

A Caribbean escape

With its tropical shores, mountains and valleys and rich culture, the Dominican Republic should be top of your wish list



Why go?

With glorious sunshine and a Caribbean breeze, the Dominican Republic is the ultimate year-round destination for an escape. The second largest Caribbean Island following Cuba, the country is famed for its untouched nature, charming citizens, and incredible culture. With a nine-hour flight from London, it allows you to step

off the plane and straight into a world of bachata dancing and delicious seafood.

Where to stay

For the first few days, we embraced our inner child at the Nickelodeon Resort in Punta Cana. Spongebob Squarepants becomes chic in this five-star family destination, with little

touches of Nickelodeon sprinkled throughout – including shadows dotted on walls and talking storm drains. Don't forget to spend a day at their on-site Aqua Nick waterpark, where you can take part in a daily sliming (or book a private one for extra holiday memories). Plus, with a stunning gym and a gorgeous spa, there's plenty of opportunity for adults to relax too.

For the main event, we checked into Margaritaville Island Reserve – an all-inclusive gourmet resort located in the exclusive gated community of Cap Cana. Immediately upon walking into reception, you're transported to Margaritaville's world and are greeted with flip flops and margarita popsicles, while a song and dance are never far away.

The hotel is separated into Wave and Hammock areas (with Hammock being an adult only

section). There's a variety of rooms available for every occasion – including options for swim-up pools, villas with private bars, and even your own personal butler. Best of all, the hotel is only a short ride from Punta Cana airport, meaning you can spend more of your holiday relaxing.

Beautiful beaches and water fun

With white sandy beaches and turquoise waters surrounded by coral reefs, the Dominican Republic is famed for its beautiful coast. Margaritaville Island Reserve backs on to Juanillo beach – one of the most stunning beaches in the Dominican. With beach huts offering you drinks, spend an evening sipping a

cocktail whilst watching the sun go down. If you're not a fan of sand, both resorts also offer infinity pools overlooking the beach.

Many of the beaches located around the island's coast are already the perfect snorkelling spot, but why not book yourself onto one of the many boat tours on offer to get out into the Caribbean waters and give scuba diving a try.

While you're exploring the water, some of the world's best whale-watching tours can be found across the Dominican Republic, giving you a once-in-a-lifetime chance to get up close and personal with some of nature's most magical animals. And if you're a fan of sharks, the island offers more than one opportunity to hang out with some nurse

sharks – dubbed the kittens of the oceans for their sweet and friendly demeanour.

Fabulous food

It's not often that you can spend a week in an all-inclusive resort and eat at a different place every night, but a stay here is a foodie's dream come true!

Offering all-inclusive gourmet dining for guests, the resort has an impressive variety of restaurants. With cuisines from across the world, some highlights

Stunning views of the ocean



include their gorgeously decorated Frank and Lola's Italian Trattoria, alongside their unique on-site brewery, Landshark. Spend your mornings testing out some authentic Dominican dishes at the Boathouse Eatery, before moving to the beach for some Cheeseburgers in Paradise.

A must-do at the resort is booking yourself a floating taco tray experience. Exactly as it sounds, guests can arrange to have the incredible taste sensation of delicious, local tacos eaten whilst floating in a pool (£66 GBP for up to four people, £105 GBP for up to eight people.)

And of course, any stay at the resort wouldn't be complete without some cocktails. With each room having a dedicated margarita-making station, guests are awarded points throughout their stay which they can then trade for items to stock up their mini bar.

Explore the island

If you're looking to get out and about, the Dominican Republic will offer you more fun and colour than ever imagined. Away from the coastlines and a little further into the centre of the island there's a diverse landscape with several national parks and natural reserves, like the Los Haitises National Park and the Jaragua National Park. Both offer hiking and trekking trails to explore the country's natural beauty, such as caves, rivers and waterfalls. For the more adventurous you can go zip-lining through the jungle or try your hand at white water rafting. There are several rivers including Yaque

del Norte and the Jimenao. These excursions take you through beautiful scenery and lush rainforests before hitting the thrills of the rapids – ideal for adrenalin junkies.

Need to know



● Stay at the Margaritaville Island Reserve Cap Cana, from £590 per night for two adults (Cap Cana Hammock) or from £792 for two adults and two children (Cap Cana Wave). Visit [karismahotels.com/Margaritaville-island-reserve-resorts/Margaritaville-island-reserve-cap-cana-hammock](http://www.karismahotels.com/Margaritaville-island-reserve-resorts/Margaritaville-island-reserve-cap-cana-hammock)

● Stay at the Nickelodeon Hotels & Resorts Punta Cana from £608 per night for three adults or two adults and two children, prices start from £608 per night. Visit www.karismahotels.com for the latest deals.

● You will need visas, with documents filled in before travel. Don't forget to check this prior to travelling.

● Hurricane season runs from June to November, but you can still expect more sun than rain. Typical lows are 22°C, with highs reaching in the 30s.

The exclusive resort offers everything you'll need

