

## PUERTO RICO

Hello! My name is Natasha Gisela and I'm from the beautiful island of Puerto Rico. Located in the Caribbean, Puerto Rico is surrounded by the beautiful blue waters of the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1493 he named the island San Juan Bautista which was later changed to Puerto Rico (meaning rich port) although the capital is now called San Juan. In addition, the island has also been called Borinquen, and La Isla del Encanto meaning "the island of enchantment" which is still used today.

Although, Puerto Rico is a U.S. Commonwealth, not a state, the island's history still has deep ties with American history. Puerto Rico remained an overseas province of Spain until the Spanish-American war. Under the Treaty of Paris of 1898, Spain ceded Puerto Rico (along with Cuba, the Philippines and Guam) to the United States.

In 1917 under President Wilson leadership, Puerto Ricans received U.S. citizenship. In 1952, the island officially became a U.S. Commonwealth.

Over the years many famous Puerto Ricans have influenced American culture, many of including; singer and actress Jennifer Lopez, actress Rita Moreno, and singer Marc Anthony. Sonia Sotomayor made Puerto Rico proud in 2009 when she became the first Latina Supreme Court Justice in U.S. history. Not bad for such a small island!

Along with the many famous faces, Puerto Rico is known for the natural wonders it has to offer. The coastline consists of beautiful beaches, the skyline is filled with mountains, dense rainforest to explore, and amazing historic monuments to be discovered.

Places not to be missed are El Yunque, which is a national park inside the rainforest. Located near my hometown of Moca in the city of Aguadilla is known for having the best beaches in the world. Also when you are visiting you must not miss the 400 year old El Morro which is located in San Juan.

When you visit Puerto Rico, you'll experience the amazing rich culture in the wonderful array of food, music, and family customs. For example, the popular dance style Salsa originated from Puerto Rico. Even the food has its own identity which has been heavily influenced by the many cultures that have inhabited the island, including the French, the British, the Dutch and of course the Spaniards. One thing you must not miss is the national dish arroz con gandules which is simply rice and pigeon peas, that is guaranteed to be enjoyed at a majority of your meals.

After you finished your dinner go grab a towel and head to the beach to watch the sun set. You will hear the sounds of the national animal of Puerto Rico—the coquí, a tiny 1" tree frog that sings throughout the night. While hearing the marvelous tunes of a little frog you will smell the hibiscus which is the island national flower.

When visiting Puerto Rico, don't forget to catch a boxing match or local baseball game, which is our top two sports on the island.

It is impossible to name the one thing that I love most about Puerto Rico. From the beaches, the sunsets, the food, the natural beauty and the salsa dancing it's hard to choose just one.

So here are **top 5 reasons to visit my beloved island.**

1. The beaches
2. The food and culture.
3. The people. Hospitality is a way of life here!
4. The night life
5. The natural beauty

You're not dreaming when you are in Puerto Rico so come on down to our beautiful waters we'll be expecting you.