

Insider's Guide TO Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen



WELCOME TO AIR STATION BORINQUEN!

¡BIENVENIDOS!

This is a wonderful duty station with so much to offer everyone. There are many places on this island just waiting to be explored. The family atmosphere on base is a great place to return after your adventures. We know that some of the changes can be overwhelming at first, so do not hesitate to ask anyone that's been here for a while for a little help.

Puerto Rico is not the United States. Though Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory, it is a country all its own, with its own flavor and way of doing things. Appreciating differences and enjoying the new experiences is a great way to spend your time on "La Isla del Encanto," or the Island of Enchantment. Just as in many Caribbean islands, Puerto Rico has adopted a laid-back, *tranquillo* culture, with a very relaxing lifestyle. Family, friends, and enjoying life are priorities here. Some customs and traditions will be different, but many are the same. Enjoy and embrace the island and it will surely love you back.

This insider's Guide is a community effort, from CG members and spouses, and the surrounding community members, and is ever improving from year to year with information to help welcome you to your new home for the next few years.

FIRST STEPS -- GET CONNECTED

Sign up for the *Borinquen Beacon*. Email the editor at borinquenbeacon@gmail.com to have the weekly newsletter delivered directly to your inbox every Thursday.

The Air Station utilizes The Coast Guard Personnel Accountability and Assessment System (CGPAAS). Users should ensure both DA personal data and CGPAAS personal data are the same. CGPAAS notifications may be sent via email and/or text message so it behooves you to have current and identical contact info on both DA and CGPAAS.

There are many restaurants, activities and other information on Facebook. "Like" pages or become part of community page to have up to date info on events and activities. Facebook is a great way to get connected with your new community and see what's out there.

Local Facebook Groups:

The Community at Air Station Borinquen
USCG Air Station Borinquen All Spouses Club
PR Westenders
Ramey Base SWAP N' SHOP Borinquen
Chapel Fellowship
Borinquen Fit Kids Club
Borinquen Backyard Homebrewers Festival
Aguadilla Yoga
And many more

La Isla Reader is a local magazine available at many restaurants and surf shops for free. This magazine has great up to date information on local events, restaurants, and activities in both English and Spanish.

Qué Pasa Magazine has island information as well.

TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND

Try and keep at least \$20 cash on you at all times. You never know when the ATH (Automatic Teller Machine) machines may not work. Many small shops, restaurants, food trucks do not take debit or credit cards for purchases less than \$5 and sometimes \$10 dollars. If your debit card is not working, have them run it as credit, a lot of times their systems will not recognize debit transactions with USA based banks (yes, even USAA).

Eat at the food trucks. Whether you are driving to Wal-Mart, at the beach, at a local festival, or visiting a town center, you will find food trucks. They are safe to eat from. They generally are selling water, soda, Malta (a malt, non-alcoholic, very sweet, carbonated drink), frappes (which are smoothies or milkshakes), piña coladas (alcoholic and non-alcoholic), and many different types of fried “patties” usually stuffed with meat, cheese, or fish - the bigger the crowd the better the food.

Be prepared for a possible long wait at many places while out and about at grocery stores, restaurants, and doctors’ offices. Always allow for extra time and bring supplies to keep you and your children occupied. It’s not a good plan to bring tired or hungry children on a quick errand, as it could end up taking much longer than planned. Patience goes a long way.

Don’t be surprised if you are waiting in line someplace and someone jumps in front of the line to ask the cashier or worker a question of his or her own. This is very common practice and is not meant to be rude.

Try to learn Spanish, and don’t be afraid to use what you know. The base Educational Service Officer (ESO) has language-learning software if you are looking to study Spanish. Don’t worry about sounding silly or not making sense. Puerto Ricans are very gracious in this way. They are almost always willing to help when they see you are trying. If you are in a situation and don’t know where to start in Spanish, it is appropriate to ask, “Habla Ingles?”—“Do you speak English?” There are many people who speak both Spanish and English and are willing to help out.

Aguadilla and Rincon are world renowned surfing spots. Generally in the winter you will notice a large influx of tourists, but throughout the year, people from all over the world travel here for recreation and fun, and YOU LIVE HERE!! There are a lot of businesses that speak English and cater to tourist, so get off base. You will find some of their information in this pack. It is great to try out these tours, lessons, and activities that are great for families as well as a single adventure. Take advantage while you are here, because there are many beaches for all activities, some are crowded and some are secluded, take time out to put your feet in the sand, feel the cool breeze of the ocean and be kissed by the sun.

A great way to learn about Puerto Rico is to make friends with locals. They will generally know a lot about the culture, annual events, and etiquette.

Watersports, fitness classes, attending church, or taking university classes, are all great ways to venture out. If you find a new activity, someplace great to eat, or a new spot to explore, don't hesitate to share it with everyone! It is great to post it on the Facebook pages, since we are all in this adventure together.

Adjust your expectations and acquire an adventurous spirit. You will be much happier if you just roll with it. Try not to get hung up on everything that is better or worse than it was back home.

Always remember we are all representatives of the Coast Guard and that many of our Coast Guard family is also Puerto Rican. They serve side-by-side with us and we need to respect their culture and heritage. Our Puerto Rican Coasties are great resources to help us all learn more about the island and its rich history.

Please use this tour as an opportunity to embrace the island and its culture and to appreciate the differences without judgment. Remember, the happiest people don't have the best of everything; they make the most of everything.

HOUSING

Living in housing is a new experience for a lot of us. Working and living together can at times be overwhelming, but just remember there are also benefits to the security of the base. In emergencies, there are always Coasties ready to help out.

Become an active member in the community and get involved. Pick up after your pets, help your neighbors, keep your lawn clean, and work together to make the community better. If you have a concern, take it directly to the people involved first. If you cannot solve the issue, then ask for others to get involved.

On base there are many little ears and eyes listening and watching all of us (even those of us who are not parents). Please remember that the actions and attitudes of the adults also affect the children.

There are some extra adventures here in PR, like frequent power outages and water pressure changes. Power outages happen on base, off base, rainy days, sunny days and at night, it happens. If you have questions please feel free to call, text, or private Facebook message the Ombudsman, or your sponsor. Most power outages are quickly resolved. However, if the power is out for more than 10 hours, housing will normally issue generators with enough power to keep your refrigerators running. It is not a bad investment to purchase a small generator to keep the refrigerator or deep freezer goods from spoiling, especially after a trip to Sam's or Costco. It is always a good idea to have flashlights, candles, extra water, and plenty of rum on hand just in case. Many of us keep a few extra gallons of drinking water, for family and pets and flushing water, just in case. If there is a loss of water, make sure and flush all water lines for several minutes before you drink or use water for cooking. This is an issue for all the surrounding community as well and can be frustrating, but remember, the beach is just minutes away and always a good excuse to read stories and have dinner by candle light and feel grateful that it's only temporary!

Trash pick-up is currently on Tuesday mornings and recycling is picked up every other Tuesday.

The Dog Park is located in the center of the base on Circle F. You should register your pets with security. The dog park is usually empty, so if your pet wants company, make a play date! Please be sure to pick up after your pet wherever you walk on base and keep the dog on a leash walking around base.

Check out your housing manual for other pertinent rules and guidelines.
<http://www.uscg.mil/d7/airstaBorinquen/Housing/Housing.asp>

GATES / SECURITY

The Coast Guard Housing Area has two gates. Housing residents may use the "Main Gate," located at the end of Wing Road just past Fifth Street.

Security has the combination to the gate that overlooks the cliff, (off Cliff RD & 6th St.) to Survivors Beach. There is a nice trail down to the beach. The combination changes periodically and is **NOT** to be shared. Please make sure you lock gate behind you, to and from the trail. This trail can be a bit tough for really young children. Babies are best in backpacks or carriers that allow you to have use of both hands. Use caution when swimming at Survivors Beach due to strong currents and limited access and cell phone reception.

There is a pedestrian gate at the south end of NorthEast Road. This code is also maintained by the Security office and changes periodically.

Security: (787-890-8472) is located at the corner of Northeast & Wing. The office is open Monday through Friday 7:30am to 3:30pm. For emergencies call 787-890-COP1 (2671).
<http://www.uscg.mil/d7/airstaBorinquen/Security/Security.asp>

AROUND THE BASE

Things are always changing here at Ramey, depending on volunteers and interests. Currently we have a neighborhood Book Club, Boy Scouts, a Mom's Morning Out, Stroller Warriors, a few workout groups, a photo group, and Jiu Jitsu is also offered on base.

Do you have a specialty or interest that you could share with the community? Most of this is kept alive through volunteers, and there is always room for new activities. Volunteers have put together kids and adult triathlons, holiday events, religious events, workout groups, cooking groups, crafts groups and much more. Feel free to post things to the community page and see if there is an interest.

ALL SPOUSES CLUB (ASC)

Here at Air Station Borinquen the weather is fantastic and the people are warm and friendly. However, learning the ropes in a new country can be challenging at times. The ASC provides an understanding support group and a myriad of activities, both social and charitable, intended to keep

the morale of our community high. Membership is open to everyone, making us a diverse and energetic club. Our club meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month, beginning in September. Meetings generally take place at the Spouse House, #80, 5th St. Evening meetings usually begin at 7:00 pm and details will be posted in on their FaceBook page. We encourage everyone to come and join us.

Some of the ASC's activities in the past have included assisting with base events such as: the Pumpkin Patch, Children's Holiday Party, Valentine's Day, Progressive Dinner, Annual Flea Market & Craft Sale, and Children's Easter Egg Hunt. This is a great way to meet new people, make friends and to get involved in the community.

COAST GUARD EXCHANGE SYSTEM

Store Phone Number: (787) 890-7272

Store Hours: Monday – Saturday 8am - 8pm, Sunday 10am - 5pm

The Coast Guard Exchange may have reduced hours or be closed on some holidays.

Gas station hours: Sunday – Saturday 7am - 7pm

The Coast Guard Exchange offers the following services:

Special Orders

Lay-Away

Price Matching

Money Orders

STAR card payments

Postage Stamps

Email capture to receive store advertisements

Job opportunities at our website - www.cg-exchange.com

MORALE WELL-BEING AND RECREATION (MWR)

Office hours are Monday-Friday 8am - 3pm.

MWR is located in La Plaza on the 2nd floor. These are some of the services this office coordinates:

Borinquen Beacon: Our base paper, delivered via email every Thursday. Sign up to receive the Beacon by emailing the editor at borinquenbeacon@gmail.com. The Beacon is a vital information resource for current base events. The Beacon can be found on line at: <http://www.uscg.mil/d7/units/asborinquen/Beacon/index.html>

Read your Beacon - It's fun!

Adult Pick-Up Sports: Soccer, basketball, softball, flag football and tennis.

Captain's Cup Sports: Softball, futsal, basketball, and volleyball. MWR will advertise for participants and schedule events.

Youth Sports: Soccer, basketball and baseball. Coordinated by MWR. Watch the Beacon for information on registration.

Ceramic Shop: Contact MWR for information. Located at 195B Wing Rd. The Ceramic Shop schedule is posted weekly in the Beacon and on the MWR USCG Air Station Borinquen Facebook page.

Community Center: Features an American Pub style menu. Open for dinner on Thursdays, 5-10 pm. Open for parties, special events, and community gatherings.

Daycare: Offered at the Child Development Center (CDC) from Monday to Friday 7am - 4:30pm. Summer and holiday hours vary. (Closed on the weekends) You must register your children with the CDC to use their services.

Boys And Girls Club: There is a Boys & Girls Club on the second floor of La Plaza that offers an affordable after-school program until 6pm. They also offer summer camp opportunities. Watch the Beacon for details.

Library: Located at La Plaza. Hours are irregular so check the *Beacon* for posted hours. There is free Wi-Fi outside the library.

Pool: The pool is a great place to relax, cool off and meet some new friends. Open daily from 11am - 5pm. Buddy Swim hours are 5am - 10pm daily (some restrictions apply). Check with the pool manager or a lifeguard for complete rules and eligibility. Red Cross Swimming Lessons are available for both adults and children. You must purchase an annual membership through MWR or pay a small daily fee.

Tennis Courts: Located near La Plaza. For complete rules and eligibility, please check with MWR.

Tropical Rentals: Located at La Plaza near the Tennis Courts. Sports equipment, lawn mowers, coolers, camping equipment and much more are available to rent at a minimal cost. Open Monday-Friday 10am to 5pm and Saturday 8am to noon.

Movie Theater: Please check Beacon for times and shows. Movies are every Friday and Saturday evenings starting at 6:30pm, with an occasional matinee. The first movie is family friendly with the second movie generally being for adults. The movies are free and concessions are very inexpensive. The theater is located at La Plaza on the second floor. The theater is also available to be rented for birthday parties.

Fitness Center: The fitness center is located in La Plaza and requires a secure card to access the facility. Stop by MWR to get your card.

OMBUDSMAN

The base has an Ombudsman to guide you in any kind of crisis or family emergency. The Ombudsman is also a valuable source of information about what services are available to spouses in the military. The Ombudsman is the liaison between the families and the Command. Our Ombudsman has a Facebook profile (CG Borinquen Ombudsman). This profile allows you to friend the Ombudsman. If you would like to add as “close friends,” you will be notified of all the Ombudsman’s posts. You can hide your post from appearing on the feed of the Ombudsman’s page (if you wish) through Facebook settings. This page is used to communicate information from the Command to families. Our Ombudsman will also create a private message feed to notify all housing members with news and updates. Please contact your Ombudsman at cgasborinquen@gmail.com with any questions you have about life here.

MEDICAL

Many offices on the western side of the island do not take appointments. Many places are first come, first serve. Some may give you an appointment time, but you could easily wait over two hours

to be seen. The best thing to do is “schedule” an appointment early on a day you are not in a rush and bring something to occupy your time (snacks, book, phone charger etc.) Many doctors’ offices tend to be very cold, so bringing a sweater or light jacket to stay warm. If you have small children or expect to have a baby while you are here your Ombudsman has access to additional information about doctors, vaccines and more.

After hours you will need to go to urgent care or to the hospital ER.

You may request a translator to go with you by calling the Base OOD. Visit Eric Gerena in the Tricare office (located at the Clinic in La Plaza) for all of your medical questions and to transfer to Tricare Overseas. <http://www.tricare-overseas.com/>

Air Station Borinquen Clinic: Located in La Plaza (in the center of the housing area). The clinic offers routine care to Active Duty residents and their dependents. For Appointments call: 787-890-8477. Clinic Hours: 0730-1200, 1300-1530, Monday-Friday, and is closed Wednesday afternoon for training. The clinic pharmacy offers over the counter medications for free. Examples include: sunscreen, children’s acetaminophen, bug spray and ibuprofen. Limited to two items per week/per family.

Also located at **Borinquen Clinic is Tricare Service Center (TSC)**. This should be one of your first stops to make sure your family is entered into Tricare and DEERS. This is extremely important to get all family enrolled and updated. Our TRICARE Representative is Eric Gerena: 787-890-8480 Email: Eric.Gerena@uscg.mil, Office Hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 0730-1200, 1300-1590. (Closed Wednesdays) TRICARE Service Center: 1-800-444-5445.

Emergencies: If the condition is not life threatening, call the Duty HS: 787-221-0015. If it is life threatening, go to the nearest ER.

911 is slightly different here in Puerto Rico - if you need an Ambulance please call 787-868-5362.

If you have an emergency, please remember to contact International SOS (ISOS) at 1-800-700-7104 (option 3) to start processing referral and language assistance.

Hospital Buen Samaritano: 787-658-000

2 Km 141.1, Aguadilla, PR.

Coordinates: 18.5034 -67.13016.

Heading on the highway 107, it is the light right before you reach the highway 2, on your right-hand side. *Website:* www.hbspr.org

Maleza Pharmacy: Located on HWY110, on left just past the Econo supermarket. They take Tricare, speak English and are open until 10 pm with drive-thru service. This is a very nice pharmacy. Their phone number is 787- 890-5515.

Ramey Plaza Pharmacy: This pharmacy is located in Ramey plaza and is called Super Farmacia Megar. Their number is 787-890-4200, and they take Tricare.

Dentist - Dr. Blay: Phone (787) 891-6022. Address: 151 Ave Pedro Abizu Campos Suite 1, Aguadilla. The office is off the 107, near Hwy 2 on the right. Parking is hard to find, but he is a

good dentist and works well with children. He and most of his staff speak English. The office is clean, but not as modern as some in the states.

Orthodontist – Dr. Valentin: Phone (787) 891-1339. 171 Ave. Pedro Albizu Campos on 107 before the 2, on the right-hand side after the Subway sandwich shop. The office is very clean, you can make appointments and the staff is very friendly. He and most of his staff speak English.

ENT (Otolaryngology): Dr. Carlos J. Cedo Alzamora: Phone: (787) 833-1113. Address: Edificio La Palma- Apt 2-F, Peral Street, Mayaguez. The office is in downtown Mayaguez, it is best to park in the parking garage and walk about 2 blocks to the office. The office is small and the office staff speaks a little English, but they are nice. The doctor speaks English and is retired from the military. He works well with children. You usually don't have to wait too long for your appointment.

Audiologists - Audiology Clinics of Puerto Rico: Mark T McDowall, PhD. Phone: (787) 882-8585. This office is very clean and well equipped. The Audiologist and his staff speak English and work well with children. The office is on the left side on the 107, call for directions.

Radiology - Insight Radiology: Off Hwy 2, is very good. They have most types of diagnostics (ultrasound, MRI, X-ray, and mammogram). They speak English, take Tricare and are great to work with.

Poison Control: It is best to call Florida at 904-244-4480. In PR you may have a hard time finding someone who speaks English.

Walgreens There are a few here. There is one off the Hwy 107 (across from Eric's BBQ) and one off HWY 2. www.walgreens.com/PuertoRico for exact locations.

Wal-Mart: Wal-Mart. (787) 830-3030. 3535 Ave. Militar Suite 193. Isabela, PR 00662. It is in Isabela (about 25-30 min east of base), here are the coordinates: 18.50078 -67.02435.

Kmart: Located in the Aguadilla Shopping Center (see below for directions).

RAMEY SCHOOL

Ramey School is a Pre-K to 12th grade school administered by the Department of Defense. Registration is typically the last week of July and school starts in mid-August. Contact the school at 787-890-4145 for more information regarding vaccinations, physicals and registration requirements. The PTSO will usually have a used uniform sale sometime during the summer. You can find information online about procedures, school calendar and much more.

Principal: Kenneth Kirk

Phone: (787)890-4145

Fax: (787)890-2180

<http://www.dodea.edu/Ramey/index.cfm>

COMMAND RELIGIOUS PROGRAM

Chapel: The Air Station Command Chaplain can be reached at 787-890-8486 or on the duty phone at 787-397-1068. The Chapel is located on the second floor of La Plaza, right above the Medical Clinic. A Christian Protestant service is offered on Sundays at 1000. All are welcome. There are numerous programs available through the Chapel for personal spiritual growth including Bible studies, children's church and a teen program. The Chaplain is available for confidential counseling by appointment. For other faith services please contact the Chapel office for information and directions.

The Borinquen Youth Group: Seeks to build a community of 7th-12th graders who will grow together in the Lord through fun, worship, and honest, challenging, and heartfelt conversations in a respectful environment. They meet each Wednesday from 6-8pm and eat dinner while there. They are a non-denominational group that welcomes any 7th-12th grader who wishes to participate, no matter their home church. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Chaplain.

ANIMAL SERVICES

They are just like family and we want to make sure they are well taken care of. On base they are required to be on a leash, when out and about, you know your dog best. Unfortunately, here in PR, there is a large stray animal problem. The PAWS organization (<http://www.pawspuertorico.com/>) can help with the problem in various ways. Several CG members have rescued dogs, it can be hard not to! Many CG members regularly take their dogs to the beach, so please be aware when taking your pets to the beach, most strays are scared, hungry and not aggressive, but you never know. There are TONS of beaches, some you'll have all to yourself to run and play with your dogs even within walking distance of the base.

There are many lizards on the island, so be mindful if your pet loves to chase things, they are everywhere.

There are also Cane Toads (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cane_toad) that are harmful to pets.

So please be aware of the amphibians with regards to the safety of your pets and small children.

What to do if you suspect your pet has been poisoned.

- Remove your pet from the area.**
- Check to make sure your pet is safe: breathing and acting normally.**
- Do NOT give any home antidotes.**
- Do NOT induce vomiting without consulting a vet or Pet Poison Helpline.**
- Call Pet Poison Helpline at 800-213-6680.**
- If veterinary attention is necessary, contact your veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic immediately.**
- <http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/pet-owners/emergency/>

Clínica Veterinaria San Francisco De Asís: 787-879-5251 and 787 817 0149 Carr #2 km 82.7 Hatillo, Puerto Rico 00659. Regular Hours: Mon- Sat 9am-6pm Emergency Hours: Everyday 6pm-9am. They are the closest and the only emergency vet. Hatillo and Arecibo are really right next to each other, from Aguadilla they are East on HWY 2.

The Pet Vet: 787-872-0204 4466 Km 0.3 Bo Bajuras Isabela, Puerto Rico 00662 Heading East on the 110 you will run into a Blinking light, turn left down the hill. After the sharp turn about a mile, it will be on the left hand side with a blue sign. Hours vary.

Veterinary Clinic: 787-707-2038 building 676, Mon & Wed 8:30am-2pm/Thurs 8:30am-Noon. *Pay by cash or check.

GROCERY STORES

Fresh fruit and vegetable stands on the side of the road are very common to see, often offering the best in local fruits, vegetables, herbs and roots very inexpensive. They take cash only. You will often see people at traffic lights offering a variation of fruits, vegetables, herbs and even sodas and bottled waters as well. It can be a lifesaver on a hot day, or when you're super hungry from a long day and there is a guy offering fresh, ripe bananas and a cold bottle of water for \$2!

Aguadilla Farmers' Market Open every Saturday from 8:00-12:00 and for special events throughout the year. Located in the parking lot of 110-Thai, Highway 110, Km. 9.2. What you'll find: Quality, chemical-free produce sold to you directly from the person who sowed the seeds, nurtured the plant, and harvested the goods. There are delicious prepared and "made-to-order" foods that exhibit the local produce. Hand-crafted body care products and intricate artisanal goods made with local expertise and local materials. Please like their FaceBook page to keep up to date info on events and products.

ECONO: On 110 outside the back gate on the right. This is the closest, newest and cleanest grocery store, but prices can be higher on some items. You can usually find the best produce here and hard to find berries. They have a very good bakery, a small deli area, and usually a small assortment of flowers. It is great for picking up a short list of items, but maybe not for a big shopping trip.

Coast Guard Exchange: Located outside the main gate. There is a small selection of food and a small refrigerator/freezer section. They do not have produce, fresh meats or a bakery. They do carry dairy products, eggs, bread and basic items.

Selectos: On 107 in the plaza with Walgreens, Wendy's, and Church's Chicken. You can find most items here, but the unemployment office is in the plaza and parking can be challenging.

Selectos in Isabela: Take 110 to Hwy 2, turn left at the light. It is about a 15 to 20 minute drive; Selectos will be on the right in the same Plaza as the Wal-Mart. This is a large grocery store with many items. It is clean and is very similar to the stores in the US. They accept M/C and Visa, though not AMEX or Discover. If you have the time, this is a good place to shop with easy parking.

Amigo: Take Hwy 107 to Hwy 2, curve to the right. Amigo is in the Aguadilla Mall on the left. It is owned by Wal-Mart so you can find many brands there including "Great Value" items. This store is a good value for your money for big shopping trips, but the lines can be long and the store is always busy.

Fresh Mart: Take Hwy 107 to Hwy 2 curve right towards Mayaguez (just past Aguadilla Mall at the bottom of the hill on the left). This is a natural health food store with a great variety of items.

SHOPPING

Aguadilla Mall: Take Hwy 107 to Hwy 2, curve right, the Mall is on the left. The exit comes up quickly, so when you see the sign for the Mall, your turn is coming up (15-20 min. drive). There is a Kmart, Amigo, food court, AT&T and many other small stores. There is also a movie theater with most movies in English. www.Caribbeanemas.com can translate the page to English and you can view what movies are playing all over the island.

Plaza Isabela: Take Hwy 110 to Hwy 2 turn left at the light (15-20 min. drive). Plaza will be on the right. There is a Wal-Mart, Selectos, Movie Theater, Burger King, and many small stores.

Mayaguez Mall: Take Hwy 107 to Hwy 2, curve right (45-60 min drive depending on traffic). You will pass a Sam's and Home Depot on the right. Continue through Mayaguez, the mall will be on the left. There is a large Wal-Mart, Marshall's, Old Navy, Motherhood, and many other stores. This is a good-sized mall and is usually busy.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mayag%C3%BCezMall/110951672288599?rf=128344857211998>

Puerto Rico Premium Outlets: Driving from Aguadilla Take Route 22, Salida/Exit 55 (Barceloneta/Manati Oeste). It is about an hour from base, but has 90 OUTLET STORES!!! Find impressive savings at Adidas, Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, BCBG Max Azria, Calvin Klein, Coach, Gap Outlet, Guess, Kenneth Cole, Lacoste, Michael Kors, Nautica, Nike, Nine West, Polo Ralph Lauren, Puma, Tommy Hilfiger and more. Don't forget to ask for military discounts!! Not all stores have it, but it doesn't hurt to ask.

<http://www.premiumoutlets.com/outlets/outlet.asp?id=80>

Plaza Las Americas The Center of It all: Mon-Sat - 9:00 am - 9:00 pm, Sun - 11:00 am - 7:00 pm
Customer Service Center: (787) 767-5202, 525 Ave Franklin Delano Roosevelt, San Juan 00918, Puerto Rico. Plaza Las Américas is a 1.8 million square-foot shopping center in San Juan, PR. Plaza Las Américas has more than 300 stores including the only Macy's in the Caribbean, the largest JCPenney in the chain, a 327,000 square-foot Sears and a 40,000 square-foot Forever 21, among others. In addition, the mall also offers a 13-screen movie theater, and more than 40 dining alternatives at La Terraza Food Court and other sit-down and full-service restaurants. It is an amazing mall. If you are ever missing the main land, this is the perfect getaway! Plan a day starting there, then go to Ft. Buchanan, and if need be, Costco can make for a great day! You can even get Starbucks to get you through! (FYI - the closest Starbucks is in San Juan)

Mayaguez Sam's And Home Depot: Off of Hwy 2 on the right towards Mayaguez (40-45 min. drive). There is also a movie theater, small stores, Applebee's, Pollo Tropical, and other restaurants in the plaza.

Hatillo Mall: Take Hwy 110 to Hwy 2 towards San Juan (50-60 min. drive). Stay on Hwy 2 as it curves to the left, the mall is on the right. There is a large Wal-Mart, JC Penney, TJ Maxx, Pet Smart, Rooms to Go, Office Max, and many other small stores. There is a food court and Chili's inside the mall. There is a Toys R' Us/ Babies R' Us store across the street from the mall and a new Shoe Carnival store.

Hatillo Sam's Club And Home Depot: on the way to Hatillo, when you see the Sam's sign, look for the off ramp on the right before the store (40-45 min. drive).

Costco: Take Hwy 110 to Hwy 2, turn left at the light. Once you are past Hatillo, look for the exit for Hwy 22 (this is a toll road), this will take you to San Juan. Costco is almost to San Juan, exit 16; you will turn to the right and continue around until you see Costco (2 hour drive or more). There isn't a gas station at this Costco like there is in the states. This is a very nice store with excellent products, as you would expect. Not too far from Ft. Buchanan in San Juan.

Fort Buchanan: The Army Base in San Juan (approximately 2 hours from Aguadilla). Many families take an entire day for this trip, by traveling to Ft. Buchanan first and then Costco on the way home. Fort Buchanan is a great place to shop, but takes planning. You will want to bring a cooler for this trip for your cold items. You will find many items at Buchanan that you can't find anywhere else on the island. There is a food court and a few other shops there as well.

Main Gate: Located nearest to the PX/Commissary and Gas Station, and is open 24 hours/day. The Golf Gate/back gate is accessed from Hwy 20 (Exit Hwy 2 at Hwy 165 South) and open 5am to 9pm M-TH. The back gate is closed Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Holidays.

PX/Exchange: Department store that offers many items like electronics, household goods, clothing, etc. and check cashing (up to \$300) near their customer service. Inside the building with the Exchange there is a Food Court, Barber Shop, Beauty Salon, Hertz Rentals, Optometrist, and a GNC. There is a Car Dealership next to the Exchange and a separate PX

annex that includes things not found at the PX like furniture, appliances, lawn/gardening, rugs, pet items and toys, liquor, beer, wine, propane gas tanks, 5 gallon water jugs and refills.

Commissary: The grocery store (Check here first! Some items are cheaper than at the PX!), **closed on Mondays**. There are **NO VISITORS** allowed in the Fort Buchanan commissary. The Commissary accepts coupons; even those 6 months past date and we have a community coupon box for sharing, located in the library on base.

Gas Station: Located across from the Commissary near the Main Gate; pay at the pump with credit card, offers oil changes & you can purchase tires with a lifetime guarantee!

Post Office: Normally open Mon-Sat, closed for some non-federal Puerto Rican holidays. Someone was told outgoing mail goes directly to the airport (avoids sorting at main P.R. post office), so possibly goes faster than from local mailbox.

MWR Activities: A Golf Course (kids 12 & under golf free), a bowling alley, and library. They also have the Waterspout Water Park. Military family annual membership is only \$50 (cash/check)

Educational & Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS): helps families who have questions/concerns about their child's development (from birth to age 36 months); EDIS can provide referrals to physical, occupational & speech therapists as well as other specialists, all at no cost for military families. Families that are in the process of moving to Puerto Rico with children with special needs should contact them to request services. The contact for this program is María de los A. Ortiz, EDIS Program Manager/Occupational Therapist Rodriguez Army Health Clinic Fort Buchanan, 00934 Office: (787) 707- 2167/ 2165

<http://www.buchanan.army.mil/edis/home.html>

DRY CLEANERS

Aguadilla Dry Cleaners: Phone: 787-890-7935. They are located in the strip mall near Econo, off of Hwy 110. They have someone that does alterations as well. Their hours are Monday through Friday 7:30am to 5:30pm and Saturday 8:00am to 5:00pm. For alterations, the hours are 9:30am to 3:00pm Tuesday through Saturday.

CAR RENTAL

Charlie Car Rental: Phone: (787) 890-8929, Located outside the airport past the CG base at the corner of Wing St. and San Antonio Rd. Their web address is www.charliecarrentalpr.com.

Hertz: Located inside the airport terminal and also at Fort Buchanan at the Exchange. This is a good choice if you want to rent a car to return after picking up your vehicle in San Juan, because it can be returned right at Fort Buchanan.

There are other major rental car companies located inside the airport terminal as well.

CAR REPAIRS

Auto Servicio Vargas: Phone: (787) 629-1747 and (787) 890-1940, Located in front of Yaret Pizza on Carr.110 (Km. 9.6). Ask for Victor.

Taller Hernandez: Located across from the Ramey School. They speak English and provide excellent, affordable service.

LOCAL RESTAURANTS

There are numerous restaurants in the area, and everyone has their favorites. There are many fast food chains including McDonalds, Subway, Burger King, Wendy's, KFC, Church's Chicken, Pizza Hut, Little Caesar's, and Domino's in the immediate area. Domino's will deliver on base (787-891-7000) and usually someone will speak English. The new Papa John's will also provide delivery, but you may need to meet them at the front gate due to their driver's not carrying proper documents to get on base. Many of the local restaurants advertise openings and events via their Facebook page. Keep in mind if your debit card is not working, have them run it as credit. Cash is always accepted.

La Isla Reader features many restaurants in the area and local events. Here are some of our favorites:

Very Close

Ramey Bakery: Found in the Ramey Plaza right outside the front gate. A delicious selection of pastries, cakes, and sandwiches to order. You can also get some household essentials such as milk, juice, and bread. It is only a walk or bike ride away, out the front gate to the left.

Cofó's Pizza Truck: Everyone has a favorite pizza truck or restaurant. Cofó's is one of the closest, across from the airport in a parking lot out the Security Gate. Cash only.

El Sión: Peruvian food served daily. Portions are very large and there is always a daily special. Located past Ramey Plaza on the way to the hangar, on the left. Cash only.

La Spezie: Brick oven pizzas, Uruguayan grilled meats, and tapas. Located next to Ramey food market.

Levain Bakery: Quiche, croissants, espresso, tarts, cakes. Amazing soup and sandwich lunch specials. Located next to Ramey food market.

Routes 110 & 107

El Meson: (787-882-2708) Sandwiches with a Cuban/Puerto Rican flavor. Gets a high mark from almost everyone. The fries and sorullos are great. On your left side, about 4 miles outside Ramey Base on route 107.

Jimmie's Pizza: (787-890-2843) Family priced. Located on Hwy 110 about 1 mile from the base on the left.

Cocina Creativa: Great for lunch or dinner during the week. Serves daily lunch specials, with a soup and pizza of the day. Closed on weekends. Located on Hwy 110 next to Econo.

Eclipse: (787-890-0275) Great atmosphere, outdoors dining on the beach, but not a place to bring small children. The food is upscale, and the menu is always changing. Breakfast and lunch are fairly reasonable with entrees running from \$10-\$16. Dinner is much more expensive with entrees running around \$20. Located out old gate 5 (Route 110) to the blinking yellow light. Take a left on Route 4466 towards Jobos Beach. Immediately at the bottom of the hill, take a left towards Tropical Trail Rides. The Eclipse is inside a gated resort called Villa Montana.

Da'bowls: Smoothies and fresh fruit bowls. Located next to Coffee Spot on route 110.

La Borinqueña Panadería: bakery and deli (787-882-4141). Offering cafeteria-style Puerto Rican food and sandwiches to go. Espresso, hot sandwiches made with unprocessed meats, and barbecued

chicken. Open 6am to 11pm daily. On your left, about one mile outside the boundary of the old Ramey Base (gate 1) on route 107.

Eric's BBQ: Great Puerto Rican style barbecue. Located on 107 on the left-hand side, close to Walgreens.

One Ten Thai: Thai restaurant on Hwy 110 across from the old La Cima hotel. All dishes are made with your choice of chicken, vegetarian, or seafood. Also has a bar next door that serves microbrews. Opens at 5pm, best to get there early. (www.onetenthai.com) Like on Facebook for the latest news.

Cinco: Excellent haute cuisine. Located on 110 across the street from Econo. 4.5/5 stars on Trip Advisor.

The Food Truck Plaza: On the right just before the blinking yellow light on 110. TakÓ serves great Korean BBQ and Blue Fin is famous for its Donut Mac and Cheeseburger, although they specialize in a variety of high class dinner fare. Call ahead, or bring bug spray.

Icons Espresso Bar: Rock N' Roll infused espressos, Italian quality espressos and coffee drinks. Authentic Panini, bagels, English muffins and waffles!! Cash only and free Wi-Fi. 110 KM 8.5 next to Verde Azul.

Palmas Café: Located on Hwy 110 right before the road taking you down to Jobos. Closed on Sundays.

Ristoranto Pomodoro: (787-890-4905) Route 110 Km 6.7. Five minutes from Gate 5, Aguadilla. Reasonably priced Italian cuisine. Take-out available. Copas wine and tapas bar is next door.

Downtown Aguadilla/Aguada

Restaurante Marina's: Puerto Rican food, sushi, and an ever changing menu. It is located in the square downtown in Aguadilla (If you stand facing Banco Popular it's a couple of buildings to the left, sort of in the corner, on the 2nd floor). I've heard from several that it's the best food they've eaten on the island. They serve Caldo Gallego, Alitas Agridulses, Rissoto de Calabaza, Sushi Grade Tuna Creative, Rack of Lamb B.B.Q., Fresh Dorado, Portuguese, Mofongo Relleno de Mariscos, Flat Bread, and Truffle. 787-472-6062

Noveciento Italian Bistro: Hwy 111 just past Policia, downtown Aguadilla. Open 7 days, 11am-11pm Calle Agustan Stahl #61, Aguadilla, Puerto Rico 00603 Phone: 787-882-7475 / Fax: 787-882-7475. They offer Tapas, Family Side Salads, Family Side Pastas, Cheese Fondue, Chocolate Fondue, and Pizze al forno.

Taza Blanca: Located in Aguada, once you are entering the town on Rd. 115, in the shopping center containing the Co-op grocery store and Burger King. Serves all kinds of sandwiches, yucca chips on the side and your choice of Frappuccino or soft drink.

Route 2

Fufu Restaurant: Located on Route 2. Serving a mix of Puerto Rican and African food. Serves many of the traditional Puerto Rican food, with a little flare. Open everyday except Mon and Tues.

Molina's Restaurant: (787-882-1487) Similar to Chris' Restaurant with a more Puerto Rican flavor. A nice sit-down dinner place (The servers wear tuxedos). About one mile further down PR 2 towards Wal-Mart.

Chris' Restaurant: (787-882-1896). An upscale restaurant that specializes in steaks, middle to upper price range. Out 110 towards Wal-Mart at the intersection of PR2 and 110.

Rincon

Lazy Parrot: (787-823-5654) In Rincón on Route 413. Caribbean cuisine at the Rum Shack.

www.lazyparrot.com

The English Rose: Located in Rincón. Serve traditional English breakfast, they make their own bread and sausages. Best to go earlier in the day, it can become very crowded. Closes at noon.

www.rinconpuertoricobedandbreakfast.com

Banana Dang: Smoothies and great coffee. Located on 413 in Rincón next to the Lazy Parrot. Closed Tuesdays. www.bananadang.com

Shipwrecks: Located in Rincón near the Taino Divers Shop. Outdoor seating with a casual atmosphere and Caribbean cuisine. www.rinconshipwreck.com

Horned Dorset Primavera: (787-823-4030) A resort in Rincón - very, very expensive. Some place you may want to go for a special occasion. Ask someone for directions. They do not allow children.

BEACHES

Heading to the beaches is a great way to spend the day and can be wonderful family fun. Some local beaches can be rough and hazardous even for strong swimmers at different times of the year. Use common sense, and always swim with a buddy. The beaches generally do not have facilities or places to wash off so plan accordingly. There are also some beaches where you have to be wary of petty theft. Just like any other beach in the US, do not bring your valuables to the beach, and keep your eyes and ears open. Make it a point to talk to someone who has children around the age of yours and ask for their recommendations. It is also a great idea to stop by a local surf shop (Surf Zone or El Rincon) to ask for a map of the local beaches. They will have great suggestions for any specific activities you are looking to explore. El Rincon Surf shop has great beach maps!

Borinquen Beach: Located directly below the Golf Course, take the road through the golf course and follow it all the way down to the parking area. Conditions vary widely here so use caution. If your car can handle it, continue on the road to the left. Follow it down to some excellent surfing spots near the ruins of an old Spanish lighthouse.

Sea Glass Beach: Located at Parque Colon just outside the plaza in downtown Aguadilla, just past the Aguadilla Ice Skating Rink on Hwy 111. Sea glass "season" is really November through March/April- not so much in the summer. It is fun to walk along the beach and collect or use a mask/snorkel to search in the water near the shore. This beach is cited as one of the world's best for sea glass collecting.

Crashboat Beach: Regarded as the most "swimmer friendly" of all our local beaches. The waves are small enough for young children to manage, and there is usually ample parking. Go out the front gate to 107. Follow 107 about 3 miles until you see a large school and church on your right. Take a right on 458 and follow to the beach. Some people have been asked by the locals to pay for "theft protection" when they park on busy days or holidays. Use your good judgment. During the week, you can get fresh fish in the market here.

Jobs: A good area for kids and a popular surfing spot. You can park your car within eyesight of the beach.. Follow 110 to the blinking yellow light and take a left. Go just past Tsunami restaurant and the beach will be on your left. There is not much parking when the lot is closed, so you have to just find a spot on the side of the road.

Montones: A beautiful well-protected beach named for its picturesque mounds of rocks. Continue past Jobos where the road will narrow, you will drive through a wooded area that will open up at a small "development" of houses on your left. Take a left and drive to the dead end. Park where you can and find a path to the beach. The El Mar Hau Resort will let base residents park in their lot for a fee.

Shacks: The best for snorkeling and cave diving and has a sandy bottom. It is also the first beach you can reach out the back gate. Follow Hwy110 to the blinking yellow light and take a left. Immediately at the bottom of the hill, take a left towards Tropical Trail Rides. Parking for Shacks is near the trail rides, wherever you can find room. This beach can have a very strong undertow.

Surfer's Beach: A perfect place to drive down and watch the sunset, and SURF! Go straight out the front gate and continue to the end of the street. Take a right, go to the end of the street, and take a right again past the old Officers Club. On the left, you will see a green sign.

Survivor Beach: Probably so named because those who survived the first walk on their own were so grateful that they made it! Today you can walk part way down on stairs, but the trail is steep and can be tricky. If you have small children you may want to try it without them first. Although swimming is not allowed, Survivor is terrific for picnics and bonfires. The base trail begins at a gate just north of Cliff & Sixth. You must ask for the combination to the gate in person at the Security Office.

There are clearly beaches ALL over the island, so go explore and be sure to share any new finds with all of us!

ATTRACTIONS

Adventure Zone: Great for all ages, go karts, bumper cars, kid zone, arcade and gelato frozen yogurt!! Carr. 402 km. 2.9 Barrio Quebrada Larga Añasco, PR 00610. Tel : (787) 229-1300 Email: adventurezonepr@gmail.com

LAS CASCADAS AQUATIC PARK: (787-891-1740) This local water park has tons of waterslides and is a perfect outing for a hot day. Discount tickets can be purchased from MWR. It is located at the intersection of 107 and PR2. www.miaguadilla.com

VERDE AZUL: Interested in exploring some of Puerto Rico's natural beauty? Verde Azul offers various eco tours, zip line & rock climbing adventures, waterfalls, caves, scuba diving expeditions and visits to historic locations just to name a few. Stand Up Paddle boarding lessons, surf lessons, and all board rentals. Hwy 110 Km 6.8 Aguadilla, PR 00605, Phone: 787-951-5702. <http://www.verdeazulpr.com/>

Aguadilla Bowling Center: (787-891-3495) In Aguadilla on Hwy 2, PRO-BOWL BOWLING ALLEY (787-890-1320). A small bowling alley located in front of the passenger terminal at the airport. A good "Family Night Out." www.miaguadilla.com

Punta Borinquen Golf Course: (787-890-2987) A public golf course located just off the base, under the approach to the airport. This was the favorite golf course of President Eisenhower when it belonged to the Ramey Air Force Base. They offer a discounted rate to Federal Employees and their dependents. They also offer lessons for children and adults.

Tropical Trail Rides: Out old gate 5 (110) to the blinking yellow light. Take a left on Route 4466 towards Jobos Beach. Immediately at the bottom of the hill, take your first left. Telephone number (787) 872-9256. \$100 a ride, takes you along the beach and through almond forest.

Aguadilla Ice Skating Rink: 787-819-5555 in Aguadilla. Children above 3 can skate for \$10 per hour.

www.miaguadilla.com

Aguadilla Skate & Splash Park: 787-890-7277 Hours vary for skating and the splash park (for children under 12). Located next to the golf course across from the Post Office.

www.miaguadilla.com

LOCAL FRUITS AND FOODS

On your trip to the base from the airport, you'll surely notice that all kinds of things are sold on the side of the road. Being an interested and curious person, ready for all kinds of new experiences, you are probably wondering what all these interesting looking fruits and vegetables are. If you see something and you don't know what it is or what to do with it, ASK. Local merchants are terrific about telling you how to prepare some of the local vegetables and fruits. With some trial and error, you should have great success at including some local fare in your diet. There are many wonderful, new foods to try all around the island. Some common fruits found on the local street-side stands are papaya, various types of mangos, pineapple, grapefruit, oranges, a variety of bananas and avocados.

Here in Puerto Rico, bananas come in several different varieties, many are smaller than those we purchase stateside, and have a slightly different flavor. You may even have a tree in your new yard, if not, plant one because it is a great experience to watch bananas grow. Look for Finger Bananas, named because they are the length of a finger. They have a wonderful, wild flavor that is a cross between an apple and a banana, and are worth a try. Plantains are large, bright-green cooking bananas. You'll frequently find them served on the side of your meal when eating local style. They are a major ingredient in Mofongo and other Puerto Rican dishes.

Pincho: Means skewer and is the local shish kabob. You can find some terrific food at roadside stands with reasonable prices. Rice and beans are staples, as well as roasted chicken, pork, or beef pinchos, with plantains or yucca (yucca is a root vegetable that tastes like a really starchy potato). Be careful about purchasing seafood from the roadside, as it may not have been properly refrigerated or may have been sitting under hot lamps for too long. If you are adventurous, you can find some great food at the little stands. Some of the larger roadside stands have freezers and refrigerators but sanitation varies considerably. Follow your nose and your judgment.

Mofongo: You can't walk into a self-respecting Puerto Rican restaurant and not see mofongo on the menu. It's a must try!!! Essentially, mofongo is a mashed mound of plantains into which a combination of seafood, meat, or vegetables is added. It can be served as a side dish or a main course accompanied typically by beans and rice.

Comidas Criollas: Traditional Puerto Rican fare.

Arroz Con Gandules: Rice with pigeon peas.

Pasteles: A type of empanada or meat pie.

Asopao De Pollo: A tomato based soup with chicken, can come with other meats.

Tostones: A fried plantain with a crispy potato texture.

Amarillos: Sweet/ripened plantains.

Habichuelas: Beans, usually served with white rice.

Chicharrones: Salty fried pig skin.

Pollo/Lechon Asado: Roasted chicken or pork.

Bacalaitos: Salted codfish batter, fried into a thin crispy wafer.

Alcapurrias: Fried fritters.

Mayoketchup: A mix of mayo and ketchup, generally with hint of garlic that is used to dip tostones and other foods into.

Festivals And Places To Visit

There are so many places to visit around the island and so many festivals each year as well. Visit the following websites for information:

www.puertoricodaytrips.com

www.seepuertorico.com (downloadable app as well)

www.discoveringpuertorico.com

www.topuertorico.org

There are many holidays in PR. On www.puertoricodaytrips.com there is a list of the holidays. It's good to check this out before venturing across the island.

JANUARY

Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra: The annual season of the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra begins in San Juan with classical and pop performances by the island's finest orchestra.

Fiestas de la Calle San Sebastián: The annual Fiestas de la Calle San Sebastián features several nights of live music as well as food festivals and *cabezudos* parades, where folk legends are caricatured in oversize masks.

Rincón International Film Festival: Each year the Puerto Rico film industry hosts the Rincón International Film Festival, which showcases movies made on the island and around the world.

FEBRUARY-EARLY MARCH

Carnival: In the days preceding Lent, Ponce celebrates Carnival with flamboyant costumes, parades, and music.

Maricao Coffee Festival: This festival continues to celebrate the end of the annual harvest with music, vibrant parades, arts and crafts stalls and plenty of coffee desserts. The festival is reminiscent of the end-of-harvest street party that Maricao's plantation owners threw for their workers in the town's coffee heyday. Puerto Rico's velvety medium-dark roast was once the toast of Europe's frilled and powdered royalty and, following the post-war slump in exportation, the bean is back on track.

MARCH

Dulce Sueño Paso Fino Fair: Held in Guayama, the two-day Dulce Sueño Paso Fino Fair showcases the island's famous Paso Fino horses, which are bred and trained to walk with a smooth, distinctive gait.

International Light Tackle Blue Marlin Tournament: Anglers try their hand at snagging blue marlin and other game fish in the International Light Tackle Blue Marlin Tournament.

APRIL

Saborea Puerto Rico: World-famous Escambrón Beach takes center stage in a flavorful weekend, with tastings from 30 restaurants per day of the island's finest restaurants, plus rums, wine, beer, distilled spirits, and 50 international and local culinary personalities!

Rincon Film Festival: Annual Rincon Film Festival: "the most celebrated film festival in Puerto Rico". Different locations in Rincon. Get tickets.

Almojábana Festival: Cultural & Culinary Festival to celebrate a local fritter "Almojábanas". Live music, art crafts and food kiosks. 787-897-3290.

Crafts & Agro Festival: Over 100 craftsmen, agricultural workshops and traditional music. Jesús M. "Tito" Colón Coliseum, Orocovis. 787-867-5000 ext. 2295.

Tomato Festival: Family event. Live music, arts craft and food kiosks. Information: 787-828-1241.

MAY

Agricultural Expo Coloso: A family event to celebrate the historical Coloso Sugar Mill in Aguada. Agricultural exhibition, ornamental plants, food kiosk, machines and live entertainment.

ETI Puerto Rico: International tourism expo in the Caribbean, held at the Puerto Rico Convention Center.

PR Chocolate Fest: International Chocolate Tasting Festival. Tasting Stations/Competitions/Workshops & Seminars. Palacio Recreación y Deportes Mayaguez. Buy your ticket now.

JUNE

SoFo Culinary Festival: For several days in both June and December, Old San Juan's Calle Fortaleza is closed to traffic for the SoFo Culinary Festival, when many restaurants set up shop on the cobblestone street.

Heineken JazzFest: The annual Heineken JazzFest attracts some 15,000 aficionados to San Juan for four days of outdoor concerts by the likes of Spyro Gyra and George Benson.

Casals Festival: San Juan's annual Casals Festival honors the world-renowned cellist Pablo Casals, who lived in Puerto Rico for several decades until his death. The 10 days of classical-music performances feature the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, as well as soloists from the island and around the world.

NOVEMBER

Festival de Mundillo: Moca's Festival de Mundillo showcases delicate woven lace with demonstrations and exhibits.

DECEMBER

Festival de los Máscaras: The annual Festival de los Máscaras honors the mask-making traditions of Hatillo, where colorful masks used in religious processions have been crafted for centuries.

Festival de Café: The mountain towns of Maricao and Yauco host the annual Festival de Café. There's music, crafts, and booths selling regional foods.

Puerto Rico Restaurant Week: For two weeks, dozens of restaurants offer a three-course prix-fixe menu, giving diners the chance to sample the island's latest culinary innovations.

Aibonito Flower Festival: This popular festival displays incredible tropical foliage, including countless varieties of colorful orchids and ginger plants. There's also plenty of food and music.

Saborea Puerto Rico: Puerto Rico's largest culinary event, Saborea Puerto Rico is a three-day extravaganza held at Escambrón Beach in San Juan. It includes presentations by island and international chefs, and food from local restaurants, as well as beer, wine, and rum tastings.

http://www.fodors.com/world/caribbean/puerto-rico/travel-tip_2389205.html and

http://events.frommers.com/sisp/index.htm?fx=event&event_id=5774#ixzz2Jf6NkBBx

Other Places To Explore:

- Aguada town festival and craft show in the fall.
- Whale festival (in Rincon) in the winter time.
- San Sebastian outdoor market every Friday morning.
- Aguadilla Farmer's Market every Saturday morning next to 110 Thai.
- Tree house in Aguadilla centro-for the kids at Parque Colon.
- Tres Puertos shop in Rincon centro-for authentic, locally made items.
- Waterfalls in San Sebastian, a trip for family, wear sneakers and bathing suit. Check out Puerto Rico day trips online for more information and directions.

DRIVING LOCALLY

Driving on the island may be different for you and could take some time for you to adjust to. Expect occasionally to see people driving in a variety of places other than the road - sidewalks and emergency lanes are two favorites. You can adapt to the new customs and learn to recognize (even appreciate) the differences by keeping the following tips in mind:

- Just as in any situation, drive defensively and be aware of your surroundings. Drivers here are actually very courteous and may stop to let others pull out ahead of them from parking lots or streets. Just be aware of this custom. It can come in pretty handy when you are the one needing to pull out.

- Get a good map and write in landmarks as you find them. Or better yet, find them out ahead of time.

- Google Maps and other GPS apps tend to work fairly well for showing your location, but it works best to enter coordinates rather than addresses to get directions. You will start to understand directions like:

'you will see a blinking light, turn right. Then you'll see a yellow house with a red roof..... Turn after the 3rd palm tree... the doctor's office is almost across the street from KFC, when you see KFC turn right then it's the 2nd building on the right.' Don't worry, it will come and locals always seem willing to help.

- Traffic patterns and timing can vary greatly so leave extra time to travel. If you absolutely, positively must be there on time, take a dry run the day before and travel with someone who has been there previously.

- Download a translator app and keep a paper and pen in your car. If you don't understand directions, ask the person to draw "un mapa, por favor." Numbers are the same written if not spoken.

Auto Expreso Tag: The toll roads cost \$20 to set up. This tag is put on your windshield (place it correctly, tickets are pricy at \$100!!!). The autoexpreso phone number (888) 688-1010. You can buy the card at most Puma gas stations. The closest one is on 110 at gate 5 (it's a little past Econo on the same side of the road across from The Beach House at 110). They speak English. If you forget, you can buy them when you are on the toll road, but there are often lines. Puerto Rico now requires you to register your vehicle tag and license plate online. You can also refill the card online, over the phone or on the toll road (don't worry you won't miss the roads that have tolls).
<https://www.autoexpreso.com/>

Gas prices are similar to the states, but the gasoline is sold by the liter (3.8 liters/gallon).

HURRICANES AND TROPICAL STORMS

Hurricane Season runs from 1 June until 30 November. Please watch the *Beacon* and the Weather Channel (27 on Centennial Cable or www.weather.com) to stay up to date on approaching storms. Please share the following telephone number with family and friends in the States: 1-800- 872-4957, ext.307. This is the number for people back home to call to obtain updated information on Borinquen's condition in the event that our phone lines become inoperative.

Here at Air Station Borinquen we use a Block Captain system to disseminate information within the housing area. If you are not sure who your Block Captain is, contact the Ombudsman.

On the next page is the American Red Cross list of what they recommend you have on hand for a Disaster Supply Kit. Also included is the description of each hurricane condition. Please make yourself familiar with these. HURRICANE SEASON BEGINS JUNE 1ST!

Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services – water, electricity, and telephone – were cut off? Now is the time to prepare in advance and purchase those items necessary to keep on hand. It is recommended that enough supplies be kept in your home to meet the needs of you and your family for at least 3 days.

Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit with the items you may need and store them in a sturdy container.

We recommend a large plastic garbage can with a lid.

Recommended supplies to include in your Disaster Supplies Kit:

5-day water supply (one gallon for each person per day)

5-day food supply – canned food or food that will not need refrigeration

One change of clothing and footwear per person

Blankets

First aid kits (including prescription medications)
Emergency tools (battery-operated radio/flashlights)
Batteries
Cash
Sanitation supplies including hand soap and toilet paper
Specialty items for infants/elderly
Baby wipes
Non-electrical can opener
Fire extinguisher
Matches/candles
Stove apparatus to cook food (Sterno, portable gas stoves/or a grill)
Bug spray
Plastic plates, bowls, utensils, and cups
Napkins/paper towels/extra trash bags
Camp Shower

Items necessary to have on hand in case of generator distribution: electrical cords, power strips and at a minimum a five-gallon gas can.

NOTE: Don't forget your pets! They will need food and water and medications too. When the storm is approaching, remove items from container and fill the container with water. Please be safety conscious when using some of the items listed above. Always use caution when filling water in containers when there are small children in your household. Also, never operate a generator inside your house and be mindful of open flames. It is easy in such a beautiful place to avoid thinking about such things.

Read the information in the Beacon and your housing manual. The Red Cross representatives are willing and able to answer questions for you. Their names and phone numbers are published in the Beacon.

Hurricane conditions are posted at the gates, and these numbers are explained in your housing manual and in the Beacon. By knowing how to prepare and what to do, you will be ready and calmer.

HURRICANE CONDITIONS – A DESCRIPTION

Condition IV: Automatically set from June 1 to November 30. It means that there is a threat of storm within 72 hours. During this period, you should maintain a stock of emergency supplies, make sure that the outside of your quarters is maintained and that you don't allow lots of things to accumulate in your yard.

Some ideas:

Be creative. Stock paper plates that are festive, and consider party wear if you have children. This can ease some of the stress of getting through a big one. Keep hurricane food stocks in an area where they won't be used up. Use a box in your storage room or a high cabinet.

Plan a three to five day “menu” for your family. Ask yourself what you would want to eat and be able to prepare without a stove or running water. From your menu, make a “shopping list.” Each time you go grocery shopping buy several items from the above list. This way if a storm hits after your regular shopping trip you won’t be without money to buy what is required. Space permitting; keep some items, such as bread and possibly a gallon of milk, in your freezer. These items are subject to delivery disruption if there is a major storm. Keep them on hand and rotate them. As space in the freezer becomes available, store plastic jugs filled with water. This will keep food frozen longer if the power goes out and provide a source of block ice for your refrigerator or cooler.

Condition III: At this point a hurricane is possible within 48 hours. You will be advised to police your yard for loose objects, take down swings, bring in lawn furniture, and take down awnings and antennas. Re- check supplies and buy extra batteries. Don’t put off policing your yard. Maintenance personnel will come around early to pick up trash and yard refuse and take it away. Later they will be busy securing other areas. Make it a habit to keep your yard picked up and to keep things stowed securely. If you are away you won’t get caught and if you are here you’ll have time to better prepare. Do your laundry. Make sure you have enough clean clothes to make it through a week. Keep busy and stay calm.

Condition II: A hurricane is probable within 24 hours. You are officially advised to fill your car with gas and oil, secure garbage cans and containers, and fill the tub and any other receptacles with water. One enterprising person suggests filling a plastic garbage can with water so you will have extra to flush your toilet. Remember that loss of water can be even more difficult than the loss of electricity. Think perishables. According to the Ball “Blue Book,” a fully loaded freezer at 0 degrees F may keep foods frozen for several days while a half load of food may not stay frozen for more than a day. They recommend that you set the freezer control at the lowest setting if a power outage is a possibility. This will minimize spoilage. You can also fill empty space with plastic jugs of water or milk. Plan to use your canned supplies as a last resort. Make an inventory of what you have on hand in the fridge and plan how you can use it up with the least amount of spoilage. Cook while you can. This would be a good time to bake banana bread for breakfast food, or turn hamburger into chili that can be easily reheated. If you’ve been saving a roast in your freezer for an occasion, this is it. Before you are confined, think about those people that may not be ready. Check on your neighbor. This would be a good time to see if newly arrived personnel in guest housing have what they need and know what to expect. If you have extra time or resources, share. Remember that waiting is tough and may not be something that you wish to do alone. If you’ve done everything you can think of, consider a “Hurricane Party.” It may be easier to wait with another family. Time can pass more easily when the adults are talking or playing a game together while the kids are “camping out.”

Condition I: A hurricane is imminent within 12 hours. At this point you are advised to remain inside closed rooms, windows closed until the all clear is sounded. Consider calling family in the states at this time (or earlier). If a storm does hit it could be some time before phone service is restored. Calling family to reassure them that you are ready and prepared can give you support and keep lines free for emergency calls later. Try to maintain a spirit of adventure for your children. This can be a scary time for them. Include them in your preparations and let them know what to expect.

WELCOME ABOARD!

So, welcome aboard! We are thrilled to have you here and we all look forward to getting to know you better. Do not hesitate to ask questions or for help. If you want someone to head out with you the first time you are going somewhere, by all means, ask. Someone is always headed that way. Your tour in Puerto Rico is going to be a great adventure! Buckle up and get ready to get out there, explore new places and experience new things. With an open mind and adventurous spirit, this tour is bound to be your best tour yet!