each hole and is playable by golfers of any skill level. The first golf course to carry the iconic Hard Rock brand, and located just inland from the beachfront Hard Rock Hotel Punta Cana, winds through beautiful native tropical vegetation that extends right up to the edge of the fairways, with no rough so that straight-hitting is at a premium. [Hard Rock Golf Club at Cana Bay](#) lives up to its rock 'n' roll branding; each hole is named after a famous rock song and putts roll pretty fast on the slick but small, sloping greens. There are also several blind shots that add to the challenge of this 7,253-yard layout.

DYE FORE

Location: Casa de Campo Resort & Villas,

La Romana

Holes: 27

Par: 72; Yardage: 7,714

Slope: 134; Rating: 77

Designer: Pete Dye

Pete Dye completed his hat trick of perfection at Casa de Campo when this course opened in 2005. [Dye For](#) is nestled right in the breathtaking Chavón River valley – where scenes from Apocalypse Now were filmed – golfers enjoy cliff-side holes dropping 300 feet to the valley below. The course also boasts 13 holes overlooking the Caribbean Sea, as well as breathtaking views of Altos de Chavón, a replica of a 16th-century Mediterranean village, and the Dominican mountains, which challenge players with 40 mile-per-hour gusting winds.

TEETH OF THE DOG

Location: Casa de Campo Resort & Villas,
La Romana
Holes: 18
Par: 72; Yardage: 7,357
Slope: 145; Rating: 75.9
Designer: Pete Dye

As Pete Dye's first Casa de Campo creation, this course first put Dominican Republic on the world golf stage in 1971. [Teeth of the Dog](#) continues to amaze golfers with pristine playing conditions 45 years later. It consistently ranks as the best course in the Caribbean and as one of the top courses in the world, making it a must-play destination for both serious and recreational golfers. Seven of its 18 holes are directly on the ocean front – four on the front nine and three on the back – making it extra tough to play due to tenacious Caribbean winds. The course was updated in 2005, adding more length to select holes and upgrading greens and bunkers. Its championship black tees measure 7,471 yards now, an increase of nearly 600 yards.

THE LINKS

Location: Casa de Campo Resort & Villas,
La Romana
Holes: 18
Par: 71; Yardage: 7,003
Slope: 126; Rating: 72.6
Designer: Pete Dye

Pete Dye designed this course only a few years after Casa de Campo's Teeth of the Dog. It first greeted golfers in 1975 and has drawn comparisons to traditional British and Scottish links courses thanks to its firm fairways and open putting surfaces that invite golfers to play shots along the ground. This moderately hilly course has several lagoons and lakes that are popular with wading birds and features tall, dense bay and guinea jungle-grass rough, as well as numerous bunkers. Most of its holes dogleg either right or left over the undulating landscape, and five holes are directly surrounded by water for an

extra challenge. [The Links](#) was completely overhauled in 2012 to make it as challenging as its sister courses.

LA ROMANA GOLF CLUB

Location: La Romana, Bahía Principe

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 7,263

Diseñador: Maverick Golf

With four spectacular holes right on the sea, [La Romana Golf Club](#) is one of the best courses in the Caribbean, where the blue sea contrasts with the green fairways and palm trees. The 7,263 yards of this golf course naturally blend in with the gorgeous Caribbean landscape of Playa Nueva Romana. Players will enjoy extraordinary views from every point on the course. The numerous starting tees mean that anyone can have an exciting round here. It represents a serious challenge for the best players while also offering an accessible and entertaining game for players of any level.

CAYACOA GOLF CLUB

Location: Santo Domingo

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 6,737

Slope: 139; Rating: 73.5

Designer: Jack Corrie

Located just 25 minutes outside of Santo Domingo, the [Cayacoa Golf Club](#) was built in 1989 but remains a well-kept secret that many golfers enjoy. The course is spread over a hilly terrain and features long water carries, lush vegetation and some terrific par 3s. Some of the course's higher elevations offer stunning views of the Dominican landscape and although the course is relatively close to Santo Domingo, golfers can enjoy a quiet, tranquil atmosphere with refreshing drinks and snacks on the terrace, which overlooks the 18th hole.

GUAVABERRY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Location: Juan Dolio

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 7,156

Slope: 130; Rating: 75.6

Designer: Gary Player

[Guavaberry Golf & Country Club](#) was designed by Gary Player and is located a convenient 30 minutes east of Santo Domingo's international airport near the resort town of Juan Dolio. The course was opened in 2002 and borders a tropical forest and nature preserve. Although it quickly earned a reputation as a tough course, it is playable for golfers of all skill levels thanks to five sets of tees. It features plenty of unique design attributes, including a 15-foot waterfall cascading into a quarry pond on the signature par-3 13th, where two separate greens are rotated daily, and indigenous coral rock formations on holes 9 and 18.

LOS MARLINS GOLF COURSE

Location: Metro Country Club,
Juan Dolio

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 6,396

Designer: Charles F. Ankrom

Located at the Metro Country Club in Juan Dolio – just 30 minutes east of Santo Domingo's international airport – [Los Marlins Golf Course](#) features numerous artistic bunkers, lakes and mounds that perfectly complement the surrounding beauty of the Caribbean. The course was opened in 1995 and winds through a gated residential community. Los Marlins features the Academy of Golf, a driving range, putting green and 18-hole mini-golf course. The clubhouse also offers a "19th Hole" restaurant, a terrace bar and grill, swimming pool, Jacuzzi, golf shop and locker rooms. A private Beach Club is just five minutes away.

PLAYA DORADA GOLF CLUB

Location: Playa Dorada, Puerto Plata

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 6,765

Slope: 134; Rating: 73.6

Designer: Robert Trent Jones Sr.

It's no surprise that this beautiful course was designed by legendary golf course architect Robert Trent Jones, Sr., with five sea-view holes, including one right next to the Atlantic Ocean. Opened in 1976 and located in the popular Playa Dorada Resort Complex in Puerto Plata, the relatively-flat course is known for its outstanding conditioning. Fairways are wide with little rough and greens are generous but with water hazards and strategically-placed bunkers to spice things up, making it a vacation resort course

that can be enjoyed by all golfers yet one that still offers a challenge. [Playa Dorada Golf Club](#) is just 15 minutes from Puerto Plata airport, so golfers can play on the day they arrive or leave.

PLAYA GRANDE GOLF COURSE

Location: Playa Grande, Río San Juan

Holes: 18

Par: 72; Yardage: 7,259

Slope: 130; Rating: 75.6

Designer: Robert Trent Jones Sr.

Opened in 1997, the [Playa Grande Golf Course](#) is not only the last course Robert Trent Jones, Sr. designed, but is also considered one of his best. Here, all of the 18 holes overlook the Atlantic Ocean, with 10 directly ocean-side. The course is spread along a slightly hilly area on nearby cliffs, earning it the nickname “Pebble Beach of the Caribbean.” Underground springs supply the greens with plenty of fresh water with the majority of the course surrounded by palm trees, typical for the area. With respect for the legacy created by his father, world renowned golf architect Rees Jones has redesigned Playa Grande, and has enhanced the experience to challenge golfers of every skill level. On the new layout the last five holes are played on the edge of the ocean which is a unique experience in the world of golf.