

# DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

## A SPANISH CARIBBEAN ODYSSEY



Tropical jungles, dense mangrove forests, white-sand beaches, fertile valleys, vast savannas and the highest peaks in the Caribbean mark this island country as a place of extraordinary diversity and dramatic beauty. While the Dominican Republic is famed for its history as the first site of Spanish settlement in the New World, the story of its people extends far before that to when the indigenous Taino Amerindians inhabited the island. Today the DR has a vibrant island culture which passionately celebrates its folklore, Latin music, and of course, baseball. Discover the festive spirit of this country's joyful people as you immerse yourself in the daily ritual of rural village life.

*"I loved looking at the community center and knowing the great impact we made."* -Dominican Republic, Summer 2011

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Hike mountain highlands** to spectacular waterfalls in the Cordillera Central.

**Improve your Spanish** as you become part of a rural family: share stories over meals and learn to dance salsa and merengue.

Whitewater raft the **rapids of the Rio Yaque del Norte**.

**Build a community aqueduct** or *centro communal* (community center) with your new Dominican friends.

Explore unspoiled **beaches and snorkel** in the **brilliant turquoise waters** of the Caribbean Sea.



# **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC DETAILED ITINERARY**

## **IN-COUNTRY ORIENTATION**

Begin your journey in the beautiful region of the Cordillera Central, surrounded by fruit orchards, coffee farms and the highest mountains of the Caribbean. Here in the highlands, your group hikes through pine forests and humid jungles, enjoys sparkling pools, and discovers spectacular 150-foot waterfalls. You also taste your first bites of the sweet sapote fruit, and laugh together during your first merengue and bachata dance classes. Practicing your Spanish and your dance moves, you explore the town of Jarabacoa, “place of abundant waters.” Deemed the ecological capital of the country, Jarabacoa is an outdoor adventurer’s paradise. Before heading on to your host community, enjoy a day’s excursion of white water rafting down the Rio Yaque del Norte.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE**

Acclimated to the pace of life and pleasant climate of the central highlands, you travel to a small village outside of Jarabacoa where you live and work in community with your Dominican hosts. Families here work as farmers of sugar cane, coffee or yucca. They are warm and generous and very eager to welcome you into their homes. You and your group work alongside local villagers on a service project, such as constructing a series of canals or a water tank to bring drinking water to each home in the community. Immerse yourself in Spanish language, the rhythms of Latin music, and the flavor of rural Dominican life as you learn to cook moro, a typical Dominican dish of rice and beans. Initiate creative arts projects with local children and expect to be challenged in a friendly game of baseball.

## **TRAVEL ADVENTURES**

Your final day in the community is a colorful fiesta of music, laughter and games. Leaving the mountains behind, you head to the country’s northeastern coast to enjoy the Dominican Republic’s famed beaches. At the tip of the Samaná Peninsula, a place of incredible beauty, you soak up days of fun, adventure, relaxation and group celebration. Bring closure to your experience as you snorkel in pristine turquoise waters or eat fresh coconuts on stunning palm-lined beaches. Returning through Santo Domingo, visit the colonial streets and local markets of the oldest European city in the Americas.

## **THE BASICS**

**Dates:** TBD.

**Starting/Ending Point:** Santiago / Santo Domingo, DR

**Program Fee:** TBD, depending on group size.