Good to know ...

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About the Dominican Republic

A few facts

- Area: 48,730 km²

- Population: 9,507,133 inhabitants

- Population density: 188.5 inhabitants / km²

Capital: Santo DomingoLocal time: UTC -4hOfficial language: Spanish

- Religions: Catholic (90%), others (10%)

The Dominican political system

The Dominican Republic is a democratic country. The current President (2012-2016) is Danilo Medina and he is a member of the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD).



Schooling in the Dominican Republic

Children under 14 years of age account for 30% of the population in Dominican Republic. Primary education is free for all children from 7 to 14 years of age and although school is mandatory the rule is rarely applied, particularly in rural areas. In most cases, students must wear a uniform which is not provided by the government so the families that cannot afford the expense do not send their children to school. It is also up to the family to provide the books, pens, copybooks and other necessary supplies which is another contributing factor for children not being registered. However, over the past few years many non-profit organizations have set up in Dominican Republic and contributed greatly to providing the supplies underprivileged children need so they can avail of the school system. Foreign citizens and residents have also donated to various programes geared towards helping needy families send their children to school. Furthermore, children who are not registered at birth cannot even go to school.

Dominican Culture

Generally speaking, Dominicans are friendly, good natured and cheerful. They love showing off their culture and if you're ever in a local person's home, they'll sit you down and offer you food and drink. There's nothing they love more than going out dancing.

Language - Dominican Spanish

Like everywhere in the world Dominicans have their own turns of phrase and pronunciation.

The "R" is pronounced like an "L", and the "S" and "D" are silent. Here are some common expressions:

- "¿Que lo que?": What's new?
- "Una fria" o "Una pequeña": a bottle of Presidente beer
- "La pasola": The scooter
- "Pica Pollo": Take away fried chicken
- "El Salon": Beauty salon for hairstyling, manicures and pedicures.



Dominican Music



Music is part of Dominican culture and everyday life. The local music is the bachata and merengue with some salsa and mambo. Romeo Santos (former member of the band Aventura), Zacaria Fereira and Frank Reyes are some of the most popular bachata artists in Dominican Republic today. Alex Matos and Yiyo Sarante are both salsa artists while Omega and Myriam Cruz sing Mambo and Merengue.

There are several dance schools in Las Terrenas offering bachata and salsa lessons.

Water

In general, tap water is NOT SUITABLE FOR DRINKING. Large 5 gallon (20lt) bottles of drinking water are easily available everwhere and cost about US\$1 (RD\$ 50).

However, tap water can be used to brush your teeth and for boiling potatos or rice.

Fruits and Vegetables

Typical fruits in Dominican Republic include the coconut, which many Dominicans pick directly from the tree, then hack open up with a machete, drink the milk and use the pulp for cooking. Passion fruit is very often used to make juice, mangos are abundant from March to August, and then there are bananas, pinapples, tomatos (tomate), ...

The most common vegetables are avocados (aguacate), cabbage (repollo), chayote or cristophine (tayota), manioc and plantain (platano). However, all sorts of vegetables are grown on the central plateau around Constanza, including: potatoes (papa), lettuce (lechuga), onions (cebolla), peppers (pimenton)...

Dominican Food

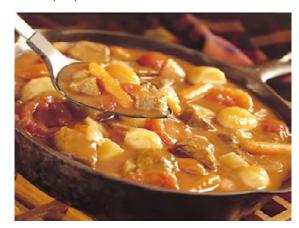
The Dominican Flag: Rice (arroz), red or black beans in sauce (habichuela guisada) and meat (stewed chicken or beef (pollo/res). Dominicans use coriander generously and do not like spicy foods.

Sancocho: Type of mixed meat stew, with vegetables and root

vegetables such as manioc and rice.

Chicharon: Fried pork crackling and pieces of pork. **Moro de guandule**: Pigeon peas cooked in rice.

Mangu et Mofongo: Plantain puré. Mofongo has meat.





Comedor (Diner)

Known as Comedor, these small typical Dominican diners serve the specialities of the country and are generally cheaper than the tourist restaurants.

Fauna

On the subject of wildlife, the manatee and hump backed whale are the most commonly seen mammals, the latter having become a popular attraction because it comes to Samana Bay for the mating season every year (January-March).

The island is chock-full of reptiles: lizards, iguanas, turtles, and especially the American alligator, a protected species with colonies on Cabritos Island in the middle of Lake Enriquillo.

Finally birdlife sees a mixture of common birds and endangered species, such as the Cotica, the best known parrot species in the country and native to the island. It is the national mascot and is easily recognized because of its bright green plummage, white forehead, black stained cheeks, red tail and breast.

Like most tropical areas mosquitos and cockroachs are the most common insects here.

There are also spiders, such as the tarantula.

There are no deadly animals or insects in the country.

Flora

Dominican Republic's subtropical climate has favored the development of over 8,000 species of plants, 1,800 of these are indemic, e.g. the 300 varieties of orchids to be found here, or the palm trees to be seen in the gardens and plantations throughout the Eastern Mountain Range.

Another feature of the country is the mangrove which grows in swamp and saline areas.

Beaches

Las Terrenas has many beaches, one more beautiful than the next: Playa Coson, Playa Bonita, Playa Las Ballenas, Punta Popi...







Good to know before leaving for Dominican Republic

Dominican Climate

The Dominican Republic enjoys a tropical climate marked by 2 seasons:

The dry season goes from November to April, with maximum temperatures reaching 25 °C, the coolest months being December, January and February.

The rainy season stretchess f rom May to October. Showers are generally frequent but short and it is very humid and clammy. The hottest months are July, August and September.



The average temperature varies depending on the altitude:

Along the coast: average 24 - 32°C. In the mountains: average 10 - 22°C.

Heat is to be expected all year round as the average daytime temperature is 30°C and 20°C at night. The temperature of the sea varies between 26°C and 31°C.

What to wear

During the summer it can get very hot, so shorts and t-shirts are ideal.

In winter the evenings or after a rain shower can be quite cool so bring some warm clothes (a sweater) and something for the rain.

Tourist Visa

There is a US\$ 10 entrance fee to be paid at the airport (in Dollars) when entering the Dominican Republic. It is valid for one month. If you stay longer, you must pay a fee of RD\$ 400 (US\$ 10 approx) per month overstay when leaving.





Customs

You are allowed import, duty free:

- 2 litres of alcohol
- 200 cigarettes
- Souvenirs, gifts worth up to a maximum value of US\$ 1,000.

Swiss and Eurpoean citizens can export, duty free:

- 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars
- 1 litre of alcohol
- 2 litres of wine
- Souvenirs, gifts worth up to a maximum of €75EUR or CHF 300





Getting about in Dominican Republic

To and from the Airport

To get from Las Americas International Airport in Santo Domingo to Las Terrenas you can hire a taxi for up to 6 passengers for US\$ 200 or avail of the public bus, known locally as the «guagua», which costs around US\$ 8 per person.



Locally

- Drivers licence

Your national driver's licence is sufficient to drive for the first 90 days. After that you will need an international driver's licence.

- Car rental

Hiring a car is a great way of getting to know the country without wasting time waiting for buses. Prices vary from US\$ 30 to US\$ 100 per day. Motorbikes, scooters and quads are also for rent (recommended only for experienced drivers due to the conditions of some of the roads). If you get a flat tyre look for a «gomero», there's bound to be one close by to quickly fix or change the tyre.

There are numerous car rental companies in all the main towns and airports throughout the country...

To rent you must:

Be over the age of 18;

Have a valid national driver's licence (generally you need at least one year's experience driving); Have a valid credit card.

- Bus

This is a cheap and practical form of transport to travel around the country. Buses are frequent and the fares vary from company to company.

There are two types of buses:



The guaguas: Small, not very comfortable buses with no fixed fare.

The express: Comfortable coaches connecting all the main towns.

The main bus companies are:

Caribe Tours (connecting the center and North of the country) For more information: www.caribetours.com.do

Metro

For more information: www.metroserviciosturisticos.com



Departure timetable from Las Terrenas:

The buses leave from opposite the Paseo de la Costanera shopping center (on the main steet) and from the Atlantic Boulevard crossroads (near the Esso gas station). The guagua goes along Carmen and Duarte streets and you can flag it down en route. Timetable valid all year round:

Las Terrenas - Santo Domingo (Capital)

Departure: 5.00am, 7.00am (Comfortable large coach takes the new toll road - one way fare RD\$ 350 p.p.)

9.00am; 2.00pm; 3.30pm (One way fare RD\$ 285 in the small bus).

Travel time 2.30 hours approximately

Las Terrenas - Santiago

Departure: 6.00; 8.10am; 12.30 pm

Las Terrenas - Puerto Plata

Departure: 6.30am Las Terrenas - Nagua

Departure: 7.00am; 2.00pm

Departure timetable from Santo Domingo

Santo Domingo - Las Terrenas

Departure: 8.30am; 9.30am; 11.00am; 1.40pm (Comfortable large coach takes the new toll road - one way fare RD\$ 350 p.p.) and 3.00pm (One way fare RD\$ 285). Travel time approximately 2.30 hours.

If you are boarding at the Las Américas intersection (entrance to the freeway) add 30 minutes to the departure times.

The bus station is on Barahona Street #129 behind Plaza Lama on Mexico Avenue.

Office:

- Santo Domingo Tel. 809 687 1470 - Las Terrenas Tel. 809 240 5302.

Drivers: Francis: cel. 809 481 2494 - Sony: cel. 829 986 1887

Roads

The main highways and roads adjacent to resort towns are generally in good condition but this is not always

the case for secondary roads. Depending on where you want to go, the road quality can vary greatly. Signposting is very poor throughout the island. People drive on the right hand side of the road but overtake on either side, traffic lights are often ignored, roads are very badly lit at night and drivers tend to push their way past so you need to drive very carefully.

The speed limit on highways is 80/100 km/h, 60/80 km/h outside towns and 40km/h in towns. There are radar speed checks on highways.

NB: RD\$ 2,000 notes are not accepted at the toll booths.





Getting around Las Terrenas (Moto conchos, taxis, bicycles)



«Moto conchos» or moto taxis are available to get around Las Terrenas town. They are on every street and often gather at intersections or at the shopping centers. The fares are cheap, particularly in town and you get around quicker. Regular taxis are also on offer. Most of them have no meter so you will have to negotiate the price beforehand and they can be pricey.

Bicycles are becoming more and more popluar for getting around Las Terrenas and are cheap and handy.



Money matters in Dominican Republic

Currency

Dominican PESO (DOP) symbol: RD\$

For the daily exchange rate: http://www.oanda.

com/currency/converter/

Banks

Banking hours are generally Monday to Friday from 9.00am - 4.00pm and Saturday from 9.00am -1.00pm. The main banks in the country are: Banco Popular, Banco del Progreso, Banco de Reservas (Banreservas), Banco León, Scotiabank and BHD. You can withdraw money with your credit card in any

of these banks and you will need 2 forms of ID (passport + driving license/personal ID).



Bank/Credit cards

The main credit cards such as MasterCard, Visa and American Express (not everywhere) are accepted in most supermarkets, shops, hotels and restaurants.

You can also withdraw cash with your credit card from the many ATM machines dotted throughout the towns and holdiay resorts.

When using a debit card, most places add around 20% to the bill (18% VAT + 2 % bank charges). Ask beforehand if the tax is included in the published prices.

NB: Remember to tell your bank that you staying in DR for your withdrawal limit.

Travellers' checks are accepted in most establishments, but it is advisable to use travelers' checks in US Dollars.

Tipping

A 10% service charge is added at the end of the bill but it is customary to leave a 5-10% tip if you are happy with the service.

Bank transfer

To confirm your accommodation you will be asked to deposit 50% of the total bill. A bank transfer is the cheapest and safest way to do this.

Europeans are advised to go though their bank and make a SWIFT transfer because IBAN is new to the American region and quite often banks do not offer this service.

Paypal

The Dominican Republic is still not set up to receive transfers by PayPal and charges are very high.



Your stay in Las Terrenas

Health care

There is a public hospital, several clinics and an international clinic. Care is relativey good.

Sun



You need to use sun screen (factor 20 to 50) as well as a hat or cap if you are out in the sun for long, for example on an excursion or driving about.

Safety

Like many places around the world, it is advisable not to use too much jewellery while walking about (necklaces, rings, earrings, etc.).

Most properties employ security guards known locally as «watchies».

Before going out it is best to store your valuables inside the house. Some properties even have safes. Even though the staff working in and around the property is trustworthy it is still a good idea not to leave money, mobile phones or other valuables lying about.

Air conditioning

In general, the banks and some supermarkets have air conditioning. Few restaurants have A/C - «Mi Corazon» is one of the few that does. Many houses are also air conditioned. Air conditioning is very expensive to run, around US\$10 per unit for 12 hours.

Pool, Jacuzzi, sea

In general, swimming pools in Dominican Republic have no safety rail or alarm system so you need to keep a close eye on small children. The same goes for Jacuzzis, as some can be quite deep.

The sea is generally easily accessible with few dangers, except for certain beaches that have strong currents or undertows.

Cigars

The Dominican Republic is the leading exporter of cigars worldwide with 200 million units sold each year. The best brands can be found here, including Pléiades, Davidoff, Juan Clémente and E. León Jiménez.

The history of tobacco in Dominican Republic dates back to before the arrival of the Spaniards and in 1531 the country became the first exporter of tobacco to Spain. The first major change to the cigar industry came about as a shock wave from the Cuban revolution and the arrival of Fidel Castro when many exiles settled in Dominican Republic, including many tobacco professionals

A period of negotiations opened between US companies on the island and large Cuba companies. More recently, the decision in 1989 by Davidoff to move its operations from Cuba to Santo Domingo changed the panorama for





the tobacco industry yet again. Three important international groups have factories here: Altadis in La Romana and Arturo Fuente and Oettinger-Davidoff, both in Santiago.

Rum



If you like rum then you will appreciate that Dominicna rum is one of the best in the world. This is because Dominican Republic is ideal for cultivating sugar cane, the essential component in the best rums.

Dominican rum is renowned for its «sweetness» and unique aromas. It is a more natural that other rums produced in the Caribbean region becausee it is distilled and then stored in American white oak barrels.

There are several different types of Dominican rum, defined according to their age. The ageing process can last from 18 to 36 months for white rums (straw or «silver» label), 5 years for amber or «copper» rums, 7 years for mature rums and 10 years or more for ageless rums.

Dominicans drink rum with ice or Coca-Cola (Cuba Libre) or simply neat. The most common rums are the 3 Bs: Brugal, Barcelo andBermudez.

Boutiques

There are several souvenir shops in Las Terrenas where you can find gifts to bring back home ranging from beach wraps to jewelry to novelty items.

Lindo Supermarket

A must in Las Terrenas and throughout Samana peninsula, LINDO Supermarket is undoubtedly the best place to shop.

Recently refurbished, LINDO Supermarket now boasts a great wine cellar with wines imported directly from

boutique vineyards in France and independent producers in Spain and Chile.

LINDO Supermarket also offers a great selection of European products, particularly the deli section for select cheeses and cured meats (brie, camembert, reblochon cheese, gorgonzola, cooked hams, Parma ham, salami, etc.) as well as fresh dairy and meat products.



You will find specialities such as shank of lamb and duck and of course the more common meats such as quality beef, pork and chicken quality.

Frozen produts include fish and sea foods, as well as frozen fruits and vegetables and even the famous Haagen Dazs ice cream.

Renowned for her wonderful pastries, pies and other mouthwatering goodies Nadine's counter at Supermercado LINDO offers a variety of fresh treats everyday.

Free home delivery throughout Las Terrenas and surrounds.



Super Pola



This new supermarket opened in Septmeber 2014. It is part of a Dominican supermarket chain.

Here you will find mostly Dominican and American products.

«Supermercado Las Terrenas», Supermercado Atlantic» and «Supermercado Elio» are all on Duarte Street (the main street). They offer a variety of Dominican products as well as some American products and prices vary very little between them.

For a quick shop, there is the «colmado» or local grocery store.

Excursions

FLORA TOURS is a small excursion agency in Las Terrenas. Owned by Nicolas and Monika, 2 young French people who love this country, it is the leading agency in the development of ecotourism in the province of Samana, the most beatutiful region in the whole of the Dominican Republic. You can book your excursions in advance:

For information:

Mobile: (1) 809 360 2793 or (1)

829 923 2792

Office: (1) 809 240 5482 E-mail: contact@flora-tours.net

List of excursions:

Catamaran - Cayo Levantado

Mountain Biking El Limon Waterfall Playa Fronton / Playa Rincon The Coffee Trail

National Park Los Haitises - Taino

Museum

Whale Watching

Tailor made excursions (for your group or family):

Angling

Zip Lining





Restaurants in Las Terrenas



BARRIO LATINO (las Terrenas Center)

A French brasserie run by Veronique and Frederic with daily specials and a classic menu, salads, sandwiches and pizzas. Nice colorful terrace. Great for breakfasts or an aperitif in the evening. Note: a fruit stand and Häagen Dazs ice creams and free wifi for customers.

EL LUGAR (las Terrenas Center)

A real favorite! Originally from Brussels but with many past lives, Bruno (mixologist in trendy bars of Paris, G.O with Club Med ...) welcomes you with a broad smile and good humor! You will feel at home in this trendy restaurant, which also offers the best cocktails in Las Terrenas. Their specialty: charcoal grilled certified Black Angus beef. The menu is great and varies from Thai beef salad, to bream ceviche, seafood casserole with butter ... A great place for a romantic dinner or a night out with friends!

LUIS' RESTAURANT (Playa Coson)

Just a kitchen right on the beach serving fresh fish, lobster, octopus, shrimps, depending on the catch of the day. Luis, a Dominican who loves the quiet life, has been serving lunch at Coson for many years, no address, no phone, just a few tables set scattered on the beach serve as a make-shift «restaurant». You can pick what you want to eat which is then weighed to determine the price of your meal, all prepared the Dominican way. Everything is cooked over an open charcoal grill and comes with a choice of side orders. Meanwhile, there's time to relax in the shade over a tasty piña colada served in a fresh pineapple or go for a swim or even a massage! They call you when everything is ready!

CHEZ SANDRO (Playa Punta Popi)

Large wooden tables and a nice friendly bar shaded by a thatched roof, the atmosphere is great and the meat is the best in town. Food is served daily, salads, grilled meats and fish, and even a fondue for fans (680 pesos). The atmospheree changes at night with soft lighting. It's a great restaurant with good service and a great cellar for whiskey lovers.

CAFFE COSON (Playa Coson)

A quality restaurant facing the sea offering international cuisine and exotic specialties. It has a fine menu and the beauty of the place adds to the magic. The Japanese style tuna tartare is delicious.



LOS CHICHAS (Carmen Street)

Typical Dominican restaurant. This large colorfully decorated diner is at the heat of the town. The tables are arranged around a central bar made of palm wood. There is no set menu - the owner simply offers the dish of the day with a warm smile. The food is excellent (goats meat, crab stew) and the price are even better!

ATLANTIS RESTAURANT (Playa Bonita)

Gérard Prystasz, former chef at the Èlysèe Palace in Paris, proposes French cuisine with a local twist. The result: exquisite fare, variety, rich flavors such as chicken thigh stuffed with lobster, sea bream goujons with passion fruit and many delectable desserts including fresh fruit Zabaione. Everything washed down with a good wine and served either indoors or on the small shaded garden terrace.

TRE CARAVELLE (Playa Punta Popy)

Undoubtedly one of the best tables in Las Terrenas. This lovely Italian restaurant focuses on the sea. The staff wears sailor hats and there are lots of maritime paintings on the wall next to the tribal art. There is a fantastic fish menu as well as a great selection of grilled dishes. The dish of the day is posted on the blackboard, all depending on the catch of the day. Speciality of the House: Tre Caravelle Risotto, a sumptuous risotto of prawns, shrimp, squid and clams.

THE FISHERMENS' VILLAGE (Pueblo de los Pescadores)

Formerly a row of fishermen's huts, the place was gradually transformed into a series of small bars and charming restaurants where you can sit and enjoy the sunset at the waters edge. Boardwalk Restaurants: La Terrace (Mediterranean cuisine), El Cayuco (Spanish Cuisine), One Love (Bar - Snack owned by a friendly Canadian couple).





Night Life in Las Terrenas



LA BODEGA (Las Terrenas Center)

La Bodega is one of the most popular nightclubs in town and is located in the courtyard of a shopping center under a huge thatched roof. The bar is always packed and it's hard toget a table on Wednesdays and Sundays, when the place simply vibrates with live music and local rhythms. It's the place to go for the latest bachatas or salsas, sway to the merengue of the moment, shake to the latest reggaeton ... or just enjoy watching the people go by. Concerts and dance competitions are scheduled regularly.

GAIA (Fishermens' Village)



This very European nightclub has 3 levels, each with a different ambiance.

Classic Disco (with A/C - bliss in this climate) with Latin, tecno, or rock on the first floor; air-conditioned VIP Lounge for very special evenings, minimalist design with mahogany decor, guest DJ, on the second floor; and finally the Penthouse open air sushi bar with relaxed lounge atmosphere under the starry sky and breathtaking view of the sea.



NIZA CASINO (La Ceiba - En Route to Playa Bonita)



You will find everything a respectable casino needs to offer for your entertainment ... The property is brand new and offers valet parking. Hold'em poker, roulette, slots, blackjack and unlimited drinks ... Well, drink in moderation if you want a chance to win!

CLANDESTINO BAR (Fishermens' Village)

The heart of Las Terrenas by night (opposite Gaia nightclub), as the name implies Clandestino is a bit alternative. THE night is Saturday night when everyone in Las Terrenas meets there for dancing, salsa or reggaeton.. Open till the wee hours!

MOSQUITO (Playa Punat Popi)

Undeniably one of the coolest bars in Las Terrenas, it hosts a mixed audience of Dominicans, expats and tourists until very late at night, especially on Friday and every second Saturday when house parties are held there. Located at the end of Punta Popi beach it MOSQUITO is the heart of the Palapa Beach Club.

ONE LOVE SURFSHACK (Fishermens Village)

A fun sports bar owned by a young couple from Quebec. They will welcome you with the legendary good spirits of a



Club Med G.O, their first profession. All baseball games, basketball and soccer are shown on the big screen. A small snack menu is also provided

A refreshing place! And because they speak perfect English at One Love, it is a favorite among Americans, especially New Yorkers, who are more and more numerous in Las Terrenas.



AIC Dominicana and you

Villas/apartments facilities

All the villas are supplied with sheets, towels and tableware. Tap water is generally not fit for drinking but all villas have water coolers with large bottles of drinking water.

All the villas have Internet but because Internet in DR can be a bit slow it is not suitable for video communication or downloading files.

Home Services

In addition to the services that are included when renting a villa or apartment, AIC Dominicana proposes a range of personalised a la carte services to make your holiday even more comfortable and care free. From the moment you arrive at the airport we guarantee a safe, comfortable transfer. Once you are here, we can organize a series of activities to suit all tastes: excursions, golfing, vehicle rental, advice on itineraries, things and places to see ...

Our à la carte services

- Home staff
- Personal chef
- Vehicle rental (with/without driver)
- Babysitter
- Private plane bookings
- Boat bookings
- Booking restaurants, shows, etc ...
- Photo services to remember your holidays by
- Catering service

Music ... To liven up your evening or special event!

Need a DJ, want to know more about typical Dominican music, want to create a piano bar and lounge atmosphere at home ...



We have a variety of artists available. Do not hesitate to contact us.

Fire up your birthday parties and celebration ... A DJ just for you

100% Dominican traditional music! Traditional music and songs for a warm memorable atmosphere.

Sushi evening at home in your Villa!

King Deluxe 2/3 Pers (36 Pieces – RD\$1,975) 20 Sushi – 8 Nigiri 2 Temaki – 6 Sashimi Imperial Deluxe 3/5 Pers (50 Pieces – RD\$ 2,600) 25 Sushi – 10 Nigiri 5 Temaki – 10 Sashimi Imperialisimo 5/7 Pers (80 Pieces – RD\$ 3,900) 40 Sushi – 20 Nigiri 7 Temaki – 13 Sashimi Free delivery Contact us

Roast piglet at your Villa!





SANTO DOMINGO













Santo Domingo is the oldest capital city in the New World and classed as Worldwide Heritage by UNESCO. Far from the postcard clichés of palm tress and beaches, Santo Domingo is in fact a great sprawling city with over 3 million inhabitants.

You will quickly realize that this city is one of the five noisiest cities in the world with its concerto of carhorns, dense traffic, traffic jams and loud music. Yet it is surprising that the historical center or Colonial City is saved from all the noise and is wonderful and peaceful to walk around.

Whether you opt for a taxi, a rental car or a domestic flight, we recommend that you spend the first night in the capital and avail of your first evening to discover the charming pedestrian streets and small restaurants with shaded terraces throughout the colonial area.

Choose from our hotel selection in Santo Domingo below.

Hotel Nicolas de Ovando MGallery Collection

Hotel Frances MGallery Collection

Hotel Mercure Comercial

Hotel El Beaterio

Hotel Villa Colonial

