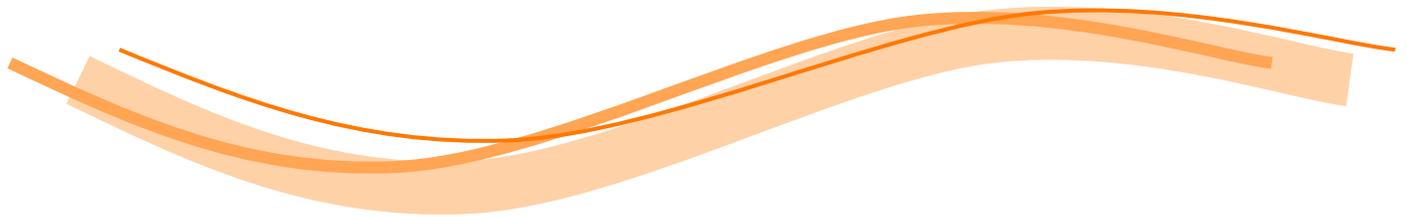




BLUEBAY RESORTS and TRANSAT HOLIDAYS





TRAVEL NOTES SECTIONS	To help you find what you are looking for, these Travel Notes are organized in the following order: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. BlueBay Resorts2. Transat Holidays3. Dominican Republic4. Riviera Maya, Mexico5. Varadero, Cuba
------------------------------	--

BLUEBAY RESORTS	<p>BlueBay Group was formed nearly 40 years ago and has extensive experience in tourism and leisure. BlueBay Hotels and Resorts currently consist of 52 affiliated hotels in 27 destinations. With over 12,800 rooms they take care of several million overnight stays annually! There are 3 distinct BlueBay brands that are available as part of Nolitours and Transat Holidays packages. They offer everything from luxurious resorts with gourmet dining and superb spas to family oriented and affordable beachfront hotels.</p> <p>Blue Diamond by BlueBay</p> <p>Blue Diamond is the BlueBay symbol of distinction. These are world-class five star resorts in lush tropical beach sanctuaries, inspiring peace, intimacy and well-being. The ultimate in luxury comes from a harmonious fusion of nature, Asian healing and attentive, customized service for each guest's personal wants.</p> <p>The Diamond Suites by Blue Bay in the Riviera Maya, Mexico is available from Transat Holidays. It is part of both Transat's Luxury and the R&R Collections.</p> <p>BlueBay Hotels & Resorts</p> <p>BlueBay Hotels & Resorts for 'families' and 'Adults Only' have redefined five and four star all-inclusive resorts with modern and elegantly designed hotels that are set in idyllic, luxury sea-side environments. Plus they feature a wide and varied selection of international restaurants that will delight the most discerning palates.</p> <p>The BlueBay Grand Esmeralda in the Riviera Maya, Mexico and the BlueBay Villas Doradas in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic are available from Nolitours.</p> <p>BelleVue Hotels</p> <p>BelleVue Hotels offer the best value for money. These are comfortable</p>
------------------------	--

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>hotels, fully equipped to provide great service. The resorts are designed to provide families, couples and groups with affordable access to a beach resort vacations where they can escape, relax, indulge and just have fun.</p> <p>The BelleVue Beach Paradise in Cancun, Mexico, the BelleVue Villas Doradas in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, plus the BelleVue Palma Real and the BelleVue Puntarena resorts in Varadero, Cuba are all available with Nolitours.</p>
<p>BlueBay Background</p>	<p>Grupo BlueBay is committed to quality, innovation and people. With extensive experience in tourism and leisure, BlueBay Group currently consists of 52 affiliated hotels in 27 destinations throughout Spain, Portugal, Caribbean, Egypt and United Arab Emirates.</p> <p>With over 12,800 rooms and 4,700 employees spread between Spain and the Caribbean, they book several million overnight stays annually. With four distinct brands (including City Hotels), BlueBay Group covers all segments and respects the environment.</p> <p>They have nearly 25,000 staff worldwide.</p>
<p>Websites</p>	<p>Have fun exploring: Website: www.bluebayresorts.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/bluebayhotelsresorts Pinterest: https://www.pinterest.com/bluebayhotels/ Twitter: https://twitter.com/BlueBayHotels</p>
<p>BlueBay in Riviera Maya, Mexico</p>	<p>The Riviera Maya is known for white sand beaches and warm tranquil waters, protected by one of the world's largest barrier reefs. The destination also offers wonderful snorkeling and scuba diving, plus an 18 hole championship golf course. And the Riviera Maya offers one of the greatest choices of luxury, all-inclusive resorts anywhere in the world.</p> <p>Diamond Suites by BlueBay, Riviera Maya, Mexico</p> <p>Offered exclusively by Transat Holidays The 5 star, Adults Only Diamond Suites by BlueBay is beachfront, approximately 8 km from Playa del Carmen and 45 km from the Cancun airport. This spectacular property is part of Transat's Luxury Collection – receive free access to VIP lounge at airports where available, upgraded flights to Transat Option Plus and private transfers to and from the hotel. It is also part of Transat's R&R Collection. For all the amenities and inclusions at this fabulous resort (including included rounds of golf) http://www.transatholidays.com/en-CA/South/Mexico/Riviera-Maya/Hotels/Diamond-Suites-Riviera-Maya</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>BlueBay Grand Esmeralda, Riviera Maya, Mexico</p> <p>Offered by Nolitours This 4 ½ star luxury beachfront resort is located 50 km from the Cancun airport and approximately 8 km from Playa del Carmen. Nolitours guests enjoy a separate check in, dedicated room location, BBQ night with welcome cocktail and hors d'oevres – and much more. Find out about kids promotions where two children under 13 stay and eat free. http://www.nolitours.com/en-CA/South/Mexico/Riviera-Maya/Hotels/BlueBay-Grand-Esmeralda</p>
<p>BlueBay in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic</p>	<p>Puerto Plata has a renewed buzz with new resorts and ramped up nightlife. Puerto Plata has beautiful beaches, lush green valleys and majestic mountains. It's on the North Coast, so the sea has more waves and the winds mean there is great kite surfing and fabulous windsurfing.</p> <p>BlueBay Villas Doradas, Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic</p> <p>Offered by Transat Holidays and Nolitours; adults only The 4 star BlueBay Villas Doradas hotel in Puerto Plata is a beachfront property, located approximately 15 km from the Puerto Plata airport. Nolitours guests enjoy a separate check in, dedicated room location, BBQ night with welcome cocktail and hors d'oevres – and much more. This hotel is part of Transat Holiday's brand new Collection - Sun Savvy – that offer great value, along with a congenial atmosphere, intimate surroundings, and a family-friendly attitude. http://www.transatholidays.com/en-CA/South/Dominican-Republic/Puerto-Plata/Hotels/BlueBay-Villas-Doradas</p>
<p>BlueBay in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic</p>	<p>This hotel is close to the historic capital city of Santo Domingo - yet it is within walking distance of the beach in Boca Chica. Santo Domingo is a colonial city recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. It is a very walkable grid of 16 short streets with jewels of 16th to early 20th century architecture. Cobblestone lanes and iron street lamps lead to the many small museums, shops, hotels, restaurants and bars that are tucked away on every street.</p> <p>BelleVue Dominican Bay, La Romana, Dominican Republic</p> <p>Offered by Nolitours The 3 star Bellevue Dominican Bay in La Romana is located 200 m from Boca Chica Beach, approximately 15 km from the Santo Domingo airport, 105 km from the La Romana airport and 180 km from the Punta Cana airport. The hotel has a spa and a scuba diving centre on site. The</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>hotel also has 4 restaurants and a disco. http://www.nolitours.com/en-CA/South/Dominican-Republic/Santo-Domingo/Hotels/BelleVue-Dominican-Bay</p>
<p>BlueBay in Varadero, Cuba</p>	<p>Varadero is Cuba's most popular beach destination thanks to its warm waters and superb resorts. Varadero is part of a narrow peninsula that stretches far out into the calm waters of the Atlantic. The 21-kilometre strip of fine white sand is an ideal vacation spot for sun-lovers, water babies and golfers. Plus lively Varadero is one of the best cities in Cuba for nightclubs.</p> <p>BelleVue Palma Real, Varadero, Cuba</p> <p>Offered by Nolitours The 3 ½ star BelleVue Palma Real Hotel in Varadero is within walking distance of downtown Varadero, across the street from the beach, 250 m from the Beach Club and approximately 26 km from the Varadero airport. Find out about a kids promotion where one kid under 13 stays and eats free. http://www.nolitours.com/en-CA/South/Cuba/Varadero/Hotels/BelleVue-Palma-Real</p> <p>BelleVue Puntarena Playa Caleta, Varadero, Cuba</p> <p>Offered by Nolitours The 3 star Bellevue Puntarena Hotel in Varadero is located on beautiful pristine stretch of beach, approximately 2 km from downtown Varadero and 30 km from the Varadero airport. Nolitours guests receive 4 à la carte dinners / week. For kids offers including one child under 13 stays and eats free plus a reduced rate for children 3 – 12 staying in a separate room. http://www.nolitours.com/en-CA/South/Cuba/Varadero/Hotels/BelleVue-Puntarena</p>
<p>TRANSAT AND BLUEBAY</p>	<p>Transat Holidays and Nolitours, together with BlueBay Hotels and Resorts work to bring Canadians a distinctive collection of resorts in the Caribbean and Mexico. For nearly 30 years, Transat has been offering quality vacation packages and creating memorable vacation experiences in a wide variety of destinations. Transat offer complete packages including flights, airport transfers, in-destination representatives, excursions – and, of course, accommodation in all-inclusive resorts.</p> <p>Transat and Nolitours offer six fabulous BlueBay Resorts in Mexico, The Dominican Republic and Cuba.</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>In all the destinations where Transat Holidays and Nolitours offer BlueBay resorts they provide a full range of exciting excursions. There are opportunities to explore the culture and history of the country, discover nature or take part in exciting soft adventure.</p> <p>Ask your travel agent for the Transat Holidays Sun Collection 2015/2016 and Nolitours Sun 2015/2016 brochure and go to www.transatholidays.com and www.Nolitours.com</p>
<p>Transat and BlueBay Added Value</p>	<p>When you book BlueBay Resorts with Transat and Nolitours look for special added value offers. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early booking offers - Up to two children under 13 stays and eats free - Single parent specials
<p>Transat Background</p>	<p>For nearly 30 years, Transat has been offering a large selection of vacation options in Europe, Florida and the South, as well as cruises sailing the seven seas. In addition to hundreds of south hotels available in the form of all-inclusive packages, Transat also offers a wide range of flights, packages, tours and à la carte holidays. Their packages are flexible and tailored to stays of varying lengths.</p> <p>Transat Tours Canada is the leader in Canada's holiday travel industry. The group includes Transat Holidays, Nolitours, Tours Mont Royal, Transat Discoveries, Air Transat and many travel agencies across the country, including Marlin Travel. This integration enables Transat to offer vacationers the best possible service, from the airport all the way to their travel destination, where a team of more than 250 destination representatives offer onsite assistance on a 24/7 basis.</p> <p>Air Transat, the group's airline, offers a vast selection of flights to nearly 60 destinations in 25 countries aboard its fleet of Airbus wide-body jets. Families benefit from numerous privileges, such as a dedicated check-in counter and Kids Club advantages. Upgrade to Club Class for a touch of luxury or choose Option Plus and obtain an additional baggage allowance of 10 kg, among other perks.</p>
<p>What Transat is All About</p>	<p>Transat offers quality vacation packages to a wide variety of destinations. Each season, the company presents a wide selection of quality products, in order to meet the diversified needs of Canadian travellers. In keeping with their mission, their employees aim to exceed vacationers' expectations in order to maintain their position as a market leader. They see their role, ultimately, to turn holiday dreams into reality: making the vacation experience one of the most memorable ever.</p>
<p>Vacation Types</p>	<p>Transat has it all: packages, cruises, hotels, flights, tours, car rentals &</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>train travel. With a choice of over 300 hotels located in more than 50 destinations and a complete line of itineraries offered in partnership with the most prestigious cruise lines, all products offered by Transat are subject to a rigorous standard review.</p>
Transat Collections	<p>Because we all have our own definition of ideal vacation, Transat has designed exclusive Collections to meet the needs of different travelers, including Luxury, Distinction, Family, and Escapade.</p> <p>Distinction Collection Transat's Distinction Collection was especially designed for travellers looking for an enhanced travel experience. Located on stunning beaches, these resorts offer exclusive privileges, added services and superior comfort. You'll notice the difference the minute you arrive. Beautiful surroundings, attentive service, superb facilities and spacious accommodations serve as the backdrop for that special vacation you've always wanted.</p> <p>Before takeoff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid the wait at the airport with Online check-in service at www.airtransat.ca - Upgrade to Option Plus and enjoy even more privileges <p>On the plane</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Italian leather ergonomic seats - Welcome champagne glass - Choice of hot meal and complimentary glass of wine <p>During your stay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-stop transfer from the airport to your resort - Exclusive room location - Concierge service - Minimum of three guaranteed reservations for à la carte restaurants - 24-hour room service
Awards	<p>Agent's Choice Awards: For the fifth consecutive year, Transat Holidays was named Wholesaler of the Year by travel agents. Air Transat was voted -#1 Leisure Airline in North America for three years in a row and 2nd in the World! They were also voted best Family Airline.</p>
Current Brochures	<p>Transat Holidays Sun 2015/16 and Nolitours Sun 2015/16 brochures are available at your local travel agent and cover vacations through to October 2016.</p>
Air Transat's New Comfort Zone	<p>With so many new comfort features, you're on vacation the minute you take your seat. Air Transat has given their fleet a full makeover. For a glimpse of what it looks like: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBse6WOCd70</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



<p>Air Transat Kids Club</p>	<p>To ensure that your family vacations are fun and unforgettable from beginning to end, Air Transat has created Kids Club so that young passengers can really enjoy themselves whilst onboard an Air Transat flight. It is designed to make air travel a fun experience for young travellers (and for their parents!). Even before the doors of the plane are closed following boarding, every child receives a small bag containing all sorts of surprises and games. The more fun they have, the easier the flight. Furthermore, children who are members of Air Transat Kids Club enjoy certain exclusive privileges.</p> <p>Members of the Air Transat Kids Club will enjoy several benefits that the whole family can share. You can check in at a special "Air Transat Kids Club Members" counter. Thanks to these special counters located in major Canadian airports where Air Transat flies, checking-in is quicker than before. At check-in, special tags will be placed on your baggage; as a result, your baggage gets priority treatment.</p>
<p>Transat Compensation Plan</p>	<p>Transat has introduced a new compensation plan for clients affected by an advanced flight schedule change on all South, Florida and Europe flights, packages and cruises. This new policy applies to all bookings made with Transat Holidays, for Air Transat flights.</p> <p>Applicable to schedule changes within 45 days of departure.</p> <p>Schedule change of 3 to 12 hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transat will offer a \$50 voucher for future travel. <p>Schedule change of 12 to 24 hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transat will offer a \$75 voucher for future travel. <p>Schedule change of 24 hours or more and cancelled flights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients can cancel their flight and are entitled to a full refund in the event of a schedule change of 24 hours or more. • Transat will offer a \$50 voucher for future travel to clients who cancel. • Transat will offer a \$100 voucher for future travel to clients who accept the date change. • Clients who choose a product at a lower fare will be refunded the price difference, whereas clients who select a product at a higher fare will be required to pay the balance. <p>Schedule change of 3 hours or less</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No compensation will be offered to clients experiencing a schedule change that is delayed or advanced by 3 hours or less.
<p>Transat Club Class</p>	<p>Enjoy exclusive privileges such as complimentary seat selection, wider, more comfortable leather seats, a choice of gourmet meals and fine wines, priority check-in, baggage service and boarding.</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>Club Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated Club attendants • Attentive, personalized service • Exclusive, spacious Club cabin <p>Drinks & Snacks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome cocktails • Complimentary non-alcoholic drinks, snacks and bar service <p>Club Privileges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased baggage allowance • 40 kg checked/15 kg carry-on • Exclusive, rapid check-in counter in most airports • Priority boarding • Practical travel items (on Europe flights) • Free headsets • Canadian newspapers <p>Comfort & Refinement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider, more comfortable leather seats • More leg room • Complimentary Seat Selection: call 1-877-872-6728 • Choice of gourmet meals • Choice of wine and more
<p>Option Plus</p>	<p>This Economy class option includes many priority privileges and services including priority check-in, priority baggage handling, an extra 10kg baggage allowance and even champagne. Here's what you get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance seat selection on roundtrip flights • Priority check-in at a dedicated counter • Priority baggage handling • Priority boarding • Complete Air Transat travel kit on flights to European destinations • Snacks from the On Board Bistro selection • Alcoholic beverages during drinks service 200ml bottle of champagne (Sun and Europe) • Supplementary baggage allowance up to 10 kg per flight segment • Wine or beer with the meal • Headsets <p>The cost is \$79-\$119 for southbound destinations and \$99-\$209 for European destinations as at November 2015.</p>
<p>Option Flex</p>	<p>Life doesn't always go exactly according to plan. When you book your dream vacation, you want to make sure you enjoy the ultimate level of flexibility should something unexpected happen.</p> <p>Option Flex with Transat gives you just that.</p> <p>Option Flex lets you:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - change your departure date, destination or hotel, up to 3 hours before departure

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - transfer your vacation package to a friend or family member, up to 7 days before departure - cancel your trip and get a full refund - and you won't be charged any additional fuel or currency surcharges once you've booked. <p>Benefit from these advantages for only \$49 + taxes at time of booking.</p>
<p>Transat and Sustainable Tourism</p>	<p>Transat recognizes the prime importance of the environment, host communities, cultural diversity, and their relationships with their employees, customers and partners. Tourism has become one of the world's leading industries. Society and communities reap the benefits, and, each year, hundreds of millions of travellers discover new countries and cultures. Transat is firmly committed to the responsible development of the tourism industry, and has adopted the following definition of sustainable tourism:</p> <p><i>"Sustainable tourism entails respect for nature, as well as for host communities and their values; it combines positive socio-economic benefits for local populations with an enriching experience for travellers."</i></p> <p>The issue of the environment, as far as Transat's own facilities are concerned, is a clear and basic target. Their environment committees have implemented concrete initiatives with regard to recycling, conservation of resources, the disposal of obsolete electronic equipment, and raising employee awareness.</p> <p>Air Transat has begun developing an environmental management system that could lead to an ISO 14001 certification in the future. To find out more, consult the Transat and the Environment sections at their website:</p> <p>http://www.airtransat.ca/en/Info/the-environment-its-everyones-business.aspx?ExitID=69&ContentType=voyageur</p> <p>Eco-responsible certified hotels</p> <p>Transat urges its hotelier partners to excel in social and environmental responsibility, and formally recognizes the efforts of accommodations that commit to certification in this area. Certified establishments must maintain performance levels to continue using such labels. The indicators used vary depending on the certification scheme, but many certification organizations have begun aligning their benchmarks with the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria.</p> <p>To help you make an informed choice when you take your next vacation, Transat list six certifications for hotels and beaches. You can also find certified hotels by searching by destination.</p> <p>Certifications for hotels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biosphere Responsible Tourism Green Globe Green Key

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	ISO 14001 Travelife Certification for beaches Blue Flag
Gift Certificates	Here's your chance to make a loved one's dream come true. With Transat gift certificates you can offer the beauty, excitement, and wonders of the world: the South with its heavenly beaches and endless sunshine, or just a rental car. Transat gift certificates are valid on all Air Transat, Nolitours, or Transat Holidays products in their brochures. They can be redeemed at a travel agent's office at the time of reservation. To order your gift certificates call 1-800-322-6649.
Groups	Group rates are available – as few as 10 adults make up a group. Talk to your travel agent to check the current details of Transat's group deals.
Hurricane Policy	Nolitours and Transat Holidays provide you with true peace of mind. Vacationers can travel secure in the knowledge that you will be protected should a hurricane affect your destination city in Florida, Mexico, the Caribbean or Central America. This Nolitours/Transat Holidays policy covers reservations for departures between June 1 and November 30 each year and is likely to be renewed in 2016 – check the website. If the conditions stipulated in the policy are met, you may choose one of these four options: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travel at a later date 2. Travel to another destination city 3. Travel to the booked destination city 4. Cancel with a full refund
Transat Special Deals with BlueBay	Transat and Nolitours currently have some special deals with BlueBay Resorts this winter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early booking offers - Up to two children under 13 stays and eats free - Single parent specials - Check out their website at www.TransatHolidays.com for latest deals.
Websites & Social Media	Websites: www.TransatHolidays.com www.Nolitours.com Stay in touch with Transat and Nolitours at their two Facebook sites: http://www.facebook.com/airtransat http://www.facebook.com/nolitours Follow Nolitours on Twitter: https://twitter.com/search?q=Nolitours

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	The Dominican Republic is a great destination with a number of different resorts for you to choose between. For relaxing and “fun in the sun” - Punta Cana has crystal seas, vast
---------------------------	---

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>stretches of white sands and first class golf. Most travelers come to this region because its beaches are among the most beautiful in the country, if not the entire Caribbean. The big hotel complexes in Playa Macao, Playa Bavaro and Punta Cana all organize activities. Their prime locations mean that guests can enjoy scuba diving, snorkelling, sailing, windsurfing, horseback riding and many other sports, including tennis. There are two golf courses in the region.</p> <p>Puerto Plata has a renewed buzz with new resorts, ramped up nightlife and fabulous windsurfing and water sports. The Dominican Republic and Nolitours have joined forces to create the It Zone in Puerto Plata. It is the place to be this year! Designed for people who expect more than just sun and sand on their vacation, it's a destination for people who want to have fun! Beyond the fabulous beaches and great resorts, you'll be able to immerse yourself in the local culture, get into the Dominican beat and enjoy a host of activities open to everyone. It's a great place to kick back and meet new people!</p> <p>Blend the Caribbean with art and culture in Romana. Altos de Chavón, located to the east of La Romana, is a surprisingly beautiful reconstruction of a late 14th century Italian village. It was built by ambitious entrepreneurs to create a major tourist attraction in the region. This replica is faithful in many ways to the original village, due to its incredible attention to detail.</p> <p>The historic, cosmopolitan capital of Santo Domingo is the oldest city in the Americas. It mixes the stately grandeur of colonial architecture with glamorous casinos and nightclubs. A stroll through the streets is pleasant and requires little effort, the buildings all being set in a relatively limited perimeter. Visit the magnificent Catedral Santa María de la Encarnación, constructed during the 1540s, the Alcazar of Columbus and many other beautiful buildings in the old city.</p> <p>Transat Holidays and sister company Nolitours have weekly flights and many excursions to help you discover The Dominican Republic and its culture. They also feature Be Live Hotels throughout The Dominican Republic.</p> <p>Explore the website at: www.godominicanrepublic.com</p>
<p>Choosing Between the Different Destinations Within Dominican Republic</p>	<p>So here's your choice: Puerto Plata lies on the more verdant, and rainier, north shore of the island; Punta Cana lies on the dustier, somewhat drier southeastern tip. Instead of the tranquil Caribbean Sea, the beaches of Puerto Plata face the Atlantic Ocean, which means that waters can be more turbulent, especially in the winter months. Rainfall</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>in Puerto Plata, when it comes, arrives suddenly, but doesn't last long. And it keeps the landscape green. Puerto Plata's beaches aren't as wide as some of those in Punta Cana, but recent improvement of the beaches in Puerto Plata has done a lot to even out the equation. However the beaches of Punta Cana truly deserve their worldwide reputation.</p> <p>Staff at hotels in Puerto Plata tend to have been born and raised within the region, and they usually retain cultural links to the region and to their families. Staff within hotels in Punta Cana tend to have moved recently from other parts of the island, and some of them seem a little uprooted. Puerto Plata maintains an urbanized feel, and an economy based on something in addition to tourism, whereas newer communities like Punta Cana and Samana are basically modern communities carved from what was wilderness or scrubland, with none of the feelings of urban life that are so deeply engrained within the Dominican consciousness.</p> <p>Each region has advantages and it's great to have the choice of different styles of vacation.</p>
Location	<p>In the heart of the Caribbean archipelago - nestled amid Cuba, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico - the island of Hispaniola (Little Spain) is divided between Haiti, on the westernmost third of the island, and the Dominican Republic, which has a lush landmass about the size of Vermont and New Hampshire combined. In the Dominican interior, the fertile Valley of Cibao (rich sugar-cane country) ends its upward sweep at Pico Duarte, the highest mountain peak in the West Indies, which soars to 3,125m (10,250 ft.).</p> <p>Much of what Columbus first sighted still remains in a natural, unspoiled condition. One-third of the Dominican Republic's 1,401km coastline is devoted to beaches of which the most celebrated are those around Punta Cana, which lies in the east of the country.</p>
Geography	<p>The mountains of the Dominican Republic divide the country into northern, central, and southwestern regions. The northern region includes the Cordillera Septentrional (northern mountain range), the Cibao Valley, which is the country's major agricultural area; and the tropical Samaná Peninsula with its coconut plantations and bay, where humpback whales breed.</p> <p>The central region is dominated by the Cordillera Central (central range) which ends at the Caribbean Sea. The highest point in the Caribbean is Pico Duarte, which reaches an elevation of over 10,414 feet (3,175 meters) and has alpine forests near the summit. The Caribbean coastal plain includes a series of limestone terraces that gradually rise to a height of about 328 feet (100 meters) and has sugarcane plantations. The southwestern region lies south of the Valle de San Juan and encompasses the Sierra de Neiba. Much of the region is a desert and it</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>includes Lake Enriquillo, the island's largest lake. Lake Enriquillo is a saltwater lake that lies 150 feet (46 meters) below sea level and is inhabited by unique fauna, including crocodiles, huge iguanas, and flamingos.</p> <p>Pico Duarte was not climbed until 1944; it's now an exciting and energetic 3 day hike available as a guided excursion.</p>
Name	Hispaniola was named "Little Spain" by Columbus
Population	Approximately 9.2 million
Language	The official language is Spanish; many people also speak some English.
Currency	The Dominican monetary unit is the peso (RD\$), made up of 100 centavos. Coin denominations are 1, 5, 10, 25, and 50 centavos, 1 peso, and 5 pesos. Bill denominations are RD\$5, RD\$10, RD\$20, RD\$50, RD\$100, RD\$500, RD\$1,000, and RD\$2,000. Price quotations in this section sometimes appear in U.S. and sometimes in Dominican currency, depending on the policy of the establishment. Currently, 34 pesos = Cdn \$ at November 2015
Tiping	Most restaurants and hotels add a 10% service charge to your check. Most people usually add 5% to 10% more, especially if the service has been good.
Government	Representative democracy with Presidents elected for a 4 year term Although the DR has long been viewed primarily as an exporter of sugar, coffee, and tobacco, in recent years the service sector has overtaken agriculture as the economy's largest employer due to growth in tourism
Documentation	Canadians traveling to the Dominican Republic require a valid Canadian passport . You will also require tourist card which will be provided on the aircraft during your southbound flight. Minors (under the age of 18) being nationals of Canada in addition to the above documentation requirements must: if traveling as an unaccompanied minor or with an adult other than a parent or legal guardian must hold a permit issued by the Consulate of Dominican Republic in Canada or the Director General's Office of Immigration in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic to leave the country of Dominican Republic. Baptismal Certificates are not acceptable as a birth certificate, nor are birth certificates issued in Quebec prior to January 1, 1994. Contact the Consulate of Dominican Republic for more information.
Time zone	One hour ahead of EST
Health	Stick to bottled water outside of the main resorts. Consult your doctor about Malaria and Dengue Fever – very unlikely threat to tourists but you may want to additionally protect yourself anyway.
Safety tips	Safety is still a concern in the Dominican Republic, but it shouldn't dissuade you from planning a vacation here. Crime consists primarily of

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	theft, robberies, and muggings, and most of it is limited to certain areas of Santo Domingo and the night hours. There is a low incidence of violent crime against tourists, however. Follow some simple common-sense rules, and you'll be fine.
--	--

CLIMATE	
General climate	The average temperature is 25°C. August is the warmest month, and January the coolest month, although even then it's warm enough to swim.
Today's weather	27 degrees Centigrade and mostly sunny for 14 th November 2015
Best time to visit	The DR is a year-round destination, but with special attraction to Canadians during the cold winter months! Hurricane season is generally September and October, but you would be very unlucky indeed to experience one of these storms.

GETTING THERE	
Flying time	It's just over a 4 hour flight from Toronto or Montreal with Air Transat. Most tourists will only need to pay for a tourist card that is issued upon arrival at the airport. The cost for the tourist card is US\$10 and it will be valid for 30 days. The exit tax is US\$20. However, most of the time this is already included in the airline ticket cost. (as at Nov 2015)
Punta Cana	<p>On the easternmost tip of the island is Punta Cana, site of several major vacation developments with more scheduled to arrive in the near future. Known for its spectacular beaches and clear waters, Punta Cana is an escapist's dream. Its 32km of white sands, set against a backdrop of swaying palm trees, are unrivaled in the Caribbean, and that's the chief and perhaps only reason to come here.</p> <p>Many Europeans (especially Spaniards) rushed to take advantage of Punta Cana's desirable climate - within one of the most arid landscapes in the Caribbean; it rarely rains during daylight hours. Capitalizing on cheap land and the virtually insatiable desire of Europeans for sunny holidays during the depths of winter, a half-dozen European hotel chains participated in something akin to a land rush, acquiring large tracts of sugar-cane plantations and pastureland. Today, at least a dozen mega-hotels, most with no fewer than 500 rooms, some with even more, attract a clientele that's about 70% European or Latin American. Some of them have some of the most lavish beach and pool facilities in the Caribbean, spectacular gardens, and relatively new concepts in architecture (focusing on postmodern interplays between indoor and outdoor spaces).</p> <p>If you choose to vacation in Punta Cana, you won't be alone, as increasing numbers of Latino celebrities are making inroads, usually renting private villas within private compounds. Julio Iglesias and celebrity designer Oscar de la Renta both spend time here.</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



<p>Santo Domingo</p>	<p>Santo Domingo is one of the Caribbean's most vibrant cities, with a 12-block Colonial Zone to rival that of Old San Juan in Puerto Rico. Come here to walk in the footsteps of Cortés, Ponce de León, and, of course, Columbus himself. Allow at least a day to capture some of the highlights of the old city such as its Alcazar and its Catedral Santa Maria la Menor.</p> <p>Bartholomeo Columbus, brother of Christopher, founded the city of New Isabella (later renamed Santo Domingo) on the southeastern Caribbean coast in 1496. It's the oldest city in the New World and the capital of the Dominican Republic. Santo Domingo has had a long, sometimes glorious, more often sad, history. At the peak of its power, Diego de Velázquez sailed from here to settle Cuba, Ponce de León went forth to conquer and settle Puerto Rico and Florida, and Cortés set out for Mexico. The city today still reflects its long history - French, Haitian, and especially Spanish.</p>																											
<p>Distances</p>	<p>From Santo Domingo to:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Barahona</td> <td>3 hrs.</td> <td>124 miles (200 km)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Boca Chica</td> <td>30 mins.</td> <td>22 miles (35 km)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jarabacoa</td> <td>1 hr. 30 mins.</td> <td>97 miles (155 km)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Juan Dolio</td> <td>50 mins.</td> <td>31 miles (50 km)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>La Romana</td> <td>1 hr. 30 mins.</td> <td>70 miles (113 km)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Puerto Plata</td> <td>3 hrs.</td> <td>134 miles (215 km)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Punta Cana</td> <td>2 hrs. 30 mins.</td> <td>120 miles (194 km)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Samaná</td> <td>2 hrs. 30 mins.</td> <td>109 miles (176 km)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Santiago</td> <td>1 hr. 30 mins.</td> <td>96 miles (155 km)</td> </tr> </table>	Barahona	3 hrs.	124 miles (200 km)	Boca Chica	30 mins.	22 miles (35 km)	Jarabacoa	1 hr. 30 mins.	97 miles (155 km)	Juan Dolio	50 mins.	31 miles (50 km)	La Romana	1 hr. 30 mins.	70 miles (113 km)	Puerto Plata	3 hrs.	134 miles (215 km)	Punta Cana	2 hrs. 30 mins.	120 miles (194 km)	Samaná	2 hrs. 30 mins.	109 miles (176 km)	Santiago	1 hr. 30 mins.	96 miles (155 km)
Barahona	3 hrs.	124 miles (200 km)																										
Boca Chica	30 mins.	22 miles (35 km)																										
Jarabacoa	1 hr. 30 mins.	97 miles (155 km)																										
Juan Dolio	50 mins.	31 miles (50 km)																										
La Romana	1 hr. 30 mins.	70 miles (113 km)																										
Puerto Plata	3 hrs.	134 miles (215 km)																										
Punta Cana	2 hrs. 30 mins.	120 miles (194 km)																										
Samaná	2 hrs. 30 mins.	109 miles (176 km)																										
Santiago	1 hr. 30 mins.	96 miles (155 km)																										
<p>Ferries</p>	<p>Shuttle boats to Cayo Levantado from Samana Also ferry to Sabana de la Mar across Samana Bay</p>																											
<p>Trains</p>	<p>There is no passenger train service in the DR</p>																											
<p>Car Rental</p>	<p>The best way to see the Dominican Republic is to drive. Motorists drive on the right here. Although major highways are relatively smooth, the country's secondary roads, especially those in the east, are riddled with potholes and ruts. Roads also tend to be badly lit and poorly marked in both the city and the countryside. Drive carefully and give yourself plenty of time when traveling between island destinations.</p> <p>For reservations and more information, call the rental companies at least a week before your departure: Avis (tel. 800/331-1212 in the U.S. and Canada, or 809/535-7191; www.avis.com), Budget (tel. 800/527-0700 in the U.S. and Canada, or 809/549-0351; www.budget.com), and Hertz (tel. 800/654-3131 in the U.S. and Canada, or 809/221-5333; www.hertz.com) all operate in the Dominican Republic. All three have offices at the Santo Domingo and Puerto Plata airports, as well as in downtown Santo Domingo. Avis and Hertz also have offices in La Romana and in Punta Cana.</p>																											
<p>Buses</p>	<p>Públicos are unmetered multipassenger taxis that travel along main</p>																											

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>thoroughfares, stopping often to pick up people waving from the side of the street. A público is marked by a white seal on the front door. You must tell the driver your destination when you're picked up to make sure the público is going there. A ride is usually RD\$5 (15¢). The minimum fare is RD\$3 (10¢).</p> <p>Public buses, often in the form of minivans or panel trucks, are called guaguas (pronounced gwa-gwas). For about the same price, they provide the same service as públicos, but they're generally more crowded. Larger buses provide service outside the towns.</p>
--	---

<p>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</p>	<p>Transat Holidays and Nolitours feature the widest range of hotels and resorts in the DR, from value 3 star to all-singing, all-dancing 5 star resorts. Be Live Resorts have four recommended resorts available with Transat – see separate section below.</p>
-----------------------------------	--

<p>LIFESTYLES</p> <p>Kids</p>	<p>Acuario Nacional, Santo Domingo Phone: (809) 766-1709 Open from Tuesday to Sunday from 9:30am to 5:30 pm. Bordering the Caribbean Sea, the national aquarium offers visitors a glimpse of the Caribbean's diverse, colorful sea life. The aquarium's Plexiglas tunnel surrounds spectators with water, sharks, rays and conger eels. A variety of colorful fish swim throughout the tunnel, while exhibits explain different types of marine environments.</p> <p>Manati Park, Bavaro, Punta Cana Phone: (809) 221-9444 Website: www.manatipark.com Manati Theme Park focuses on nature, animals and the history of the Dominican Republic. Located in Bavaro-Punta Cana, the park is centered on an incredible landscape of magnificent gardens abundant with orchids and tropical plants. This park is a huge hit with kids as it encourages them, with the assistance of professionals, to hold non-poisonous snakes and play in a pool with dolphins.</p> <p>Parque Zoológico Nacional, Santo Domingo Phone: (809) 562-3149. http://www.zoodom.gov.do Open Tuesday to Sunday, 9am to 5pm Located north of Santo Domingo, Parque Zoológico is one of the largest zoos in Latin America. The 320-acre park provides guests with the opportunity to see intriguing animals like tigers, chimps and hyenas, while also offering glimpses of crocodiles, flamingos and nocturnal anteaters. Whether children are discovering creatures in the large landscaped grounds or going for a ride on the shuttle train, they're sure</p>
---	--

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	to enjoy their visit to Santo Domingo's National Zoo.
Teens	<p>Islabon Jungle River Tour Phone: (809) 248-2818 Located about three miles east of Cabarete, the Islabon Jungle River Tour allows kids to explore the Islabon river area by boat and walk through jungle trails to a mini zoo that includes iguanas, snakes, turtles, ravens and North American crocodiles. The tour includes an informative chat about the nature found in the area.</p> <p>Monster Truck Safari Phone: (809) 244-4060 This full-day adventure tour allows participants to experience the diversity and beauty of the Dominican countryside in a fun, comfortable and safe environment. Holding approximately (28 people for small jeeps, and 32 for large), the large eight-wheel drive safari jeeps are driven by professionals on a variety of terrain. Participants are seated up high to ensure an exceptional view of the countryside and will be covered in case of rain. Various stops throughout the day offer a glimpse of true Dominican culture and life.</p>
Romance	Lush tropical forests, rolling mountains and long deserted beaches – perfect!
Honeymoons & Weddings	This is a very popular wedding and honeymoon destination for Canadians and most of the larger resorts have dedicated staff available to help you plan for this very special event.
Zoomers	Endless beaches, excellent resorts and accessible tours to the countryside make this an excellent choice for the older vacationer.
UNIQUES	<p>Usually starting in January and lasting until late March, Samana's humpback whales return every year to these tropical waters. Tours originate from Samana and Las Galeras (and several bayside locations in between) and from Las Terrenas.</p> <p>Whale-watching as a local tourist industry was begun in the 1980s by Kim Beddall, then an itinerant scuba instructor with no formal training as a marine biologist – although she's since been instrumental in the implementation of a code of conduct for whale-watch boats. Beddall still runs excellent whale boat tours through her Whale Samaná/Victoria Marine operation, Malecón (US\$45) that allow you to get an up-close look at the humpbacks; sitings are guaranteed in season</p>
Surprising	Larimar: is a rare blue variety of pectolite found only in the Dominican Republic. Its coloration varies from white, light-blue, green-blue to deep blue. In 1916 Father Miguel Domingo Fuertes Loren found the first gems but it wasn't until 1974, that Miguel Méndez and Peace Corps volunteer

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>Norman Rilling rediscovered Larimar on a beach at the foot of the Bahoruco Range, the coastal province of Barahona in southwest DR.</p> <p>There is a Larimar Museum in Santo Domingo: Isabel La Catolica Street no.54, Zona Zolonial-Santo Domingo. Tel: 809-682-3309 Hours: 9:00AM - 6:00PM. http://www.larimarmuseum.com</p>
<p>History</p>	<p>For at least 5,000 years before Christopher Columbus discovered America for the Europeans the island was inhabited by Amer-Indians. Anthropologists have traced multiple waves of indigenous immigration from two principle places. Some of the early Amer-Indians came from Central America (probably Yucatan and/or Belize) and some came from South America, descendants of the Arawakan Indians in Amazonia, many of whom passed through the Orinocco Valley in Venezuela. It is from the blending of these waves of indigenous immigrants that the Taíno Indians, the people who welcomed Columbus on his arrival, are believed to have originated.</p> <p>The Dominican Republic was discovered on December 5, 1492, by Christopher Columbus during his first voyage to the New World. At that time the island of Hispaniola (as Columbus named it) was called "Quisqueya" by the Taino Indians who occupied the land. With a population estimated around 600,000, the Tainos (meaning "the good") were peaceful and hospitable to Columbus and his crew of Spaniards. Columbus himself grew a particular fondness for Hispaniola, describing it in his journal as "a beautiful island paradise with high forested mountains and large river valleys."</p> <p>Columbus' admiration for Hispaniola coupled with his crew's discovery of gold deposits in the island's rivers led to the establishment of European settlements, the first of which was founded in 1493 in La Isabela. With the presence of new settlements, the Taino Indians were put into slavery and over the next 25 year, were eventually wiped out. Simultaneously, the settlers began bringing African slaves to the island to ensure adequate labor for their plantations.</p> <p>Columbus' brother, Bartholomew, was appointed governor of Hispaniola and in 1496 he founded the city of Santo Domingo. The capital city quickly became the representative seat of the Spanish royal court and therefore, a city of power and much influence. However, by 1515 the Spaniards realized the gold deposits of Hispaniola had significantly dwindled. Around this time Herman Cortes discovered silver deposits in Mexico. Upon hearing this news, most Spanish residents of Santo Domingo left for Mexico, leaving only a few thousand settlers behind. Because of the predominance of livestock, initially introduced by</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



Columbus, these settlers sustained themselves by providing food and leather to Spanish ships passing Hispaniola on their way to the richer colonies on the American mainland. It is during this period of time that the pirates of the Caribbean made history.

The island of Hispaniola remained under Spanish control until 1697 when the western third of the island became a French possession. (In 1804, the western part of the island became the Republic of Haiti.) This area, which the French called "Saint Domingue" became the richest colony in the world thanks to large sugar plantations which were worked by hundreds of thousands of slaves imported from Africa. In 1791 a slave revolt broke out in Saint Domingue. For fear of losing their colony to the slaves, the French abolished slavery in 1794. With calm in Saint Domingue, the French were able to focus on overwhelming the Spanish on the island's eastern side, who later surrendered power.

In 1809 the eastern side of the island returned to Spanish rule. In 1821 the Spanish settlers declared an independent state but just weeks later, Haitian forces invaded the eastern portion of the island and incorporated Santo Domingo. For the next 22 years the entire island came under Haitian control. However, fueled by their loss of political and economic control, the former Spanish ruling class developed an underground resistance group led by Juan Pablo Duarte called "La Trinitaria." After several attacks by La Trinitaria on the Haitian army, the Haitians retreated. On February 27, 1844, the eastern side of the island declared independence and gave their land the name "Dominican Republic." The 70 years that followed were characterized by political unrest and civil war, mainly due to fights for leadership of the government by Dominican strongmen. Disputes continued with Haiti and power returned to the Spanish for a short period of time (Restoration Day celebrates the day that a national war of "restoration" began, re-establishing the Dominican Republic's independence by 1865). Turmoil in the early 1900's led the United States to intervene. In 1916 U.S. troops occupied the country and stayed until 1924 when a democratically elected Dominican government was put into place. However, the head of the army that was put into place during the American occupation, Raphael Leonidas Trujillo, used his power to block government reform and shortly thereafter, took total control of power in the form of a repressive dictatorship. His rule lasted until 1961 when his motorcade was ambushed and he was killed. (The anniversary of his death is a public holiday in the Dominican Republic.)

Following Trujillo's death, political unrest again prevailed. The Dominican Republic went through a series of leaders until 1965 when Lyndon B.

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>Johnson ordered the U.S. marines to again occupy the country. A rigged election in 1966 put Dr. Joaquin Balaguer, a member of the Partido Reformista Social Cristiano (PRSC), in power for a reign that lasted until 1978 when Dominicans elected Antonio Guzman, also of the PRD. Guzman died in 1982 at which time Dominicans elected another member of the D.R.P. In 1986 Balaguer was again elected, this time legitimately, and remained president until 1996 when President Leonel Fernandez (of the Party of the Dominican Liberation or PLD.) was elected. He served for four years and was replaced by Hipolito Mejia in 2000. Today's Leonel Fernandez is again president.</p>
<p>Books</p>	<p>The go to guide book for the Dom Rep is definitely the Lonely Planet guide: http://shop.lonelyplanet.com/caribbean/dominican-republic-travel-guide-6/ An Adventure Guide to the Dominican Republic by Harry Pariser See also an article I have written for one of the airline in-flight magazines: http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/travelarticles/TA_Dominican.pdf</p>
<p>1000 Places to see before you die</p>	<p>Casa de Campo near La Romana – one of the world's best golf and sporting destinations</p>
<p>UNESCO World Heritage Site</p>	<p>Santo Domingo After Christopher Columbus's arrival on the island in 1492, Santo Domingo became the site of the first cathedral, hospital, customs house and university in the Americas. This colonial town, founded in 1498, was laid out on a grid pattern that became the model for almost all town planners in the New World.</p>
<p>Must See</p>	<p>Altos de Chavon, is an architectural wonder, a 16th century replica of a Mediterranean village perched high above the Chavón River, near Casa de Campo. The village was designed by Dominican architect Jose Antonio Caro, and created by Italian master designer and cinematographer Roberto Coppa. Dominican artisans handcrafted the stone pathways, decorative ironwork, furniture and enchanting buildings, reviving almost forgotten crafts of metal work and stone carving. Under Coppa's direction, each stone was hand cut, each wooden door frame was handcrafted and each wrought-iron detail hand-forged. Construction of the village began in 1976 and the village was inaugurated in 1982 with the concert of Frank Sinatra at the amphitheatre. Altos de Chavon was built as a centre of culture for the Dominican people. Dominican residents, tourists and working artists, flock to this magically inspirational locale. Stroll along cobblestone streets and enjoy the architectural grandeur of days gone by as you take in the detailed, amazing quality craftsmanship of yesteryear. Quaint shops, boutiques, art galleries, fine restaurants and</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>an archeological museum are just a sampling of the world that awaits atop the picturesque cliffs of Casa de Campo. Today, this amazing village is the site of many fine restaurants, boutiques, museums and the Altos de Chavon School of Design affiliated with Parson's School of Design in New York.</p>
<p>SPORTS ACTIVITIES - Baseball</p>	<p>Back in 1866, American sailors stationed on the island of Cuba taught natives the rules of the game of baseball. Following the Ten Years' War (also known as the Big War) in Cuba, baseball migrated to the Dominican Republic along with Cubans who were fleeing their country. Quickly nicknamed "beisbol" by the Dominican people, the sport was rapidly learned and became a passion. Today, traveling from one side of the country to the other presents national scores of baseball fields and stadiums, attesting to the Dominicans' love for the game.</p> <p>The sport first turned competitive in the 1920s when baseball games began being played against neighboring countries. This competitiveness encouraged the establishment of the Dominican Baseball League. Four baseball teams were formed: Tigres del Licey and Leones del Escogido, both from Santo Domingo, Estrellas Orientales of San Pedro and the Las Aguilos Cibaeñas in Santiago. The popularity of professional baseball in the Dominican Republic ascended throughout the following years, but came to a halt in 1937 due to a financial downturn in the country. Meanwhile, amateur baseball evolved with Dominican teams competing with those from the U.S. and other Caribbean countries. The hiatus finally ended in 1951 with the return of professional baseball. Dominicans' idea of hosting amateur baseball in the summer and professional baseball during the winter months was generated, therefore giving the Caribbean the "home of winter baseball" title.</p> <p>Today there are two additional teams in the country's professional baseball league: the Azucareros del Este from La Romana and the Gigantes del Cibao. Each season extends from the end of October through February, with the winner advancing to the Caribbean Series. At the series, the winning team of the Dominican Republic league plays against the champions of the Mexican, Venezuelan and Puerto Rican leagues.</p> <p>The baseball season is October to February each year.</p>
<p>Golf</p>	<p>Punta Cana has 12 professional golf courses that were built in 1991, from designers such as Jack Nicklaus, P.B. Dye, Tom Fazio, Nick Faldo and Nick Price. Punta Espada, along with Teeth of the Dog in Casa de Campo figure among the very first 50 best golf courses in the world. The Bávaro Golf Course, at Barcelo Bávaro Beach, Golf & Casino Resort, Bávaro Beach (tel. 809/686-5797), is the best golf course on this</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>end of the island, and bears the honor of being the golf course whose allure helped open the eastern DR to the tourist boom. Open daily 7am to 5pm.</p> <p>Punta Cana Golf Club. Fronting the sea, it was designed by P. B. Dye of the famous golfing family. Fourteen of its holes open onto panoramic views of the Caribbean Sea, and four play along the ocean itself.</p>
Fishing	<p>Sea fishing is great in all the resorts for Marlin, sailfish, benito, tarpon, dorado, snook. You can arrange freshwater river-fishing trips through Casa de Campo in the south. Some of the biggest snook ever recorded have been caught around here.</p>
Horse riding	<p>Within Punta Cana, the guest services staff at your hotel can arrange horseback riding for you, but if they can't, consider an equestrian jaunt at the region's biggest stables. These are headquartered at Rancho RN-23, Arena Gorda (tel. 809/747-7356 or 7538). It supervises as many as 125 horses that are stabled at three separate "ranches," each within a reasonable distance of one another. You'll be guided on equestrian tours through groves of coconut palms near the beach and, in most cases, onto the beach itself. To reach it, you'll follow some clearly marked signs 3km through some of the wildest terrain left in Punta Cana, down winding sandy paths to a series of palm groves, to the site of these stables.</p>
Hiking	<p>In the National Park and along the endless beaches the walks are superb.</p> <p>For a special hike, there's a three day guided hike up Pico Duarte, the highest mountain in the Caribbean.</p> <p>There is a well-maintained system of trails leading up to the summit, with trailheads at several locations. The easiest access is from the town of La Ciénega, near Jarabacoa. The trail is 23.1 km to the summit, with a total elevation change of 1,977 meters, and a shelter 5 km away from the summit. Tourist-friendly travel agencies in the town of Jarabacoa can help arrange trips from this trailhead, using mules in their employ to help lug food, sleeping bags and supplies for the overnight stay in the shelter. A few fresh water springs labeled "Potable" are along the trail, but water filters or purifying tablets are recommended. The vast majority of hikers travel by this route.</p> <p>For the more adventurous, there is another trailhead northwest of the town of San Juan de la Maguana. These four-day (three night) trips that end at the Ciénega trailhead (or, for an extra day of hiking, back at the starting location) are run entirely by local Dominicans who cook the food you provide and help you camp along the way. Each night is spent in well maintained shelters, and due to the distance traveled, riding by mule-back is strongly encouraged. Far off the beaten path, it is highly unlikely that there will be anyone else on the trail until you merge with the trail from La Ciénega.</p> <p>According to Dominican Park Service representatives in La Cienega,</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	while approximately 1,000 hikers visit Pico Duarte during each of the months of December and January, only about 10 to 15 people a day hike the mountain during off-season months.
Cycling	The coast road is good biking terrain, but the roads are pot-holed and this is not ideal biking country!
Diving	There are diving opportunities with fully qualified operations in all the major resort areas of the country.

CULTURE	
Arts	Dominican paintings are primitive, colourful and affordable.
Music	<p>Passing through the streets of the Dominican Republic visitors are sure to notice the handmade posters that hang from telephone poles promoting an upcoming merengue or bachata night at a nearby venue. Continue walking and it doesn't take long to realize that music acts as the soundtrack of the country and its people, often heard blaring from vehicles, stores, restaurants and houses. After sunset, the pulsing beats fill the air with life and draw locals and tourists alike toward the crowded dance floors of the world's hottest night clubs. A way of life on the island, Dominicans view dancing as an art and take pride in sharing their native movements with others. Salsa, Latin jazz and other types of dance music can be heard in the country, but are not as popular as their beloved merengue and bachata counterparts.</p> <p>Merengue The country's national dance, traditional merengue groups are comprised of a three-piece band including a melodeon (accordion-like instrument), a guira (a scraped percussion piece) and a tambora (double-headed drum); however, it has expanded to incorporate other instruments such as the saxophone, trumpets, violin, flute and piano. Its tempo is characterized by an aggressive beat, requiring its dancers to swing their hips in rapid, fluid motions and make sure their feet follow suit. Early merengue's lyrics were based on sexual encounters and other socially taboo subjects, thus preventing it from becoming widely accepted. Today, merengue's lyrics cover more general topics including politics and current events. Its music has become so popular, in fact, that it is honoured with two regional festivals each year.</p>
Films	Cayo Levantado on the peninsula of Samana, is the original Bacardi Island photographed in the 1970s rum campaign
Museums	<p>Museo del Hombre Dominicano, Santo Domingo The finest collection in the Caribbean of the artifacts of the pre-Columbian peoples, including the Taíno Indians. This is, in fact, the most important collection in the world of the Taínos, who greeted Columbus in 1492, little knowing the horrible fate that awaited them,</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>including disease, slavery, and ultimately death at the hands of these strange visitors from another world. Thousands of magnificently sculpted ceramic, bone, and shell works are on display, along with grinding stones, carved necklaces, axes, and pottery. One section is devoted to the conquest of the West Indies, focusing on the pain suffered by the slaves under the domination of the Spanish. The life of the peasant is brilliantly depicted, including a typical country house that has been reconstructed in the museum. The exhibits are a pastiche of African, Taíno, and Spanish cultures, all of which went to influence Dominican life today. There's a little bit of everything here, even the "throne car" that the pope rode through the streets of Santo Domingo on a 1979 visit. One festive section depicts carnival costumes from around the island.</p> <p>At the southern end of the Plaza Espana in Santo Domingo is the Museo de las Casas Reales, built between 1503 and 1520, was the administrative centre of the West Indies, housing the Royal Court, Treasury and Office of the Governor. Inside, the museum's rather hodgepodge collection includes a few Taíno artefacts, Spanish navigational instruments, and an armoury donated by Trujillo with examples of weaponry used here since Columbus. Opposite the Casas Reales is the Alcazar de Colón, the fortified palace of the Columbus family, built by Diego from 1511 to 1515.</p> <p>Amber Museum: Puerto Plata You can see a collection of rare amber specimens at the Museo de Ambar Dominicano (Museum of Dominican Amber), Calle Duarte 61 (tel. 809/586-2848; www.ambermuseum.com), near Puerto Plata's Central Park. Look out for the piece of amber with a perfectly preserved lizard inside! It's open Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm, Saturday 9am to 5pm. Guided tours in English are offered. Admission is RD\$40 or RD\$7 for children.</p>
<p>Festivals</p>	<p>Dominican Republic Jazz Festival: Nov in Cabarete The Dominican Republic is world-renowned for merengue so it is no surprise that the annual Dominican Republic Jazz Festival attracts a line-up of Latin jazz performers. Concerts are held at Cabarete beach and the Gran Teatro del Cibao in Santiago. http://www.drjazzfestival.com</p> <p>Carnival is held in late Feb – Diablo Conjuelo costumes, singing, dancing, every weekend in February.</p> <p>Merengue festivals: July in Santo Domingo – musical blowout; Oct in Pto Plata on the Malecon.</p> <p>Las Nochas de Vela: the night of the prayer festival Jan 21 mix of Catholic and African religious festivities</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



ATTRACTIONS	
<p>Beaches</p>	<p>It was the beaches of the Dominican Republic's north coast that originally put the country on the world's tourist map, and in 2006, the Dominican government pumped hundreds of thousands of tons of sand from deeper offshore waters onto Playa Dorada's beaches, restoring them to wide, expansive stretches of pale amber-colored sands. The beaches all along the north shore are collectively known as the "Amber Coast" because of their color and because of the rich deposits of amber that have been discovered here. Many concession stands along the beach rent water sports equipment.</p> <p>Don't expect Robinson Crusoe-style isolation at Playa Dorada; you'll rarely, if ever, be alone on a stretch of beach in Puerto Plata. But if you enjoy beige sand that's rarely too hot to walk on, and a seemingly never-ending array of water sports kiosks and chaise longues, as well as an occasional loudspeaker projecting merengue music, you'll be happy here.</p> <p>Lying 5km west of Puerto Plata is a gorgeous beach, Playa Cofresi, set against a backdrop of all-inclusive hotels and some vacation villas that started to be built here in the 1990s. Although you can find plenty of space on this beach on weekdays, it comes alive on Sunday when several hundred local Dominican families descend from the hinterlands for fun, food, and sun.</p> <p>Another good choice in the area, Playa Luperon lies about an 80-minute drive to the west of Puerto Plata. This is a wide beach of powdery white sand, set amid palm trees that provide wonderful shade when the noonday sun grows too fierce. It's more ideal for windsurfing, scuba diving, and snorkeling than for general swimming. Various water sports concessions can be found here, along with several snack bars.</p> <p>Playa Bonita, in the Samana area, has 13km of uninterrupted beach that begins just west of Playa Las Ballenas, and boasts the kind of powdery white sand you might expect to see only in tourist brochures. From Playa Bonita's entrance, a sand road provides access for four-wheel-drives and motorbikes, past a beachfront populated at most by a few small groups of people taking advantage of the isolation to swim or sunbathe naked, until, after 6km, you reach Playa Cosón, a small fishing village holding two gourmet beach shacks with tables and chairs on the sand, serving grilled, fresh-caught fish for a few pesos.</p>
<p>Wildlife</p>	<p>Whales: 2500 of 6000 world pop of humpbacks breed and give birth in the north on the Silver Bank; they are 50ft long and 60 tons; Dec- Mar is the season for whale watching.</p> <p>The hutia is an endemic mammal, nocturnal, 30cms, lives in caves and is rarely seen.</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



<p>Parks</p>	<p>Los Haitises National Park – 1200 square kilometers of limestone hills and mangroves. Guided tours to explore the many small islands and caves of the park are offered from Samana, Sanchez, Sabana de la Mar. Pre-Colombian pictograms cover the walls of some of the caves There are 16 national parks, 67 protected areas; caimans in SW; birds: flamingos, parrots; solenodon – the Caribbean’s only insectivorous mammal, almost extinct; sea turtles, whales galore!</p>
<p>Gardens</p>	<p>The National Botanical Garden in Santo Domingo occupies an area of one square mile and was founded to study, preserve and investigate the varied plant life of Dominican Republic. Opened in 1976, the Botanical Garden is named after Dr. Rafael María Moscoso, the first Dominican botanist who wrote a catalog of the plants of the Spanish island in 1943. It is a sanctuary where animals and plants live in perfect harmony, with roads and trails will lead you a personal encounter with nature. It highlights the permanent exhibitions of bromeliads, ferns, palms, orchids, aquatic plants and the Japanese garden. Open daily from 9am - 5pm. www.jbn-sdq.org</p>
<p>Historical Buildings</p>	<p>Santo Domingo: Santo Domingo is the city of firsts in the Americas. Located in this metropolis are the first buildings constructed for religious, health, judicial and government purposes after the Spanish arrived. Among them, the first Cathedral of the Americas was erected (1523-1546), with its blend of Gothic and Renaissance styles. Don't miss the beauty of the Alcázar de Colón, the oldest Viceregal residence in the Americas. It was built at the beginning of the 16th century by the son of Admiral Christopher Columbus, Don Diego Columbus. He lived there with his wife María de Toledo, the niece of the King of Spain. Diego became the colony's governor in 1509, and Santo Domingo rose as the hub of Spanish commerce and culture in America. For more than 60 years, this coral limestone structure on the bluffs of the Ozama River was the centre of the Spanish court, entertaining such distinguished visitors as Cortés, Ponce de León, and Balboa. The nearly two dozen rooms and open-air loggias are decorated with paintings and period tapestries, as well as 16th-century antiques. A walk downhill from the Alcázar leads to the impressive Puerto de San Diego, which dates from 1571 when it was built as the main gate into Santo Domingo. Columbus Park is in the centre of the city's ancient quarter. It is an “urban living room” where everyone goes to enjoy its tree-lined streets where beautiful buildings date back several centuries.</p>

<p>OTHER ACTIVITIES</p>	
<p>Shopping</p>	<p>Santo Domingo is also one of the grand shopping bazaars of the Caribbean, with such "hot" items as hand-wrapped cigars for sale virtually everywhere, along with local handicrafts. Jewelry made of</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



larimar or amber is also much sought after. From gambling to merengue, Santo Domingo is also one of the liveliest cities in the Caribbean after dark.

Notable cigar brands include: Santiago, Cibao Valley, Davidoff, Churchill.

Puerto Plata: The neoclassical house sheltering the **Museum of Dominican Amber** also contains the densest collection of boutiques in Puerto Plata. Many of the paintings here are from neighboring Haiti, but the amber, larimar, and mahogany woodcarvings are local.

Plaza Turisol Complex, the largest shopping center on the north coast, has about 80 different outlets. You may want to make this your first stop so you can get an idea of the merchandise available in Puerto Plata. This complex also has the most upscale and tasteful merchandise. You might want to stop in here if you don't have time to visit all the shopping centres. It's about 5 minutes from Puerto Plata and Playa Dorada, on the main road heading east.

Nearby is a smaller shopping centre, **Playa Dorada Plaza**, with about 80 shops selling handicrafts, clothing, souvenirs, and gifts. Both it and the Plaza Turisol are open daily from 9am to 9pm. The Amber Shop, in the Playa Dorada Plaza (tel. 809/320-2215), is associated with the Amber Museum. This shop sells the best collection of Dominican amber in town, artfully displayed on racks and on shelves. It features necklaces, pendants, bracelets, and rings crafted from amber ranging in color from oil-clear yellow to dark blue. A competitor, Galeria de Ambar, Calle 12 de Julio (tel. 809/586-2101), is both a museum and shop. On the ground floor, both amber and larimar are sold along with Dominican and Haitian arts and crafts and with bottles of rum. Upstairs, a museum displays rare samples of Dominican amber, often with prehistoric insects imbedded inside. It is open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 6pm, Saturday 9am to 5:30pm

Tobacco Shop, in the Playa Dorada Plaza (tel. 809/320-2216), is the best shop selling cigars around Puerto Plata. Don't overlook the benefits of cigars rolled in the Dominican Republic from tobacco grown with Cuban seeds. They're a lot less expensive than most of the Cubans, and many of them are surprisingly good.

Plaza Isabela, in Playa Dorada about 500m from the entrance to the Playa Dorada Hotel complex, is a collection of small specialty shops constructed in Victorian gingerbread style, although much of its inventory has a Spanish inspiration or flair. Here you'll find the main branch of the Dominican Republic's premier jeweler, **Harrison's**, a specialist in platinum work and a favorite with celebrities. The store has a special

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>clearance area; tours are available. Another branch is in the Centro Comercial Playa Dorada in the Playa Dorada Hotel complex.</p> <p>A particularly attractive outlet for jewelery is La Canoa, Calle Beller 18. If you drop into this place, you can wander around, noting the difference between what's in front (a well-ordered, glossy-looking jewelery store) and what's in back (a much more workaday and less glossy series of workrooms where a crew of locals actually polishes and sets amber and larimar into gold and silver settings.) There is a wide range of prices, suitable for modest to extravagant budgets. Although there are the predictable array of gold, diamonds, and precious colored stones, the best are the chunks of amber - some pale, some tawny, and some of them blue - set into gold frames and configured as pendants, brooches, earrings, or rings.</p>
Markets	<p>Most of the towns have fun markets to explore. Samana town has one of the most colourful public markets in the DR.</p> <p>Although the marketplace at Puerto Plata hardly resembles the greater one at Santo Domingo in the Zona Colonial, the Mercado at Puerto Plata merits a visit. It lies at the corner of Avenida Isabel de Torres and Calle 2, and is open Monday to Saturday 8am to 5pm (it starts winding down after 3pm, however). Everything is sold here, from both Dominican and Haitian art to handicrafts, along with the inevitable T-shirts, as well as luscious fruits and vegetables. It's a great photo op</p>
Nightlife	<p>Punta Cana: Bávaro Disco, on the grounds of the Barcelo Bávaro Beach, Golf & Casino Resort (tel. 809/686-5797), has emerged as the hottest, most popular, and sexiest dance club in Punta Cana, thanks to a superb sound system. The venue is more European than North American, thanks to a heavy concentration of clients from Italy, Spain, and Holland. Painted black, with simulated stars overhead and lots of mirrors, the place is open nightly from 11pm to 5am.</p> <p>On Sundays, islanders pour into Playa Cofresi, turning the beach here into a giant house party, with the eating, drinking, picnicking, barbecues, and merengue lasting well into the night; it's a great way to meet the locals.</p>
Casinos	<p>Most casinos are conveniently located within major resort complexes and are open until dawn, if not 24 hours. Dominican casinos use Las Vegas odds, so the casino's profits and player winnings are relatively the same and considered fair.</p>

CUISINE	
Food	<p>Breakfast typically calls for a serving of "Mangu," a mix of plantains, cheese and bacon, which can be found at most hotel and resort restaurants. Mangu has been dubbed the "mashed potatoes" of the Dominican Republic and is a must-try for all visitors. Locals are also known to prepare the dish for evening meals.</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>A foundation of the native diet, "La Bandera Dominicana," or the Dominican flag meal, is eaten by nearly everyone at lunch time. The most important meal of the day, La Bandera consists of rice, beans, meat, vegetables and fried plantains to ensure energy throughout the afternoon and evening.</p> <p>Another popular dish is "Sancocho," a Spanish-style stew usually served with rice. Ingredients include various roots, green plantains, avocado and typically chicken or beef, although it sometimes includes a combination of seven meats (Sancocho prieto). Goat meat, a staple in many Dominican homes, may also be used in this recipe. It offers a unique addition to the character of any dish as these animals graze on wild oregano.</p> <p>"Locrio," or Dominican rice, varies with its preparer. An adaptation of the Spanish paella, locrio is made with achiote (a colored dye produced from the seeds of the achiote plant), since saffron spice is unavailable.</p> <p>Near Samana, coconut trees decorate the landscape and provide a delectable milk sauce for fish, known as "Pescado con Coco." Throughout the south central coast, "bulgur", or whole wheat, is a main ingredient in "Quipes" (ground beef wrapped in wheat) or "Tipili" (bulgur salad).</p> <p>Comida Creolla – creole cuisine blends Spanish, African, Indian and Caribbean influences; plantains, cassava, tropical fruits, mango, papaya, seafood, rice and beans; pastelitos: meat or cheese pastry turnovers; chimichurris: pork sandwiches hot off the spit; sancocho: national dish, sausage, pork, chicken, beef, goat, veg, herbs, spices in stew. Local beers, which are very good, are Quisqueya and El Presidente.</p>
<p>Rum</p>	<p>Rum production in the Caribbean is attributed to the African colonists who brought sugar cane with them to make crystallized sugar and molasses. They noticed, however, that the molasses began to ferment when left in the hot Caribbean sun and could be mixed with water to create what became known as rum.</p> <p>During the 1700s, sugar cane plantations and their by-products contributed to a booming social and economic climate which eventually drew the attention of the DR's three rum brand founders. In the mid-to-late 1800's Don Andres Brugal Montaner, Don Erasmo Bermudez and Julian Barcelo started experimenting with their own personal refining processes. Today, the Brugal, Bermúdez, and Barcelo brands of rum have become popular across the globe and are considered some of the world's best. Unlike that of Jamaica and Barbados, Dominican rum is</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>produced through a more natural process of distillation. Aging is often done in special American white oak kegs, thus creating a sweet, hearty blend.</p> <p>Bermudez, the eldest of the Dominican rum distilleries, was established in 1852. Its first formula, Bitter Panacea, remains famous. Distilling in Santo Domingo, Bermudez boasts the Dominican's oldest aging cellar.</p> <p>Brugal, established in 1888, is located just east of Puerto Plata and produces more than one and a half million liters of white and dark rum each year. Considered the most popular distiller, Brugal offers affordable bottles of rum for sale at its bottling plant and gives guests a free rum drink. Tours are offered Monday through Friday and admission is free.</p> <p>Barcelo, established in Santo Domingo in 1930, is said to be best-liked by locals. The plant manufactures 40 thousand liters of rum per day.</p> <p>Mama Juana is a unique Dominican Republic drink that is concocted by allowing rum, red wine, and honey to soak in a bottle with tree bark and herbs. The taste is quite similar to port wine and the colour is a deep red. The specific herbs that make up Mamajuana were originally prepared as an herbal tea by the native Taino Indians and much later in time, post-Columbus, alcohol was added to the recipe. Besides being rumored to be an aphrodisiac, with many natives of the Dominican Republic claiming that the drink has similar effects, Mamajuana is also consumed for its medicinal value. The alcohol is said to act as an extract base that pulls the herbs' curative properties, creating an herbal tincture that is often served as a shot. The reported positive effects on health vary, ranging from a flu remedy, to a digestion and circulation aid, a blood cleanser and kidney and liver tonic.</p>
<p>Restaurants</p>	<p>Chez Palace, Punta Cana: This is the showcase restaurant of one of the biggest resort complexes in the Dominican Republic. If you're not staying at one of the Barcelo hotels, you'll have to make reservations in advance. The decor is cool and stylish, as if it were imported from a chic resort in the south of Spain. A formally dressed staff serves superb dishes that include salmon mousse in a prawn sauce, tartar of tenderloin, grilled red snapper, grouper with mustard sauce, and filet mignon with truffles and foie gras.</p> <p>Le Papillon, Puerto Plata This is an unusual but charming restaurant set on a hillside in a residential neighborhood about 5km southwest of Puerto Plata. The expatriate German owner, Thomas Ackermann, manages to combine aspects of the Black Forest with merengue music. The best way to start a meal here is with a caipirinha (a Brazilian cocktail) at the bar beneath the cane-frond ceiling. Later, within an open-sided pavilion overlooking a forest, you'll be presented with a menu that's divided into categories that feature different preparations of pork, chicken, beef, seafood, rabbit, and</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>even vegetarian offerings. Enduring favorites include fettuccine with lobster; "pirate" kabobs with shrimp, tenderloin of beef, and vegetables; an especially worthy chicken stuffed with shrimp and served with saffron sauce.</p> <p>Casita Rica/Escape al Mar, Puerto Plata These two establishments, one a snack bar, the other an upscale dining choice, sit side by side between Puerto Plata's seafront and its waterfront boulevard, El Malecon, in the heart of town. As such, they're closely linked to the gossip and goings-on of the local community, but somehow manage to emulate the gastronomic style of elegant dining rooms within some of the resort hotels. If you happen to be strolling along the seafront and want a beer, the laid-back but gregarious Casita Rica, an open-air dive a few steps from a wide stretch of beachfront, would be perfect. And if candles and romantic gloss appeal to you at dinner, Escape al Mar has the kind of variety that has successfully sheltered wedding receptions, local charity luncheons, and romantic evenings within a classy, napery-strewn setting that evokes seafront trattorias within popular resorts in Italy or Spain. There's even a bronze statue of Neptune positioned like a guardian on a rocky offshore island, within full view of your table. Menu items include pizzas, fried chicken, burgers, pastas, and a flavorful casuela de mariscos that's loaded with fish, saffron, spices, and shellfish.</p>
--	---

MORE INFO	DR Tourism Office: 514-499-1918
Brochures	Transat Holidays and Nolitours 2015/16 brochures are available at travel agents.
Websites	Website: www.godominicanrepublic.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DominicanRepublicTourism Pinterest: http://www.pinterest.com/godomrep/ Twitter: https://twitter.com/GoDomRep

RIVIERA MAYA, MEXICO	<p>It starts with a special location - the Riviera Maya is mystical, mesmerizing and magnificent... The Mayan coast is a favourite spot around the world for vacationers seeking beauty combined with Mexican hospitality.</p> <p>The area boasts intriguing Mayan ruins, spectacular scuba diving, eclectic towns & villages and adventurous eco-tour options - not to mention upscale shopping, sizzling nightlife and tantalizing cuisine. Serviced by the Cancun International Airport, the Riviera Maya is a destination not to be missed. Flights are available with a range of airlines from airports right across Canada.</p>
-----------------------------	---

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



Location	Southeast Mexico, facing the Caribbean.
Geography	The Yucatán's Caribbean coast is 380km long, stretching from Cancún all the way to Chetumal, at the border with Belize. The northern half of the coast has been dubbed the "Riviera Maya"; the southern half, the "Costa Maya." In between is the large Sian Ka'an Biopreserve.
Name	The Mexican name for the Atlantic coastal region of the Yucatan Peninsula is "Riviera Maya", named after the Mayan People. The English use is either Maya Riviera or Mayan Riviera. Cancun comes from "Kankun" (a single word written with the two "k's"), which means "pot of snakes" or "nest of snakes" in Maya.
Language	Spanish, but English is widely spoken in the resort areas
Currency	One Canadian Dollar = 13 Mexican Pesos (Nov 2015)
Tipping	10-15%
Government	Democracy. Enrique Peña Nieto was elected President in the Federal election of 2012.
Documentation	Passports are required for Canadian citizens, but no Visa is necessary. Unaccompanied minors traveling to Mexico no longer need a notarized letter from their parent or guardian authorizing the trip. The regulation has been suspended by the Ministry of Tourism and National Institute of Migration. Prior to the suspension, anyone under 18 traveling alone or accompanied by a single parent or legal guardian had to carry a notarized letter signed by both parents or by the one not travelling with the minor granting permission to enter/exit the country.
Time zone	Central Time
Health	No inoculations needed; drink bottled water to avoid 'turista', an upset stomach.
Safety tips	Car break-ins are just about the only crime here. Despite concerns about safety in Mexico which have been largely created by lurid media reporting, Mexican tourist destinations remain as safe as most other major destinations. 80% of all murders take place in just 6% of the country...and a part that Canadians are unlikely to go anywhere near. About 50,000 Canadian ex-pats live in Mexico For instance the murder rate in this part of Mexico – the Yucatan – is the same as the rate in Canada. Mexico's former President Felipe Calderon told the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) summit in Las Vegas in 2011 that the murder rate in Mexico was lower than in much of the US. "The rate of homicide is 15-16 per 1,000 – lower than in Washington DC, in Pittsburgh or in New Orleans," he said. "It is lower than in Puerto Rico. Yucatan has a rate of less than two per 1,000 – similar to places in Europe." The president also suggested the US bore a responsibility for the increasing violence. He said: "There are 8,000 gun shops along the US side of the

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>border with Mexico. We seized more than 100,000 guns from criminals and 85% were bought in the US.” A sobering thought...</p> <p>Here is a link to an excellent article on the subject from a travel insider that I know well and respect for her balanced judgment: http://travelindustrytoday.com/web/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=14175:mexico-gets-a-bad-rap-time-to-give-it-a-rest&Itemid=64</p> <p>On a more general level – check out my Top Ten Safety Tips: http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/Planning/ChrisTop10Lists/Top10VacationSafetyTips.aspx</p>
--	--

CLIMATE	
General climate	The average annual temperature of the Riviera Maya is 25.5 degrees Celsius, with fluctuations of 5 to 7 degrees. Occasional hurricanes (e.g.Emily and Wilma in 2005)
Today’s weather	28 degrees with sun and cloud in Playa del Carmen (14 th November 2015)
Best time to visit	Year round (the hurricane season is July-Nov, but you would be very unlucky to encounter one of these storms)

GETTING THERE	
Flying time	4.25 hours from Montreal and Toronto
Cities and Towns	<p>Cancun</p> <p>Cancun is situated on the south-east coast of Mexico in the state of Quintana Roo in the Yucatan Peninsula. Warm white powdery sand beaches and turquoise crystal clear waters together with the famous Mexican hospitality make this a place like no other.</p> <p>There are a thousand and one things to do in Cancun. There are many world-class luxury hotels dotted all along the edge of the beautiful Caribbean Sea, and on the other side you have the Nichupte Lagoon with many romantic waterside restaurants and trendy bars. Add a full range of water sports, including some of the world’s most exquisite snorkeling and scuba diving, plus championship golf courses and you have a location that will delight even the most discerning traveler.</p> <p>For water sports enthusiasts, Cancun offers some of the best scuba diving, snorkeling and fishing in the world, owing to the Great Mesoamerican Reef just off the coast of Cancun. This is the second largest reef in the world – second only to the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.</p> <p>In Cancun you have such a varied choice of cuisine, with everything from downtown traditional Mexican restaurants to ultra-chic bistros. You will find something to suit all tastes and budgets and will get fantastic service with a smile wherever you go. Cancun’s Hotel Zone is renowned</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



for its nightlife, boasting some of the best nightclubs in the world playing everything from salsa to disco to R & B and live music venues. You will find something to suit all ages and tastes.

Downtown Cancun offers a captivating mixture of tradition and modernity. If you like to enjoy a real local atmosphere in a safe and friendly environment then this is the place to come! In downtown Cancun you will find hotels for all budgets- many small local restaurants offering regional and specialty cuisines and some really cool bars and live music venues. There is a wide choice of shopping venues from the Mercado 28 – a handicrafts market – to the super modern shopping mall Plaza Las Americas.

The **Cancun Aquarium** located near Cancun's hotel zone boasts a large numbers of fascinating Marine life exhibits. There is also an area to get up close to various marine life including star fish and sea cucumbers.

Playa Mujeres – This is a newly developed destination a little to the north of Cancun and features an endless beach, a brand new marina and some luxurious resorts. It's the perfect spot for a quieter vacation but it's still very close to the bright lights of Cancun. The Isal Mujeres is just offshore and makes for a lovely excursion by small boat.

Puerto del Carmen - Playa, as it is called, is the most happening place on the coast - a delightful beach (especially when the wind and currents are flowing in the right direction), hotels for every budget, a good choice of restaurants, and an active nightlife, most of which is on or around Quinta Avenida (Fifth Ave.), Playa's well-known promenade. In the last few years the town has grown quickly, and local residents and the tourism board are working to keep it from becoming a smaller version of Cancún.

Puerto Morelos - This town between Playa and Cancún remains a little village affectionately known by the locals as "Muerto Morelos" (muerto means "dead") for its phenomenally quiet low season. It has a few small hotels and rental houses, and nearby are a few secluded spa resorts. The coast is sandy and well protected by an offshore reef, which means good snorkeling and diving nearby, but the lack of surf means sea grass and shallow water. If you're looking for good swimming, head farther down the coast. If you're looking for a relaxing seaside retreat with a clean beach in an easygoing community, this will work for you.

Puerto Aventuras - The first major town south of Playa is a modern condo-marina development with a 9-hole golf course, several

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>restaurants, and a few hotels. You might come here to go deep-sea fishing or swim with dolphins.</p> <p>Akumal - A bit farther south is Akumal and Half Moon Bay. The community is relatively old for this shore, which means that it's already built up and doesn't have the boomtown feel of Playa and Tulum. Akumal has a strong ecological orientation and is a prominent scuba and snorkeling center. The locals are a mix of Americans and Mexicans, who enjoy the unhurried lifestyle of the Tropics, making this a good place to relax and work on your hammock technique. There are a few hotels; most of the lodging is rental houses and condos. Consequently, the town is a favorite with families who enjoy the calmness of the place and can save money by buying groceries and cooking for themselves.</p> <p>Tulum - The town of Tulum (near the ruins of the same name) has a hotel district of about 30 palapa (palm-leaf roofed) hotels, which stretch down the coast of the Punta Allen peninsula. A few years ago it was mainly a destination for backpacker types, but with some of the most beautiful beaches on this coast and many improvements in hotel amenities, it now attracts people with big budgets. Construction is booming, both in the town and along the coast. Here you can enjoy the beach in relative solitude and quiet.</p>
Distances	<p>The tranquil paradise of the Mayan Riviera stretches more than 100 km south of Cancun offering stunning beauty with ruggedly beautiful beaches, lush vegetation and a charming Mexican atmosphere.</p> <p>Cancún – Tulúm130 km Cancún – Cobá167 km Cancún – Chichén Itza193 km Cancún – Puerto Morelos ...32 km Cancún – Xcaret72 km Cancún – Xel-Há124 km</p>
Ferries	<p>You can take a ferry to Cozumel, which you catch in Playa del Carmen. There are two ferry lines transporting passengers now. The ferries leave every hour. The ride is approximately 45 minutes, depending on the sea conditions</p> <p>The island of Isla Mujeres is located off the coast and is accessible by boat from Puerto Juárez.</p>
Car Rental	<p>All major companies are represented here.</p>
Buses	<p>A colectivo is a mini-bus that runs up and down the coast along highway 307 from Cancun to Tulum. It is an inexpensive way to travel up and down the Riviera.</p>

ACCOMMODATION	All Inclusive resorts predominate here, but there are smaller, pension
----------------------	--

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



TYPES	type properties in Playa del Carmen.
--------------	--------------------------------------

LIFESTYLES	
Kids	<p>Xcaret is a developed Nature Park, eighty kilometers south of Cancún and 10km south of Playa del Carmen. Xcaret (pronounced "ish-cah-ret") is an ecological and archaeological theme park that is one of the area's most popular tourist attractions. It's the closest thing to Disneyland that you'll find in Mexico, with myriad attractions in one location, most of them participatory. Signs throughout Cancún advertise Xcaret, which has its own bus terminal to take tourists there at regular intervals. Plan to spend a full day.</p> <p>Tres Rios ecoadventure park 25 minutes south of Cancún is actually a nature reserve on more than 60 hectares of land. Tres Ríos www.tres-rios.com offers families a beautiful natural area for kayaking, canoeing, snorkeling, horseback riding, or biking along jungle trails. It's definitely less commercial than the other eco-theme parks and is essentially just a great natural area for participating in these activities. The entrance fee - \$22 for adults, \$19 for children - includes canoe trips; the use of bikes, kayaks, and snorkeling equipment; and the use of hammocks and beach chairs once you tire yourself out. Extra charges apply for scuba diving, horseback riding, and other extended, guided tours through the preserve and its estuary. You can also opt for an all-inclusive package that covers admission, diving, horseback riding, and all food and beverages.</p> <p>The ecopark at Xel-Ha (tel. 998/884-9422; www.xelha.com), 13km south of Akumal, attracts throngs of snorkelers and divers with its warm waters and brilliant fish. The beautiful, calm cove is a perfect place to bring kids for their first snorkeling experience. Xel-ha (shell-hah) also offers dolphin swims and has food and beverage service, changing rooms, showers, and other facilities.</p>
Teens	<p>In Cancún, the Parque Nizuc marine park offers guests a chance to swim with dolphins and view them in their dolphin aquarium, Atlántida. The price of the dolphin swim includes admission to the park. It's a fun place for a family to spend the day, with its numerous pools, waterslides, and rides. Visitors can also snorkel with manta rays, tropical fish, and tame sharks. It's at the southern end of Cancún.</p> <p>Xplor: Xplor is a unique underground world, with four activities that invite you to Xplor and rediscover your emotions and senses immersed in nature. This unique place is found in the heart of the Riviera Maya on the highway to one side of Xcaret. Xplor offers you the chance to dive deep into the entrails of the Earth in way that would previously have</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>been unimaginable, submerging yourself in a sea of stalactites and stalagmites, navigating on an underground raft, after a fantastic flight through the jungle, or like a modern Xplorer, driving an amphibious vehicle that can travel equally on water and underground and also through the intricate paths filled with thick foliage.</p> <p>Selvatica: the adventure kingdom is strategically located in between Cancun and Playa del Carmen (only 30 minutes away from either town). With over 330 acres of jungle, their 3 high-rope circuits including the “Aventura” zipline circuit (11 cables), plus its brand new “Extremo” course (12 ziplines), and America’s first A.C.C.T. fully certified Aerial Trek (high ropes course with over 20 elements), Selvatica offers adventures for everyone, from 6 to 96 year olds.</p>
<p>Honeymoons & Weddings</p>	<p>The Riviera Maya is a popular destination for weddings and honeymoons. These are best arranged through the tour operator with the resort itself.</p>

<p>UNIQUES</p>	<p>Coba: Set inland, deep in the jungle, surrounded by shallow lakes and accessed by "sac-be's", a network of formal limestone roads built by the Mayans over a 1000 years ago, awaits the ancient city of Coba, located about 40kms west of Tulum, Coba served as a Ceremonial centre that flourished during the Classic Period (300-1000 A.D.), with 50,000 inhabitants. Coba, the capital of the largest Late Classic Empire in the Northern Lowlands, the city’s most important structure is the Nohoch Mul, which is the tallest pyramid in the Yucatan Peninsula, stands 138 feet tall. The road to Cobá begins in Tulum and continues for 65km; there are also buses to Coba from Puerto Del Carmen</p>
<p>Surprising</p>	<p>Cenotes The Sacred Waters of the Riviera Maya The natural wonders of the Yucatan Peninsula are countless, but some of the most unique to the area are the cenotes. Cenotes are created by an underground river system and are fresh water sink holes that the Maya considered to be sacred. In addition they were an incredibly important resource as a fresh water source, and the Mayans also believed they were the entrance to the underworld. Cenote, (say-NOH-tay) called dzonot (ZO-note) by the ancient Maya were defined by the Motul dictionary, a dictionary of Mayan hieroglyphics, as "abysmal and deep" or "hole filled with water". Millions of years ago, the Yucatan Peninsula was covered by the ocean. Some 15,000 years ago, during the last Ice Age, the sea level descended approximately 250 feet. For thousands of years, the porous land surface, formed by fossilized coral and limestone, has filtered rainwater, which dissolved parts of the subsoil. This process created a system formed by flooded underground rivers and caves. This phenomenon is truly unique, and makes up the</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>largest network of caverns in the world.</p> <p>Cenotes are formed when the roof of a cavern collapses due to erosion. The level of the water also contributes to the creation of cenotes: if it is too low, it does not provide enough support, which causes the roof to weaken and cave in.</p> <p>The depth of each cenote depends of the amount of natural debris that has accumulated through erosion in addition to the remains of the roof that collapsed. The water that gathers in these amazing natural wonders is a crystal clear turquoise color with a very pleasant temperature.</p> <p>The stalactites and stalagmites that form inside the cenotes are true natural works of art. In many, holes in the ceiling allow the sunlight to filter into the cenotes, giving the scene a magical feeling. The cenotes of the Yucatan Peninsula should be seen by all, but keep in mind that they should be protected so that they are here for generations to come. You can do your part in local conservation by not using any lotions, sunscreens, perfumes, or repellents prior to swimming in a cenote. Many cenotes provide showers that you can use to rinse off before going in. There are four different types of cenotes - those that are completely underground, those that are semi-underground, those that are at land level like a lake or pond, and those that are open wells. Some of them are accessible for swimming and cave diving, some of them are not accessible at all, and some are actually dry cave systems that can be explored.</p> <p>Sizes and shapes of the cenotes differ according to their location. Some cenotes have been found to hold quantities of ancient offerings and jewelry, apparently thrown in the depths by the Mayas who once inhabited the area.</p> <p>Currently, an estimated six thousand cenotes have been found in the Mexican states of Yucatan and Quintana Roo. In the Riviera Maya, many cenotes have become famous, for their individual features offer different types of amusement for their visitors.</p> <p>In most cases, cenotes offer basic facilities such as bathrooms, dressing rooms and parking. Entrance can run anywhere from free to 100 pesos depending on where you go. Here are a few names to Google:</p> <p>Gran Cenote Tres Bocas Cristalino Cenote Azul El Jardin de Eden Chemuyil Dos Ojos Yax Mul Casa Cenote</p>
History	Tulum: A popular excursion combines a visit to the ruins at Tulum with

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>the ecological water park Xel-Ha . A wall surrounds the site on three sides, which explains the name (tulum means fence, trench, or wall). Its ancient name is believed to have been Záma, a derivative of the Maya word for "morning" or "dawn," and sunrise at Tulum is certainly dramatic. The wall is believed to have been constructed after the original buildings, to protect the interior religious altars from a growing number of invaders. It is considered to have been principally a place of worship, but members of the upper classes later took up residence here. Between the two most dramatic structures - the Castle and the Temple of the Wind - lies Tulum Cove. A small inlet with a beach of fine, white sand, it was a point of departure for Maya trading vessels in ancient times. Today it's a playground for tourists, and you can enjoy a refreshing swim. Admission to the site without a tour is \$3.50 168km SW of Cancún</p> <p>Coba: Older than most of Chichén Itzá and much larger than Tulum, Cobá was the dominant city of the eastern Yucatán before A.D. 1000. The site is large and spread out, with thick forest growing between the temple groups. Rising high above the forest canopy are tall and steep pyramids of the Classic Maya style. Of the major sites, this one is the least reconstructed. But the structures themselves and the surrounding jungle and twin lakes make the experience enjoyable. This is not a cenote area, and the water has nowhere to go but stay on the surface. The forest canopy is also higher than in the northern part of the peninsula.</p>
<p>Books</p>	<p>I recommend the Lonely Planet guide to Mexico: http://shop.lonelyplanet.com/mexico/mexico-travel-guide-14/</p> <p>Maya Roads by Mary Jo McConahay see my review of this lovely book: http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/Planning/ChrisBookPicks.aspx#18</p>
<p>1000 Places to see before you die</p>	<p>Chichen Itza, 2.5 hours' drive from Cancun is the granddaddy of Mayan ruin sites in the Yucatan Peninsula and one of the most grandiose in the Mayan world. What also makes this a wonderful site to visit is there has been much restoration done, the grounds are manicured and there are tourist services including restaurants, small museum, and stores selling items not found in Playa del Carmen or Cozumel. This is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.</p>
<p>Must Sees</p>	<p>Xcaret: Hanging out on the beach, scuba and snorkeling, cavern diving, visiting ruins, taking a siesta in a hammock under a grove of palm trees, hiking through tropical forest, meeting native Maya peoples - Xcaret has all that plus handicraft exhibitions, a bat cave, a butterfly pavilion, mushroom and orchid nurseries, and lots of wildlife on display (the park has several conservation programs for endangered species), native jaguars, manatees, sea turtles, monkeys, macaws, flamingos, and a petting aquarium. Children love it. What probably receives most of the comments is the underground river (a</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>natural feature of the park and common in much of the Yucatán) that's been opened in places to allow snorkelers to paddle along with the current. There are also a number of tours and shows, including charros (Mexican cowboys) from the state of Jalisco, and the Totonac Indian voladores ("flyers" who do a daring pole dance high above the ground) from the state of Veracruz.</p> <p>Xcaret is 10km south of Playa del Carmen. It's open daily from 8:30am to 9pm. Admission prices are \$54 for adults, \$28 for children 5 to 12. (as at 2015) www.xcaret.com</p> <p>Sian Ka'an biosphere reserve is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is a wonderful place to spend a day if you love wild, natural landscapes. In this case it's all about low, partially submerged coastal limestone plain that is home to a rich diversity of both marine and terrestrial life such as jaguars, margays, pumas, ocelots, tapirs, monkeys and anteaters.</p>
--	--

SPORTS ACTIVITIES	
Golf	<p>Currently this region features 10 quality golf courses, created by world class designers such as Robert Trent Jones, Jr., Robert von Hagge, Jack Nicklaus, Greg Norman and P.B. Dye. The Mexican Caribbean will generate more than 200,000 rounds of golf a year.</p> <p>This new Golf Paradise has already been host to International tournaments like The Mayakoba Golf Classic Riviera Maya - Cancun (the first PGA Tour Event to be held outside of the United States or Canada). Perhaps the best known is the Pok-Ta-Pok Club, a Robert Trent Jones designed course</p> <p>The golf courses in Cancun and the Riviera Maya feature challenging fairways that present players with distinctive curves and gentle hills, all framed by colorful tropical vegetation. Some are even built around ancient Mayan temples. From tee to green, views of the Caribbean's turquoise waters and pure white beaches stretch out in the distance with an abundance of wildlife in view.</p> <p>Cancun Golf Club at Pok Ta Pok - Robert Trent Jones Jr Cancun Golf Club at Pok Ta Pok, designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr. in 1976, is considered a leader in golf in this region. Those who visit Cancun know that playing a round of golf on this course is a must.</p> <p>Hilton Cancun Golf Club The 18-Hole, Par 72 Championship golf course at Hilton Cancun Golf Club is set within 150 acres of tropical paradise. With lush fairways tended with the utmost care meandering through ancient Mayan Ruins,</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



this challenging, yet fair golf course is enjoyable for golfers of all handicaps

Moon Spa & Golf Club – Jack Niklaus Signature Golf Course
Moon Spa & Golf Club is one of the Nicklaus Signature Golf Courses in Cancun and the Riviera Maya and was designed with a unique concept of environmental conservation. It is surrounded by a beautiful landscape, natural mangroves and exotic animals. This 27-hole course will be an unforgettable experience.

Riviera Cancun – Jack Niklaus Signature Golf Course
Two brand new golf courses can be found at the Riviera Cancun with the famous Jack Niklaus Signature design. With Par 72 and undulating fairways at the edge of the turquoise Caribbean sea it will be an exhilarating experience for any golfer.

Mayan Palace Riviera Maya – Jack Niklaus
This is another Niklaus Design golf course found at the Mayan Palace Riviera Maya between Cancun and Playa Del Carmen. It features traps of radiant, white sand, lakes surrounded by natural rocks and the intense color of the greens. The extraordinary natural landscape featuring lakes and native Mayan vegetation all make for a challenging yet beautiful golf course.

Cozumel Country Club – Jack Niklaus
The Cozumel Country Club has been carefully crafted from the surrounding mangrove marshlands and tropical rainforest to preserve its environmental integrity, as well as providing attractive challenges for players of every skill level.

El Camaleon Mayakoba – Greg Norman
El Camaleon Mayakoba designed by Greg Norman stretches from the jungle to the mangroves and on to the most beautiful ocean views. El Camaleon Mayakoba is the first golf course in Mexico to be chosen by the PGA. They now hold the PGA Tour, and have committed to carry out the PGA event during the third week of February for the next several years.

Playacar Spa & Golf Club – Robert Van Hagge
Playacar Spa & Golf Club was designed and constructed under the supervision of the famous architect Robert Von Hagge. This magnificent golf course surrounded by a diversity of lakes and exuberant vegetation, is considered to be one of the most challenging golf courses in Cancun or the Riviera Maya.

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>Iberostar Playa Paraiso Golf Club – P.B. Dye Iberostar Playa Paraiso Golf Club, located about 30 minutes south of Cancun, is the latest creation of world-renowned golf course architect P.B. Dye. The vertical movement and distinctive rock work are signatures of a typical P.B. Dye design. This world-class layout features conditions seen only at the best golf destinations around the world.</p> <p>Cancun Country Club Cancun Country Club consists of two 18-hole courses – one designed by Tom Fazio, considered to be one of the world’s great golf design architects and one by Nick Price.</p>
Fishing	<p>Sportfishing Riviera Maya is one of the best sportfishing hotspots in the world... Sportfishing in Cancun is on a ‘catch and release’ basis and goes in seasons. From February to April the top catches are kingfish, barracuda, small shark, grouper and blue marlin. From April to August you will find blue marlin, sailfish, tuna and mahi-mahi. Then from September to February catches include barracuda, snapper and mackerel. Book a sportfishing excursion and you are guaranteed an exhilarating day out!</p> <p>Fly fishing The lagoon system around Cancun offers the angler all year round opportunities to catch and release a great variety of species such as tarpon, bonefish, barracuda, sea trout, and red snapper. Fly fishing can be done in the sea, lakes, lagoons or rivers and is done in shallow, clear waters using artificial bait called a fly. You can book fly fishing lessons with one of the many tour operators. The fishing is best March to August; you can arrange a day of deep-sea fishing at one of the numerous piers or travel agencies for around \$220 to \$360 for 4 hours, \$420 for 6 hours, and \$520 for 8 hours for up to four people. Marinas will sometimes assist in putting together a group. Charters include a captain, a first mate, bait, gear, and beverages.</p>
Horse riding	Rancho Loma Bonita: 30 minutes south of Cancun has a 5 hour package riding through mangrove swamps to the beach for a swim
Hiking	The long stretch of beach by the resorts is ideal for strolls by the ocean
Cycling	Bikes are available for rent in Puerto del Carmen and Cancun
Diving	Riviera Maya offers an unimaginable world of underwater beauty and is one of the best places in the world for scuba diving; it’s famous because of its shallow reefs alive with the dazzling colours of fish and coral. Scuba diving in Cancun is so popular largely because of the Great Mesoamerican Reef (the Gran Arrecife Maya). This is the largest reef in the Western Hemisphere and the second largest coral reef in the world.

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>The Great Mesoamerican Reef stretches from Punta Nizuc, which it at the tip of the Cancun Hotel Zone, all the way to the Bay of Islands in Honduras. Cancun's coastline is home to nearly 100 coral species, 350 molluscs and 164 species of reef dwelling fish.</p> <p>The Riviera Maya is also the home to the hawksbill sea turtle, crocodiles, lemon sharks and manatees.</p> <p>There are many fascinating scuba diving venues for both the novice as well as the more experienced diver. You have a choice of open water diving along the reef and there are also several sunken boats to add to the adventure. If you go inland along the Cancun – Tulum corridor you will find many caverns and cenotes, also known as “sink holes”.</p> <p>Cyan-Ha Diving Centre arranges reef and cavern diving. Many of the hotels have free introductory dives and dive shops.</p>
--	--

CULTURE	<p>Mayan Culture</p> <p>The Mayan civilization was among the original cultures of the New World and spanned more than 3,000 years. The Mayans lived mainly on the Yucatan Peninsula in the eastern one third of Mesoamerica and at its peak had one of the most densely populated and culturally dynamic societies in the world. Mayan culture is known for its spectacular art, impressive architecture, and sophisticated mathematical and astronomical systems which were all way ahead of their time.</p> <p>Mayan Architecture</p> <p>Mayan architecture spans many thousands of years. The most dramatic and easily recognizable are the fantastic stepped pyramids in places such as Chichen Itza and Coba to name but a few. A year ago Chichen Itza was named as one of the seven wonders of the world, and has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site for 20 years.</p> <p>The Mayan Calendar</p> <p>The Mayan Calendar was not the original Mesoamerican calendar, but with the refinements the Mayans made, it became the most sophisticated. The Mayan calendar along with the Aztec calendar are the best documented and most completely understood of all the Mesoamerican calendars. This year, 2012, the Maya Long Cycle of over 5,000 years ends on December 21st and there has been much written about what this portends...</p> <p>Mayan Scripture and Mayan Art</p> <p>Mayan scripture is the only known fully developed written language of the pre-Columbian Americas. Mayan art is considered by many to be the most sophisticated and beautiful of the ancient New World.</p>
----------------	--

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>Mayan Tree of Life The Mayan civilization recognised the four primary compass directions and each was associated with a colour – East with red, North with white, West with black and South with yellow. They also had a fifth ‘direction’ which was the center and this was a blue-green colour. The center was represented by a great ceiba tree known as the Mayan tree of life. This tree connected the center of the Earth with both the underworld and the heavens.</p> <p>Mayan Gods There were thirteen Mayan gods belonging to the thirteen of heavens of the Mayan religion and nine gods from the nine underworlds. Natural elements such as the stars and the planets, crops, numbers, days and periods of time each had their own gods. The mood of the Mayan gods changed according to the days in the Mayan calendar or the position of the sun, moon and stars. Some of most notable gods are Chaac – God of Rain and Thunder, Ixchel – jaguar goddess of midwifery, Ah Puch – God of Death.</p> <p>Today, the Mayan civilization and their descendants form sizable populations throughout the Maya area known as the Mundo Maya and maintain a distinctive set of traditions and beliefs. Over 500 different Mayan languages continue to be spoken today.</p> <p>To visit some of these sites and experience the beauty of the Mayan civilization really is an opportunity not to be missed during your Cancun vacation. There are many tours available from your hotel or tour operator.</p>
<p>Museums</p>	<p>Museo de Arte Popular Mexicano, located at on the second floor of the El Embarcadero Marina, Bulevar Kukulcán Km 4. It displays a representative collection of masks, regional folkloric costumes, nativity scenes, religious artifacts, musical instruments, Mexican toys, and gourd art.</p> <p>Shipwreck Museum, Puerto Aventuras - a fascinating display of wreckage and artifacts collected from shipwrecks along the eastern coastline. Exhibits include 16th century breech-loading cannons and an elephant tusk from the wreckage of a 17th century ship carrying African slaves and ivory.</p>
<p>Festivals</p>	<p>Santa Semana: Holy Week is a huge celebration in Mexico with colourful street processions...but be sure to book early as everywhere is sure to be very busy.</p> <p>Spring Equinox is celebrated with parades to welcome the spring and</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>at Chichen Itza's main pyramid, the shadows align and the plumed serpent moves slowly from the top of the building to its base...</p> <p>Winter Equinox will be another major event and most Maya sites, as this is the day when their 5,000 year Long Cycle ends.</p> <p>Riviera Maya Jazz Festival November</p> <p>The annual Riviera Maya Jazz Festival attracts an enthusiastic crowd to Mamitas Beach in Playa del Carmen to enjoy free performances by national and international acts.</p> <p>http://www.rivieramayajazzfestival.com</p>
--	---

ATTRACTIONS	<p>Beautiful lagoons and bays full of colorful fish & sea turtles</p> <p>Fascinating Mayan ruins at Chichen Itza, Tulum, Coba and Xel-Ha</p> <p>Second-largest barrier coral reef in the world</p> <p>Miles of white sand beaches</p> <p>National Park and UNESCO Site: Sian Ka'an</p> <p>Unique "eco-archeological" theme parks, Xcaret & Xel-Ha</p> <p>Lots of Cenotes - natural pools of clear water- amazing to swim in</p> <p>Aktun Ha - giant caves on road to Coba</p> <p>Playa del Carmen - the fastest growing city in Latin America</p> <p>Cozumel Island for diving and snorkeling</p> <p>Magnificent resorts and hotels</p> <p>Diverse shopping</p> <p>Fabulous food</p>
Beaches	<p>Almost the whole length of the Mayan Riviera is bordered by beautiful white sand beaches. These beaches have recently been considerably enhanced with additional sand to make them broader and better than ever after recent coastal erosion.</p>
Wildlife	<p>The Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve</p> <p>Down the Riviera Maya a few kilometers south of the Tulum ruins, you'll pass the guardhouse of the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve. The reserve is a tract of 500,000 hectares (1.2 million acres) set aside in 1986 to preserve tropical forests, savannas, mangroves, coastal and marine habitats, and 110km of coastal reefs.</p> <p>The area is home to jaguars; pumas; ocelots; margays; jaguarundis; spider and howler monkeys; tapirs; white-lipped and collared peccaries; manatees; brocket and white-tailed deer; crocodiles; and green, loggerhead, hawksbill, and leatherback sea turtles. It also protects 366 species of birds -- you might glimpse an ocellated turkey, a great curassow, a brilliantly coloured parrot, a toucan or trogon, a white ibis, a roseate spoonbill, a jabiru (or wood stork), a flamingo, or one of 15 species of herons, egrets, and bitterns.</p>
Wildlife – Whale Sharks	<p>Swimming with Whale Sharks</p> <p>Whale sharks are the gentle giants of the ocean. They are the largest fish in the world measuring up to 40 feet (12 meters) and weighing up to</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>15 tons. Fortunately for those of us that want to swim with the whale shark they are totally harmless and peaceful. During your vacation in Cancun you have the once in a lifetime opportunity to get up close to one of these amazing creatures.</p> <p>Whale Shark Facts The whale shark is a fascinating creature to behold, with its wide mouth extending to 5 feet when open. The whale shark swims with its mouth open, close to the surface of the water, and just sucks in the plankton. It then closes its mouth and forces all the unwanted water out of its gills and only the plankton remains. The whale shark has a unique checkerboard pattern on its back made up of creamy white spots and pale horizontal and vertical stripes with a white underbelly so is easily distinguishable. This pattern is why it is also often known as the Domino.</p> <p>Whale Shark Season If adventurers want to take advantage of this phenomenon, you must bear in mind that the whale sharks are usually found around the islands of Holbox and Contoy from May until September, although mostly during the months of July and August. They gather here due to the nutrient -rich water around these shores. In fact, 30th August has now been formally established as the Mexican Day of the Whale Shark.</p> <p>Tours to Swim with Whale Sharks You can book tours to swim with the whale sharks leaving Cancun from Punta Sam, which last about 5 hours, or you can take a trip to Isla Holbox and book it while you are there. If you choose to experience swimming with the whale shark you will be accompanied by experts who will provide you with all the necessary information to better understand the behaviour of these wonderful creatures. Take a look at some of our recommended tour operators. If you would like to swim with a whale shark just remember there is nothing to fear... they feed exclusively on plankton and are therefore completely harmless to humans. The experience is truly amazing and one you will never forget.</p>
<p>Parks</p>	<p>There are many beautiful nature reserves and protected areas you can visit in this region. You will get the opportunity to observe monkeys, flamingos, whale sharks, marine turtles, crocodiles and many more creatures in their natural habitat. You can arrange guided tours lasting from one day to several days where you can pursue activities such as kayaking, hiking, snorkeling and diving.</p> <p>Cozumel Reef National Park In 1996, an 11,988-hectare area of sea and coral reefs, was declared</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>the Cozumel Reef National Park. Cozumel is the Caribbean's premier dive spot with 85% of the region's dive sites. Isla Mujeres West Coast, Punta Cancun and Punta Nizuc National Park. It covers 8,673 hectares of reefs that are part of the Mesoamerican Reef System. The estimated age of the base coral is 125,000 years and the reef consists of a chain of coral formations of varying sizes. The park protects a triangle of reefs off the west coast of Isla Mujeres, Punta Cancún and Punta Nizuc.</p> <p>Isla Contoy National Park The island, covering 5,126 sq. hectares, was declared a National Park on February 2, 1998. The coral reefs within the park's perimeter -called an "islet"- are located south of the island and mark the beginning of a 389-kilometer barrier reef running along the coast of Quintana Roo. This is the birthplace of the Mesoamerican Reef System.</p> <p>Puerto Morelos Reef National Park The 9,066 square-hectare park was set up in 1998. The barrier reef borders the Isla Mujeres West Coast, Punta Cancún and Punta Nizuc National Park.</p> <p>Chinchorro Bank Biosphere Reserve The Chinchorro Bank Biosphere Reserve was created in 1996. The country's best-preserved reef system covers 144,360 hectares. A platform reef, it has the largest commercial population of pink conch and Caribbean lobster and is important for the fishing industry. It is also a sea turtle nesting ground and at least 93 bird species live in the area's mangroves. The reef is a fantastic spot for divers. It is also a magnet for scientists who study its biodiversity and underwater archaeological heritage (there are more than 20 shipwrecks here).</p> <p>Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve Declared a United Nations World Heritage Site, the Biosphere Reserve was created on January 20, 1986 and the Uaymil Flora and Fauna Protected Area and the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reefs Reserve were created in 1994 and 1998, respectively. The three reserves cover an area of 650,000 square hectares. They incorporate areas of the principal ecosystems found in the Yucatán Peninsula and the Caribbean, where both Mesoamerican and Antillean species flourish. The barrier reef extends for some 120 kilometers and covers approximately 15,000 hectares</p>
<p>Historic Sites</p>	<p>Chichen Itza was once the capital of the Maya people in this region and is one of the new Seven Wonders of the World as well as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is simply stunning!</p> <p>Tulum Ruins is a relatively small site. It has an excellent beach for</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>swimming and cooling off, shopping and food. This makes an easy half-day excursion and is simple to get to anywhere on the Mayan Riviera from Tulum to Playa del Carmen. You can use a tour company or go there yourself via colectivo.</p> <p>Coba is deep in the jungle a 45 minutes' drive off of Hwy 307 just before Tulum. There is a lot more to see here than Tulum including large temples/pyramids. Taking a colectivo here can be done but it's not recommended; better to rent a car and drive yourself in or take a tour.</p>
--	---

OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	<p>As one of the world's premier tourist destinations the shopping in Cancun is as impressive as one would imagine. You will find everything from ultra-chic designer stores and famous brand names, to flea markets and souvenir shops selling Mexican local handcrafts. Cancun shopping is duty free so you can find some real bargains on cosmetics and fine jewellery. There are many shopping malls in Cancun: here is a list of just some of the great places to go if you fancy shopping in Cancun whether it be for a new designer outfit for yourself or a gift to take home to your loved ones</p> <p>La Isla Shopping Village, Cancun La Isla Shopping Village is a glittering, ultra-trendy shoppers' paradise on the banks of the Nichupte Lagoon in the Hotel Zone Cancun. You will find over 150 shops here all under a giant canopy with a series of canals and small bridges designed to create a Venetian look. There is an amazing aquarium here as well as fabulous restaurants and cinemas showing movies in English and Spanish.</p> <p>Kukulcan Plaza & Luxury Avenue Kukulcan Plaza & Luxury Avenue are adjacent to each other in the Hotel Zone. Between them they boast more than 250 shops and boutiques in exclusive and luxurious surroundings including world famous brands such as Louis Vuitton and Cartier. There are many specialty restaurants, bars and cafes and even a bowling alley if you are looking for something fun to do.</p> <p>Plaza Caracol Plaza Caracol is situated just north of the Cancun Convention Center. There are over 200 shops and boutiques where you will find everything from Ralph Lauren and Sunglass Island to chic perfumeries such as Ultrafemme to souvenir and silver jewellery stores. There is also a great choice of restaurants and cafes if you need to take a rest from shopping in Cancun.</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>Plaza Las Americas Plaza Las Americas is found in downtown Cancun. There are three large department stores as well as more than 50 stores – fashion shops – bookstores – sportswear – just about everything you might need. There are also two fantastic cinemas here showing movies in English and Spanish as well as a choice of restaurants.</p> <p>Also, Fifth Avenue in Playa del Carmen is a good shopping street.</p>
Markets	<p>Market 28: Also known as the Mercado 28 this is a huge flea market situated in the heart of downtown Cancun. It is a fun place to buy your souvenirs, Mexican handcrafts and silver jewelry at half the price of the Hotel Zone. Next door you will find Plaza Bonita, built to resemble a small Mexican village with colourful architecture and shops selling good quality Mexican handcrafts and pieces of art.</p>
Nightlife	<p>For a night out, Playa del Carmen is the place to go. Almost all activity take place around Playa's 5th Avenue which is a pedestrian walk way filled with restaurants, sidewalk cafes, bars, handicraft stores where people from all over world get together giving this town its cosmopolitan atmosphere - The Blue Parrot is particularly well known.</p>

CUISINE	
Food	<p>The annual Mexico-Caribbean Food Festival, featuring special menus of culinary creations throughout Cancun, is held each year over the first two weeks of November.</p>
Drink	<p>Tequila! Tequila is a blue agave-based spirit made primarily in the area surrounding the city of Tequila, 65 kilometres northwest of Guadalajara, and in the highlands (Los Altos) of the western Mexican state of Jalisco. Try the different varieties available.</p> <p>Beer: Many think that as long as it is cold and being imbibed anywhere in Mexico... whatever it is, it IS the best beer. Bohemia, Negro Modelo, Modelo Especial, Dos Equis, Dos Equis Amber, Pacifico, Montejo, Victoria, Tecate Light, Sol, Leon and the ubiquitous Corona are all well liked and satisfying. Carta Blanca is also an old, satisfying beer. Barriardo Lessardo is pretty good as well.....</p> <p>When touring off of the resort find a small convenience shop. They will give you a few options other than the norm. Try the Corona Familiar (a huge quart) which cannot be bought in Canada. It tastes a bit stronger but is more pleasant tasting than the regular corona. Also, try the Corona Cerveza de Barril. (They look like little "Mickey" Bottles.) It is also much better than Corona regular. If you have the opportunity to be in Mexico over the Christmas season, try the Noche Buena by Dos</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	Equis. It is a darker full flavored brew that is not exported either and can only be found in Mexico.
Restaurants	<p>The resort located restaurants are often first class in this area. U.S. based franchise chains dominate the Cancún restaurant scene. These include Hard Rock Cafe, Rainforest Cafe, Tony Roma's, TGI Friday's, Ruth's Chris Steak House, and the gamut of fast-food burger places.</p> <p>La Cueva del Chango in Puerto del Carmen is recommended: Good food in original surroundings with a relaxed "mañana" attitude. True to its name ("The Monkey's Cave"), the place suggests a cave and has little waterways meandering through it, and there are two spider monkeys that hang about in the back of the place. You'll enjoy great juices, blended fruit drinks, salads, soups, Mexican specialties with a natural twist, and handmade tortillas. The fish is fresh and delicious.</p> <p>Yaxche: The menu in this Perto del Carmen eatery makes use of many native foods and spices to present a more elaborate regional cooking than the usual offerings at Yucatecan restaurants. Excellent examples are a cream of chaya (a native leafy vegetable), an xcatic chili stuffed with cochinita pibil and the classic Mexican-style fruit salad with lime juice and dried powdered chili. There are several seafood dishes that are fresh and well prepared.</p>

MORE INFO	
Brochures	Mexico Tourism Board, 2 Bloor Street West, Suite 1502, Toronto, ON M4W 3E2 Tel: 416-925-0078
Websites	www.rivieramaya.com for destination information www.visitmexico.com
PERSONAL	<p>I have visited the Mayan Riviera, Puerto del Carmen and Cancun many times. I have also explored the atmospheric archaeological sites of Chichen Itza, Tulum, Muyil and Coba; the national park of Sian Ka'an; and the cenotes of Gran Cenote and Sammula.</p> <p>Check out my Pinterest board at http://www.pinterest.com/TravelShow/riviera-maya-yucatan/ And my Travel Blog at http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/Blog/tabid/400/EntryId/81/Riviera-Maya-Mexico.aspx</p>

CUBA	Cuba is unlike any other place on earth. What draws people to this fascinating Caribbean island is much more than beaches, sun, and cheap drinks, though there are plenty of all three for those who want
-------------	---

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>them. One of the last Communist nations left, it doesn't suffer from the drab and desultory demeanor of its disappeared peers. Cuba's rich culture, unique political history, and continued survival through ongoing economic hardship make it one of the most eye-opening countries that travellers can still discover.</p>
Location	<p>Cuba is the largest Caribbean island, between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. It lies 145 km south of Key West, Florida, between the Cayman Islands and the Bahamas, to the west of Haiti, and northwest of Jamaica.</p> <p>Formed by over 4,000 keys, islets and islands, Cuba covers 110,922 square kilometers of terrain, encompassing luxuriant vegetation with a huge variety of flora and fauna, virgin islands, grottoes, caves, mountains, forests and over 280 beaches.</p> <p>Havana, the capital, was declared a World Heritage City by UNESCO in 1982 in recognition of its concentration of historic buildings.</p>
Geography	<p>111,000 square km, 4,200 coral cays and isles, 1,250 km long, 30-100 km wide, with 7,000 km coastline .</p> <p>Pico Turquino is the highest mountain at 1974 meters</p>
Name	<p>Columbus named it Juana, the first of several names he successively applied to the island. It eventually became known as Cuba, from its aboriginal name, Cubanascnan.</p>
Population	<p>Nationally 11.2 million, with Havana having more than 2 million</p>
Language	<p>Spanish; English is widely spoken in the resorts and in Varadero</p>
Currency	<p>One Canadian Dollar = 20 CUP or Cuban Pesos (Nov 2015) One Canadian Dollar = 0.76 CUC or Cuban Convertible Pesos (Nov 2015)</p> <p>There are two currencies circulating in Cuba, Cuban Pesos (CUP) and Cuban Convertible Pesos (CUC).</p> <p>CUC is the currency most tourists will use in Cuba. It is how you will pay for hotels, official taxis, entry into museums, meals at restaurants, cigars, rum, etc. Conversion into CUC can be done at exchange houses (casa de cambio, or cadeca). These are located in many hotels and in other places throughout the cities. CUC are valued at 24 times the value of CUP. Tourists are permitted to import or export a maximum of CUP 100 or CUC 200 at any one time.</p> <p>CUP are also known as local Pesos and Moneda Nacional (National money). There is a limited range of goods that can be bought for local pesos, and these are transactions carried out in agricultural markets or from street vendors. Fruits, vegetables, fresh juices and snacks from street vendors are among the things CUP can buy. Because the products that can be purchased with CUP are limited, it is not a good</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>idea to change more than CUC 5-10 into CUP at a time, as the CUP will last for a good while.</p> <p>Note that Amex, MasterCard MBNA and Visa Citibank credit cards are currently not accepted in Cuba and US dollars are not accepted for exchange in official outlets. However this may soon change with the recent improvement in relations between the US and Cuba.</p>
Tipping	American dollar notes are always appreciated if you receive good service and it's a good idea to bring a stash of one dollar notes with you.
Government	Socialist republic, but Fidel Castro has created his own brand of more pragmatic Socialism which is now led by his brother Raúl Castro
Documentation	Passport and tourist card (included in package tours) Departure tax is 25 CUCs
Time zone	Eastern Standard Time
Health	<p>Cuba's health and education facilities are more accessible to the average citizen than those of many richer countries, including the U.S. Life expectancy is 76 years and literacy is 96%.</p> <p>Since May 2010, travellers must present proof of health insurance in order to enter the country. Upon arrival, travellers may be required to present an insurance policy, insurance certificate, or medical assistance card valid for the period of their stay in Cuba. Those who do not have proof of insurance coverage may be required to obtain health insurance from a Cuban insurance company when they arrive.</p>
Safety tips	<p>Cuba is generally a very safe country; strict and prominent policing, combined with neighborhood watch style-programs keep the streets safe from violent crime. Nonetheless, a certain degree of common-sense and caution is advisable, especially in major cities.</p> <p>In my personal opinion and experience, Cuba is one of the safest destinations in the Caribbean today.</p>

CLIMATE	
General climate	Wet season is May to Oct; temp averages 26 degrees in Jan and temperatures are sub-tropical year-round
Today's weather	27 degrees Centigrade and sunny in Havana (14 th November 2015)
Best time to visit	November to April

GETTING THERE	
Flying time	3.5 to 4 hours from Montreal and Toronto
Cities	<p>Havana: 2.5 million people, faded glory, 1950's cars, swinging nightlife; "a rhythm all of its own: halfway between the easy tempo of a sleepy tropical resort and the feverish pace of a metropolis"</p> <p>Founded 1514: "the jewel of the Spanish colonies"; UNESCO world Heritage Site;</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



1898-1902 ruled by US;
Highlights:
Old Havana is a walkers paradise;
Catedral de la Havana – baroque façade;
Plaza de la Cathedral - Is perhaps the most beautiful square in the Caribbean which is surrounded by examples of the finest baroque architecture in the country
Castillo de la Real Fuerza – the oldest colonial fortress in the Americas;
Museo de la Ciudad – former Palace of the Captains General;
Malecon – seawall meeting place;
In search of echoes of Hemmingway – go to El Floridita 180 yrs old, birthplace of daiquiris, ‘papa especial’: double 3year rum, lemon, crushed ice;
And no less than 247 museums!

Varadero: Varadero is a privileged enclave on the west coast of Cuba, with over 20 kilometers of superlative beaches sheltering caves and virgin keys whose crystalline waters conceal more than 40 different kinds of coral, fish, lobsters, shrimp, crabs and turtles. This beautiful destination has excellent connections and a vast range of leisure and entertainment options, making it the ideal spot for a relaxing and enjoyable vacation in the heart of the Caribbean.

History: Siboney Indians, Cubanacan nation, Cueva de San Ambrosio: 50 drawings at tip of peninsula, discovered in 1961;

1928: Mansion Xanadu – Cary Grant, Ava Gardner;

1900-1920: wooden houses;

Museo Municipal – Varadero history with English captions;

Establecimiento Tabaquero – cigar factory, 20 tobacco craftsmen;

Parque Josone – flamingos, macaws and rowboats;

Scuba – 3 clubs \$60 Playa Giron intro 2 hrs;

Horseriding – Casa del Valle, Valle Yumuri near Matanzas;

Cardenas – 15km from Varadero, architectural jewel, Museo Oscar

Maria de Rojas – eclectic: shrunken heads and snails;

Shopping: cigars, ceramics, art;

Delfinario – 8 dolphins, 5 born there, 3 shows;

Cuevas de Bellamar – discovered in 1861, 45 mins, La Fuente del Amor

Sailing ship to Cayo Blanco from Marina Chapelin \$65 seafood lunch,

snorkeling

Santa Clara: Santa Clara is a pretty city set amid green hills. The capital of the province of Villa Clara; it was founded in 1689 as San Juan de los Remedios.

Overlooking the Parque Leoncio Vidal, the Museo de Artes Decorativas occupies a magnificent colonial house built around 1740. Transformed

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



over the centuries, it was restored in 1820 and again in 1980. The museum has some extraordinary items, including an armoire built entirely without nails and a washbasin from the days when there was no running water.

The memory of Che Guevara permeates the town of Santa Clara. Located a little over 2 kilometres west of Parque Leoncio Vidal, the Plaza de la Revolución is dedicated to the famous Argentine guerrilla who fought fiercely alongside Fidel Castro to overthrow Batista in the late 1950s. A gigantic statue of Che Guevara dominates this plaza, the site of major political and cultural rallies in Santa Clara. Built in 1988 to commemorate the Guevara-led Battle of Santa Clara, this 7-metre high bronze sculpture is the work of Cuban artist Delana; the gigantic stone pedestal upon which it rests is more than 10 metres high.

Below this monument, anyone interested in this almost mythical Argentine revolutionary will not want to miss the Museo Memorial Nacional Comandante Ernesto Che Guevara. Inaugurated on December 28, 1988, it traces Che's life from his childhood up to his death, including his trips through Latin America, his stay in Mexico during which he met an exiled Fidel Castro, the landing of the Granma on the coast of Cuba, and his revolutionary experience in the Sierra Maestra. The museum is well documented, and displays a number of Che's personal items, including his uniforms, hand-written letters as well as many photos.

The door that faces the entrance to the museum leads to the **Mausoleo del Che**, where lie the remains of Che and the 13 Cubans who were killed with him in Bolivia. An eternal flame shines in this solemn and touching shrine.

Following Che Guevara's footsteps in Santa Clara also requires a visit to the **Monumento del Descarrilamiento**, Acción y Toma del Tren Blindado, which recounts the decisive battle led by Che Guevara against an armoured train carrying Batista's forces on December 28, 1958. Four of the train's 22 cars can be viewed at the monument.

The Museo de Artes Decorativas also offers classical music concerts. The museum is recognized as Santa Clara's most important centre for classical music.

The Casa de la Cultura Juan Marinero is Santa Clara's community cultural centre. At the entrance, a small art gallery exhibits works by contemporary artists from the region. This beautiful house, built in 1927, is the site of many cultural activities. Shows and concerts are held here regularly.

Shopping is a rare diversion in this region of the country, but you can still head to Calle Independencia, open only to pedestrians starting at Calle Maceo. Most of the shops are intended for local residents, including Santa Clara's biggest bookshop.

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>Santiago de Cuba: Set on the seaside, near the island's eastern tip, Santiago de Cuba is the country's second-largest city. Vibrant, tropical, and often sweltering, Santiago is the country's liveliest cultural showpiece, outside of Havana. With a population just under a half-million people, Santiago is a world apart, with a unique history and rhythms all its own.</p>
Distances	<p>Varadero to Havana: 144 km Santa Clara to Havana: 270 km</p>
Buses	<p>There are 30,000km of paved road. Probably the nicest way to get around Cuba is on the Viazul buses. These are well-staffed and luxurious air-conditioned buses with toilets, big comfy seats, and lots of leg room. Refreshments are provided. Viazul buses are mostly used by foreigners and rich locals. You'll need to book your ticket a day before departure to secure your seat; you may not get a ticket if you just show up right before departure.</p>
Trains	<p>Standard gauge: 4,226 km of which 140 km is electrified</p>
Car Rental, Taxis	<p>Car rental starts from CUC 65 per day (including insurance) plus the cost of a full tank of gasoline. The refundable deposits start around CUC 200. Rental cars are for the most part fairly new, imported European or Asian models. Collective taxis often use pre-1959 US cars.</p>
Regions	<p>Central Cuba is an area rich in both historical and natural attractions. It is home to several wonderful colonial-era cities, as well as isolated and pristine beaches. Heading east from Matanzas into Cuba's central heartland you first hit Villa Clara province, which is devoted largely to sugar cane, citrus, and tobacco farming and cattle ranching. The provincial capital, Santa Clara, a lively university town, is often called "Che Guevara's City" and features an impressive monument and plaza dedicated to the fallen revolutionary. To the north of Santa Clara lie the tiny and well-preserved colonial-era city of Remedios, and the jaw-droppingly beautiful beach resort destination of la Cayería del Norte.</p> <p>Abutting Villa Clara to the south is Cienfuegos province. The city of Cienfuegos is affectionately known as La Perla del Sur (The Southern Pearl). Cienfuegos is a busy port city with a pretty, colonial-era center and the country's second-longest seaside promenade, or Malecón. Cienfuegos is connected to Trinidad by a pretty coastal highway, and is definitely worth a visit on a loop trip around the region.</p> <p>The province of Sancti Spíritus is the only one in Cuba to count two of the original seven villas (towns) in Cuba among its offerings. The colonial gem Trinidad, tucked in the southwest corner of the province, is the highlight of a visit to the central section of the country, or all of Cuba</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>for that matter. The provincial capital, Sancti Spíritus, isn't a great deal larger than Trinidad, and though it is more ramshackle and rough around the edges, lacking Trinidad's remarkable collection of perfectly preserved architecture, it is still worth a visit to see its couple of colonial highlights.</p> <p>Cuba's Northeast Coast: The extraordinary, powdery beaches of Cayo Coco and Cayo Guillermo, the cays that lie off the mainland and jut into the deep blue of the Atlantic Ocean, are the primary attractions of Ciego de Avila province. It is a remote area, but one with the infrastructure and natural gifts that make it perfect for idyllic sun, sand, and sea holidays. The namesake provincial capital Ciego de Avila and other towns and cities in this province hold few attractions for visitors. A little farther east, predominantly flat low-lying Camagüey province, southeast of Ciego de Avila, is the largest in the country, though it is also the least densely populated. It occupies the widest swath on the island, 120km from the Atlantic coast to the Caribbean coast. Camagüey, the provincial capital, is Cuba's third-largest city, after Havana and Santiago de Cuba, and is a relatively undiscovered colonial gem of a city that is worth exploring.</p> <p>El Oriente: Prior to the 1959 Revolution, the eastern half of Cuba was a single province, straightforwardly called "El Oriente," or the East. Most Cubans still refer to everything east of Camagüey - a region much more scenically and historically interesting than most of central Cuba - as El Oriente, even though it is now composed of the distinct provinces of Holguín, Granma, Santiago de Cuba, and Guantánamo. The region is less known and visited than the west, but every bit as rewarding for travelers (and perhaps more so). The farther east you go, the more emphatically Caribbean it feels. The region's remarkable landscapes include the north coast's exuberant banana and coconut groves, densely wooded peaks of the Sierra Maestra, and tropical rainforest on the east coast.</p>
--	--

<p>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</p>	<p>Everything from five star international resorts to the B&B equivalent in Cuba called casas particulares. In general, the rooms and homes are kept very clean, while the furnishings and amenities are quite simple. The rates average between \$25 and \$35 per person, and meals are often available at very reasonable prices.</p>
-----------------------------------	--

<p>TARGET GROUPS</p> <p>Kids</p>	<p>If you've got kids in Varadero, you might want to head to the Parque de Diversiones, a small amusement park in Varadero that has the types of rides and booths you might find at a county fair.</p>
--	---

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



<p>Teens</p>	<p>If all the activities at the resorts in Varadero are not enough, there is a large swath of the eastern end of the Varadero peninsula is protected as the Parque Ecológico Varahicacos. There are some gentle paths through the scrub forests here, and you can visit a series of small caves, some of which contain ancient indigenous pictographs. If your family is adventurous, try the Jungle Tour, which is a fast and furious trip through the mangroves aboard sit-on-top motorized watercraft. Sign up for a day-cruise on one of the many sailboats operating out of Varadero. These cruises head out to nearby cays, and include some snorkeling time, as well as lunch either on the boat or on some private little island beach.</p>
<p>Romance</p>	<p>Old Havana has to be one of the most romantic cities on earth...</p>
<p>Honeymoons & Weddings</p>	<p>Your travel agent and Cuban wedding planners can help you design a perfect day. Here are a few pointers to help you get started.</p> <p>1- If you have never been married before, all you need is a passport that is valid throughout your stay in Cuba, and a tourist card (available from a travel agent, airline or the Cuban consulate).</p> <p>2- If either the bride or groom has been married before, the previously married person must, in addition to the valid passport and tourist card, also produce the following documents: if divorced: his/her birth certificate and Certificate of Divorce; if widowed: his/her birth certificate, Certificate of Marriage and Certificate of Spouse's Death.</p> <p>Have your birth certificate and any divorce/marriage/death documents translated into Spanish and certified by a notary public and legalized by the Cuban consul in Canada (service fee applies).</p> <p>3- In addition, you need to: Create a sheet that lists your names, home address, occupations, level of education, nationality and the full names of your parents, living or deceased. Attach the photo page of your passport to this sheet. Fax copies of all documentation in both English and Spanish to your hotel in Cuba at least three weeks before your arrival there. Bring all your original documents with you.</p> <p>Your marriage will be formalized in the name stated on your passport. Your passport must therefore be correct, and the name on your passport must match that on all your other documents.</p> <p>After your wedding, your Marriage Certificate will be prepared as quickly as possible and either given to you before you leave (time permitting) or couriered at the hotel's expense to the home address on your documents. Your marriage is legalized by the Canadian Embassy in Havana and the Cuban Foreign Affairs department.</p>
<p>Seniors</p>	<p>The nicest spot to visit in "downtown" Varadero is the Parque Josone, a beautifully maintained little city park with cool shady grounds and</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>gardens. There are paths winding around and over little lakes with fountains, several restaurants and food stands, and the park is dotted with gazebos and park benches.</p> <p>The old colonial city of Trinidad is a perfect day excursion from many of the island resorts.</p>
--	---

UNIQUES	Fábrica de Tabaco Partagas , Havana: Founded in 1845, this is Cuba's largest and perhaps most renowned cigar factory, producing around 5 million cigars a year.
Surprising	Santeria is a folk religion of African deities combined with Catholic saints; Cubans are open about it and happy to tell you more. Guantanamo Bay : the US forced Cuba to accept a US lease in 1903 which can be ended only by abandonment or mutual agreement.
History	<p>History is important in Cuba, so I have expanded this section for a fuller account of Cuba's intriguing past...</p> <p>In 1492 Columbus said of Cuba "I have never seen a more beautiful country..."</p> <p>It's thought that humans first cruised from South America to Cuba around 3500 BC. Primarily fishers and hunter-gatherers, these original inhabitants were later joined by the agriculturalist Taino, a branch of the Arawak Indians. Christopher Columbus sighted Cuba on 27 October 1492, and by 1514, Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar had conquered the island for the Spanish crown and founded seven settlements. When captured Taino chief and resistance fighter Hatuey was condemned to die at the stake, he refused baptism, saying that he never wanted to see another Spaniard again, not even in heaven.</p> <p>Cattle ranching quickly became the mainstay of the Cuban economy. Large estates were established on the island under the <i>encomienda</i> system, enslaving the Indians under the pretext of offering instruction in Christianity. By 1542, when the system was abolished, only around 5000 Indians (of an estimated 100,000 half a century before) survived. Undaunted, the Spanish imported African slaves as replacements. British troops invaded Cuba in June 1762 and occupied Havana for 11 months, importing more slaves and vastly expanding Cuba's trade links. In 1817, Spain's long-standing monopoly on tobacco ended, which raised prices, encouraging the crop's expansion. Tobacco quickly became one of the islands most important products. Sugar had also become a major industry, as American independence in 1783 created new markets, and the 1791 slave uprising in Haiti eliminated Cuba's biggest sugar-producing competitor. By 1820 Cuba was the world's largest sugar producer.</p> <p>After the great liberator, Simón Bolívar, led Mexico and South America to independence, Cuba and Puerto Rico were the only remaining Spanish holdings in the Western Hemisphere. Spanish loyalists fled the</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



former colonies and arrived in Cuba in droves. Even they, however, began demanding home rule for the island, albeit under the Spanish flag.

In October 1868, planter **Carlos Manuel de Céspedes** launched Cuba's First War of Independence. After 10 years and 200,000 deaths, the rebels were spent and a pact was signed granting them amnesty. Meanwhile, a group of Cuban rebels exiled to the USA began plotting the overthrow of the Spanish colonial government. Among their ranks was **José Martí**, a respected journalist and critic of US policy, as well as an important poet and the author of the best-known Cuban song of all time, Guajira guantanamera. Martí and his military commander, General Máximo Gómez, landed on eastern Cuba in 1895; within days Martí, conspicuous on his white horse, was shot and killed in a skirmish with Spanish soldiers. His martyrdom earned him the permanent position of Cuba's national hero.

Gómez and rebel leader Antonio Maceo pushed westward, burning everything in their path. Spain came down hard, forcing civilians into reconcentración camps and publicly executing rebel sympathizers. These methods effectively reestablished Spanish control, but Cuba's agriculture-based economy was in ruins. The Spaniards adopted a more conciliatory approach, offering Cuba home rule, but the embittered populace would agree to nothing short of full independence. José Martí had long warned of US interest in Cuba, and in 1898 he was proved right. After years of reading lurid (and often inaccurate) tabloids tales about Cuba's Second War for Independence, the American public was fascinated with the island. Although everything was quiet, newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst told his illustrator not to come home just yet: 'You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war.' In January 1898 the US warship Maine, anchored outside Havana harbor, exploded mysteriously. All but two of its officers were off the ship at the time. The **Spanish-American war** had begun.

Spain, weakened by conflict elsewhere, limped to battle, trying to preserve some dignity in the Caribbean. They nearly beat future US president Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders (though they'd had to leave their horses on the mainland) in the Battle of San Juan Hill. The USA's vastly superior forces eventually prevailed, however, and on December 12, 1898, a peace treaty ending the war was signed. The Cubans, including General Calixto García, whose largely black army had inflicted dozens of defeats on the Spanish, were not invited.

The USA, hobbled by a law requiring its own government to respect Cuban self-determination, could not annex Cuba outright, as it did Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. In 1903, the USA built a naval base at Guantánamo Bay that is still in operation today.

By the 1920s US companies owned two-thirds of Cuba's farmland,

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



imposing tariffs that crippled Cuba's own manufacturing industries. Discrimination against blacks was institutionalised. Tourism based on drinking, gambling and prostitution flourished. In 1933 Morales was overthrown in a coup, and army sergeant **Fulgencio Batista** seized power. Over the next 20 years Cuba crumbled, and its assets were increasingly placed into foreign hands. On January 1, 1959, Batista's dictatorship was overthrown after a three-year guerilla campaign led by young lawyer **Fidel Castro**. Batista fled Cuba for the Dominican Republic, taking with him US\$40 million of government funds. Castro was named prime minister and began reforming the nation's economy, cutting rents and nationalizing landholdings larger than 400 hectares. Relations with the USA, already shaky, deteriorated when he nationalized US-owned petroleum refineries that had refused to process Venezuelan oil. The Americans retaliated by cutting Cuban sugar imports, crippling the Cuban economy, and the CIA began plotting devious ways to overthrow the revolutionary government. In 1961, 1400 CIA-trained Cuban expats, mainly upper-middle-class Batista supporters who had fled to Miami after the revolution, attacked the island at the **Bay of Pigs**. They were promptly captured and ransomed back to the US for medical supplies. The following week, Castro announced the 'socialist nature' of the revolutionary government, and its relationship with the Soviet Union flourished, who provided food, technical support and, of course, nuclear weapons. The October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis is said to be the closest the world has ever come to nuclear conflict. The missiles were shipped back to the USSR, and the USA declared an embargo on Cuba. Castro and his Minister of Economics, **Che Guevara**, began actively supporting guerilla groups in South America and Africa, sending troops and advisers to assist socialist insurgencies in Zaire, Angola, Mozambique, Bolivia (where Guevara was killed) and Ethiopia. The US response was to support dictators in many of those countries. In December 1991, the Cuban Constitution was amended to remove all references to Marxism-Leninism, and economic reforms began. In 1993, laws passed allowing Cubans to own and use US dollars, be self-employed and open farmers' markets. Taxes on dollar incomes and profits were levied in 1994, and in September 1996 foreign companies were allowed to wholly own and operate businesses and purchase real estate. These measures gradually brought the economy out of its post-Soviet tailspin. The US responded by stiffening its embargo with the Helms-Burton Act, ironically solidifying Castro's position. In July of 2006, Fidel Castro handed off the reins of government for the first time in 47 years. The reins were not passed far. In fact, Fidel turned over the day-to-day chores of governing to his younger brother **Raúl**

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>Castro, who was already the head of the Cuban armed forces and the head of Cuba's Communist party.</p> <p>As 2015 begins, there has been a historic rapprochement between the US and Cuba and if things go according to plan, relations between the two countries will soon be normalized.</p>
Books	<p>The Lonely Planet guide to Cuba is my recommended book for planning your trip to this island nation: . http://shop.lonelyplanet.com/caribbean/cuba-travel-guide-8/</p>
1000 Places to see before you die	<p>Cuba's Jazz Festival – December in Havana http://www.jazzcuba.com</p> <p>La Habana Vieja – Havana's Old Quarter</p> <p>Hemingway's Hangouts – La Floridita and La Bodeguita del Medio</p>
Must Sees	<p>Here are my tips for the things not to miss: Havana, Trinidad, the countryside and the people</p>

SPORTS ACTIVITIES	<p>Baseball is the national sport. Cuba's amateur players are considered some of the best in the world, and the premier players are aggressively scouted and courted by Major League Baseball. The regular season runs November through March, and playoffs and the final championship usually carry the season on into May. Most major towns and cities have a local team. Some of the consistently better teams include Pinar del Río, Sancti Spíritus, Santiago de Cuba, Santa Clara, and of course Havana's Industriales. It's usually easy to buy tickets at the box office for less than 5 Cuban pesos, or ask at your hotel and perhaps they can get you tickets in advance.</p> <p>If you want to bring presents for the locals, you can't go wrong with any baseball equipment!</p>
Golf	<p>The country's only regulation 18-hole golf course is the Varadero Golf Club (www.varaderogolfclub.com). The course is a relatively flat resort course, with lots of water, plenty of sand, great views, and almost no rough.</p>
Fishing	<p>There's fabulous deep-sea sport-fishing for marlin, sailfish, tuna, dorado, and more off of most of Cuba's extensive coastline, while the Zapata Peninsula and Cayo Largo del Sur may just be some of the best and least exploited bone-fishing spots left in the hemisphere. The mountain lake and resort of Hanabanilla is getting good grades as a freshwater ground for widemouth and black bass.</p> <p>A half-day of fishing should cost between CUC\$150 and CUC\$400, while a full day can run between CUC\$300 and CUC\$1,400, including gear and lunch, depending on the size of the boat and number of fishermen. There's a broad network of state-run marinas all around Cuba; the greatest number are run by Cubanacán (tel. 7/208-6044; www.cubanacan.cu) and Gaviota (tel. 7/66-9668;</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	www.gaviota-grupo.com). All offer sport fishing charters
Hiking	<p>Walking along Havana's Malecón: your best bet is to start in Habana Vieja and work your way toward the Hotel Nacional in Vedado. Take your time to stop and sit on the sea wall for a spell, and be sure to talk to some of the locals on your way. If you time it right, you will reach the Hotel Nacional in the late afternoon - a good time to grab a cool drink and enjoy the setting sun from their "Compass Card" outdoor terrace.</p> <p>Hiking Pico Turquino: Pico Turquino, tucked within the celebrated Sierra Maestra National Park, is the highest peak in Cuba at just under 2,000m. The trail to the summit is swathed in cloud forest and tropical flora. Hikers in good physical condition can do the 15km round-trip journey in a day, but most camp overnight below the summit. The panoramic views of the coast and Caribbean Sea are breathtaking.</p>
Cycling	<p>With a local reliance on bicycles for everyday transportation and a relatively well-maintained road network serving a small motor vehicular fleet, Cuba is a great country to tour by bicycle. There are very few operations renting decent bikes in Cuba, so it may be best to bring your own. There are also specialist tour companies who organize biking holidays in Cuba: try Holiday-n-Adventure (1877-415-4329)</p> <p>Jeff Reid operates a small humanitarian program sending donated bicycles to Cuba – see http://bikesforcuba.wordpress.com or www.bikesforcuba.com for full details. He sends bikes every month and depends on tourists from Ontario to take them.</p>
Diving	<p>There are fabulous scuba diving and snorkeling opportunities on the coral reefs, ocean walls, and ancient wrecks that lie just off Cuba's coasts. María la Gorda, Isla de la Juventud, Playa Larga, Playa Girón, and Los Jardines de la Reina are widely considered the absolute top scuba-diving destinations. You will also find perfectly acceptable dive opportunities and operations in Varadero, Cayo Coco, Cayo Guillermo, Guardalavaca, and Cayo Largo del Sur.</p>

CULTURE	
Music	<p>Buena Vista Social Club; rumba; jazz; salsa; son</p> <p>Cuba has a strong tradition in the performing arts. Cuban musicians, playing in a range of styles, are world-renowned. The Cuban National Ballet (tel. 7/855-3084; www.balletcuba.cu) has been garnering international accolades for decades, under the seemingly eternal direction of Alicia Alonso.</p> <p>The Conjunto Folklórico Nacional de Cuba (Cuban National Folklore Group) hosts the weekly Sábado de la Rumba, a mesmerizing show of Afro-Cuban religious and secular dance and drumming. The 2-hour shows are presented every Saturday at 3pm, at El Gran Palenque,</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	Calle 4, between Calzada and Avenida 5 in Vedado.
Museums	<p>Museo de la Ciudad, Havana: Old Havana's preeminent museum displays colonial-era art and artifacts. It's worth the price of admission alone to stroll the rooms, outdoor courtyards, and interior veranda of the former Palacio de los Capitanes Generales (Palace of the Captain Generals), which houses the museum.</p> <p>The National Fine Arts Museum fills three floors of this square-city-block building, and the design - with a central courtyard and zigzagging ramped stairwell - can make navigating the upper floors confusing, so allow yourself plenty of time, and be prepared to get mildly lost inside. An extensive collection of Cuban art and sculpture is on display at the newly renovated main building here. Modern masters like Wifredo Lam, Raúl Martínez, Amelia Peláez, and Rene Portocarrero are well represented. The international collection is now housed in a recently restored early-20th-century gem of a building.</p>
Festivals	<p>Cuba's Jazz Festival – Dec in Havana http://www.jazzcuba.com</p> <p>This is an internationally renowned event that consistently attracts an excellent line-up, with performances at venues around the city. Cuban music enjoyed a worldwide boost in popularity due to the success of the Buena Vista Social Club, and rightly so. Cuban son was a precursor to salsa and much excellent Latin jazz emanates from this sunny Caribbean island.</p> <p>What better place for a jazz festival than Havana, with its rich musical heritage and unique atmosphere? The Hotel Rivera acts as the festival headquarters, while the Casa de la Cultura Plaza, Teatro Nacional de Cuba, Teatro Amadeo Roldán, Teatro Mella and Teatro Karl Marx also host performances</p> <p>Carnival Santiago de Cuba July/Aug: in the intense heat of summer, Santiago de Cuba explodes with the island's best carnival, an evocative celebration of the city's Afro-Caribbean roots. Ripe with rumba music, conga processions, booming percussion, fanciful floats, and wild costumes, it's a participatory party.</p>
ATTRACTIONS	<p>Trinidad - The best-preserved colonial city in Cuba, in the shadow of the Escambray mountains, Trinidad was not even linked by road to the rest of the country until the 1950s. Declared a national monument by the Cuban government this city is very much as it was four centuries ago, the beauty of its baroque architecture and cobblestones squares harking back to a bygone era when Trinidad was a key player in the Caribbean slave trade. There are many interesting things to see (e.g Guamuhaaya Archaeological Museum, Plaza Mayor, Church of Santa</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>Ana, Calle Simon Bolivar....) but the most impressive of all Trinidad's many museums is Trinidad Municipal Museum and a visit to the Taller Alfarero, a large ceramics workshop where traditional techniques are still used is also worthwhile.</p>
<p>Beaches</p>	<p>Varadero is Cuba's premier beach resort destination, and it ranks right up there with the best in the Caribbean. If you're looking for a well-run all-inclusive resort loaded with amenities and activity options, Varadero is a good choice, with a 21km stretch of nearly uninterrupted beach. If you prefer less commercialized beach destinations, consider the various Cayo destinations along the north coast.</p>
<p>Wildlife</p>	<p>Bird-Watching in the Zapata Peninsula: A dedicated (and lucky) bird-watcher might be able to spot 18 of Cuba's 22 endemic species in the swamps, mangroves, and wetlands of the Zapata Peninsula. In addition to the endemics, ornithologists and lay bird-watchers can spot over 100 other varieties of shore birds, transients, and waterfowl in this rich, wild region. Other top bird-watching destinations include La Güira National Park, as well as the areas around Cayo Coco and Cayo Guillermo and Baracoa.</p> <p>Cayo Largo: In the Archipelago de los Canarreos, off the south coast, 177 km southeast of Havana; 38 sq km, 26 km long, 2 km wide; glittering white sands faced by turquoise waters; 200 shipwrecks in the area, shallow coral reefs; wildlife: turtles, iguanas, cranes, flamingos, bee hummingbirds; Playa Paraiso – nude beach; Cayo Iguana – home to 100's of friendly iguanas</p>
<p>Parks</p>	<p>Gran Parque Natural Montemar: 4500 sq km, Peninsula de Zapata, vast wetland of mangroves, 160 birds species, 31 reptiles, 12 mammals, manatee sea-cows, hummingbirds, flamingos, parrots, Apr/May red land crabs swarm in their 10,000's</p> <p>The Viñales Valley: This broad, flat valley is punctuated by a series of limestone karst hill formations, or mogotes. The views from the small mountains surrounding the valley are spectacular. The area offers great opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, bird-watching, and rock climbing, as well as caves to explore.</p> <p>Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve: (100 km west of Havana) The mountainous region between Havana and Pinar del Río is another prime destination in the country's budding eco-tourism industry. With both the Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve and La Güira National Park, as well as eco-tourism projects in Soroa and at Las Terrazas, the area offers a wealth of opportunities to explore the flora and fauna of Cuba's inland mountain forests. Add the sulfurous mineral springs of San Diego de los Baños into the mix, and you've got the perfect recipe for some nature-based rest and relaxation. Declared a UNESCO biosphere reserve in 1985, the 25,000-hectare (nearly 62,000-acre) Sierra del Rosario encompasses a mountainous area of rapidly</p>

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	recovering secondary tropical deciduous forests, cut with numerous rivers and waterfalls. Nearly 100 species of birds can be spotted here, including over half of Cuba's 22 endemic species.
Gardens	Parque Josone in Varadero is a beautifully maintained little city park with cool shady grounds and gardens.
Castles/Forts	Castillo de la Real Fuerza, Havana: a well-preserved 16th-century fort sits within a broad cloverleaf moat. This is the oldest fort in Havana, and the oldest surviving fort in the hemisphere. It was a failure, built too small and too far from the harbour entrance to be of much use, but crossing over the old drawbridge and walking around the ancient stone battlements gives a great sense of history.

OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	Highlights of Cuban craftsmanship include articles made from leather, vegetable fibers, wood, stone, metal and coal as well as traditional clothing such as Cuban hats and "guayaberas", beautifully cool, comfortable shirts made from pure linen, and select Cuban tobacco products such as Havana cigars. There are nine shopping centres in Varadero where beautiful examples of Cuban craftsmanship can be found as well as delicious local produce. They are generally open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m
Markets	Havana: The biggest and best street market in Havana features three narrow rows of stalls stretching over a full city block. It's open daily from 10am to 6pm in Habana Vieja on Calle Tacón, between Calles Empedrado and Chacón. In addition to the typical arts and crafts and souvenir T-shirts, you'll find scores of local painters selling their wares. Varadero: There are several outdoor arts and craft markets around Varadero; the best, Artesanía , is at Avenida 1 and Calle 12. The Plaza de los Artesanos is also good. ARTex has stores at each of these sites, as well as at Avenida 1 and Calle 35. At each you will find a broad collection of trinkets, T-shirts, musical instruments, posters, and CDs.
Nightlife	Tropicana, Havana: This is the original and still reigning cabaret show in Cuba. The Tropicana has been at it for over 60 years and it shows no signs of slowing down. The sea of lithe dancers, the exuberance of their costumes, and the sheer excess of it all is worth the trip. It all occurs under the stars in the shadow of tall overhanging trees. There's a second Tropicana in Matanzas for visitors to Varadero, and another in Santiago. El Gato Tuerto, Havana: The mood is dark and bohemian, although the decor mixes Art Deco and kitsch in equal measure. The nightly show usually features three or four distinct acts, which can range from sultry boleros to up-tempo jazz. A storyteller, poet, or comedian might perform between sets. La Zorra y El Cuervo, Havana: This is Havana's best jazz club, and

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	<p>that's saying a lot. The vibe is mellow and unpretentious in this compact basement club, but the music and acts are usually culled from the best Cuba has to offer.</p> <p>Habana Café, Havana and Varadero: Mix the Tropicana with a Hard Rock Cafe, and Habana Café is more or less what you'd get. The floor show is a mix of cabaret-style dance numbers and slightly burlesque comedic bits, all anchored by a top-notch big band. After the show, the dance floor swings and writhes for hours</p>
Casinos	None in Cuba – unlike pre-Castro days!

CUISINE	
Food	<p>Cuban cuisine is influenced by Spanish, African, indigenous and other cultures. The national dish is ajiaco, a stew of assorted root vegetables cooked with pork, poultry or beef. Other typical dishes are lechón (roast pork), fried green plantains (tachinos, chatinos or tostones), black beans, congrí (rice with red beans), moros y cristianos (rice with black beans), picadillo a la habanera (ground beef in tomato sauce), roast chicken and tamales among others.</p> <p>The Cuban sweet tooth ensures that each meal includes dessert.</p>
Wine	<p>Cuban national cocktails include the Cuba Libre (rum and cola) and the Mojito (rum, lime, sugar, mint leaves, club soda and ice).</p> <p>If you request a rum in a small country restaurant do not be surprised if it is only available by the bottle. Havana Club is the national brand and the most popular. Expect to pay \$4 for three year old white rum or \$8 for seven year old dark rum.</p> <p>Cristal is a light beer and is available in "dollar" stores where Cubans with CUCs and visitors may shop. Cubans prefer the Bucanero Fuerte, which at 5.5% alcohol is a strong (hence the "fuerte") darker beer. Both Cristal and Bucanero are brewed by a joint venture with Labatts of Canada, whose beer is the only Cuban beer sold in CUC.</p> <p>In nearby Cardenas is the Arrechabala Rum Factory, where the brand Havana Club was born and where present-day Varadero and Buccanero rums are made. Tours of the factory are given daily between 9am and 4pm.</p>
Restaurants	<p>The best restaurants are within the major resorts, but good food will also be found in paladares (locally owned restaurants in private homes).</p> <p>Restaurants in Varadero: Mi Casita – Cuban style seafood; El Bodegon – Creole cooking; La Casa de Antiguiedades – best in town; Nightlife: La Cueva de Pirata – Latin music; Casa du Pont – quiet piano bar and gorgeous views</p>

MORE INFO	
Brochures	Transat Holidays Sun Collection 2015/16 Nolitours Sun 2015/16

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.



	Both of these brochures are available at your local travel agent.
Websites	www.transatholidays.com www.nolitours.com www.gocuba.ca
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	Several trips to Cuba including visits to: Havana, Santiago, Varadero, Holguin, Cayo Largo, Cayo Coco and Trinidad.

Chris Robinson Associates Inc does not warrant the quality, accuracy or completeness of any claims, statements or information contained within this document. This document was created at the time of broadcast and may not be current.