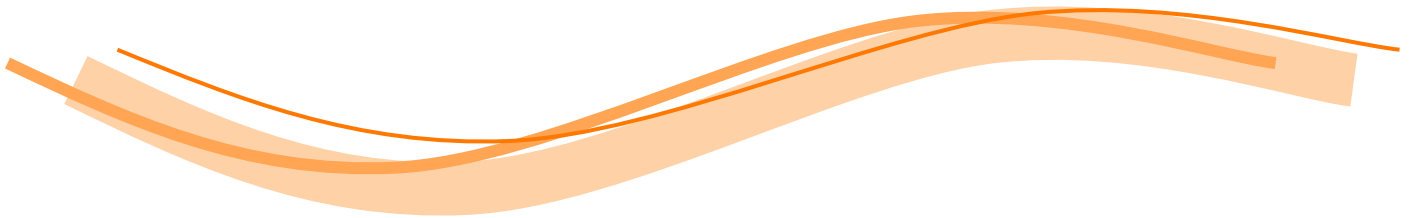




BARCELO RESORTS & TRANSAT HOLIDAYS





BARCELO RESORTS	<p>Barceló Hotels and Resorts is one of the world's most respected names in all-inclusive vacations. Barceló has a knack for making every place, the best place, and always providing the best holiday. They take the very essence of the local culture and invite you to discover everything it has to offer, while always taking care of the vacationer's every need.</p> <p>Transat Holidays and, sister company, Nolitours offer vacation packages at Barceló Resorts. You can pick up their winter brochures at your Travel Agent. These three great names together translate into a vacation cocktail of carefree days in the sun. Barceló Hotels are located in Punta Cana, Cancun, Riviera Maya, Los Cabos, Cayo Santa Maria, Varadero, Costa Rica and many other destinations.</p> <p>Transat Holidays is proud to feature eight Barceló resorts in its Transat Distinction Collection, an outstanding line of luxury hotels offered exclusively to Transat Holidays clients. With its Prestige Club, the Barceló hotel chain has perfected the art of providing guests with the ultimate vacation in the sun. Guests enjoy exclusive privileges, enhanced services and fabulous facilities at these resorts that are also renowned for their attentive service as well as their wide array of activities for couples and families.</p> <p>We focus on some fantastic Barceló Resorts on the clear, calm waters and pristine beaches of Playa Bavaro in the Punta Cana area on the east coast of the Dominican Republic. Spend endless days lounging on a white sand beach, sipping your tropical drink as the ocean stretches into the horizon. Barceló has a 2 kilometer long beach, the best beach of Punta Cana, protected by a coral reef that converts the sea into a natural swimming pool.</p> <p>New and exclusive to Transat Holidays is the Barceló Bávaro Palace Deluxe Prestige Class with Superior Rooms. The fantastic resort is in a unique and spectacular location, situated directly on Bávaro Beach, protected by a coral reef that makes for a perfect, totally calm sea. It boasts 198 renovated superior rooms.</p>
Barcelo History	<p>The name of Barceló, which began as a small transportation company, is today associated with one of the most prestigious holiday groups. Behind this lies the determination and hard work of three generations for seventy years.</p> <p>1931: Creation of Autocares Barceló (a transport company), founded by Simón Barceló in Felanitx (Majorca, Spain).</p> <p>1962: First hotel of the chain opened in Majorca, Spain. This stage</p>

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	<p>culminates in 1965, with the development of a new concept of hotel: the Barceló Pueblo Palma</p> <p>1985: The international hotel operations begin: opening of the first hotel in the Caribbean (Barceló Bávaro Beach Resort, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic). Thus, Barceló becomes the pioneer Spanish hotel company in the area</p> <p>1999: Opening of the Barceló Maya Resort complex, in the Mayan Riviera in México, and purchase of two hotels (Ixtapa and Huatulco) on Mexico's Pacific coast</p> <p>Barcelo believe that they have a great responsibility that includes social and environmental aspects, so Barceló Hotels & Resorts has explicitly confirmed its commitment to society and the environment by signing the United Nations Pact on Human Rights and the Environment</p>
<p>Websites</p>	<p>Have fun exploring:</p> <p>www.barcelo.com www.barcelobrochures.com www.barceloweddings.com</p>
<p>Travel Show Prize</p>	<p>A seven night all inclusive trip for two to the Barceló Bavaro Palace Deluxe Prestige Class. Exclusive to Transat Holidays, this newly renovated resort in Punta Cana is directly on Bávaro Beach in Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic.</p>
<p>Barcelo Resorts in Bavaro Beach, Punta Cana</p>	<p>In the Transat Holidays 2010 -2011 brochure: Barcelo Punta Cana Prestige Class Barcelo Bavaro Palace Deluxe Prestige Class</p> <p>In the Nolitours 2010-2011 brochure: Barcelo Bavaro Beach and Convention Center Barcelo Punta Cana Barcelo Bavaro Casino Barcelo Dominican Beach</p>
<p>Barcelo and Transat Holidays 2010-2011</p>	<p>Transat Holidays offers 10 Barcelo resorts in 8 destinations: Barcelo Cayo Santa Maria Beach Resort Prestige Class, Cayo Santa Maria, Cuba Barcelo Marina Palace Prestige Class, Varadero, Cuba Barcelo Puerto Plata Prestige Class, Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic Barcelo Punta Cana Prestige Class, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic Barcelo Bavaro Palace Deluxe Prestige Class, Punta Cana, DR Barcelo Karmina Palace, Manzanillo, Mexico Barcelo Puerto Vallarta, Mexico</p>

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	<p>Barcelo Costa Cancun, Cancun, Mexico Barcelo Maya Colonial Beach Prestige Class, Riviera Maya, Mexico Barcelo Maya Palace Beach Prestige Class, Riviera Maya, Mexico</p>
<p>Barcelo and Nolitours 2010-2011</p>	<p>Nolitours offers 15 Barcelo resorts in 10 destinations: Barcelo Langosta Beach, Liberia, Costa Rica Barcelo San Jose Palacio, San Jose, Costa Rica Barcelo Tambor Beach, San Jose, Costa Rica Barcelo Cayo Santa Maria Beach Resort, Cayo Santa Maria, Cuba Barcelo Marina Palace, Varadero, Cuba Barcelo Solymar, Varadero, Cuba Barcelo Capella Beach, La Romana, Dominican Republic Barcelo Puerto Plata, Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic Barcelo Bavaro Beach & Convention Center, Punta Cana, Dom Rep Barcelo Bavaro Casino, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic Barcelo Punta Cana, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic Barcelo Dominican Beach, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic Barcelo Tucancun Beach, Cancun, Mexico Barcelo Ixtapa Beach Resort, Ixtapa, Mexico Barcelo Maya Beach Resort, Riviera Maya, Mexico</p>

AIRLINE PARTNER	Air Transat
Flight details 2010/2011 - Toronto	<p>La Romana: Mondays/Tuesdays Puerto Plata: Five days a week Samana: Mondays, Thursdays Punta Cana: Seven days a week</p>
Flight details 2010/2011 - Montreal	<p>La Romana: Mondays/Tuesdays Puerto Plata: Four days a week Samana: Mondays/Thursdays, Saturdays Punta Cana: Six days a week</p>

<p>Barceló Bavaro Palace Deluxe</p>	<p>The five-star all-inclusive Barceló Bavaro Palace Deluxe Prestige Class welcomes you to the clear, calm waters and pristine beaches of Playa Bavaro on the eastern coast of the Dominican Republic, only 20 km from Punta Cana International Airport.</p> <p>Ease your mind from the worries of the outside world as you spend endless days lounging on three kilometers of white sand beach while sipping your tropical beverage of choice with the crystalline ocean stretching into the horizon.</p> <p>If you desire a more active vacation, choose from a wide array of onsite water sports including snorkeling around an offshore reef or venture further with an optional tour or excursion to discover the stunning palm-covered landscapes of the Dominican Republic.</p> <p>The Barceló Bávaro Palace Deluxe, the most upscale in a 4-hotel resort complex, boasts an elegant atmosphere complete with numerous</p>
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	<p>convenient amenities and encourages guests to utilize the additional facilities and restaurants located in the other four hotels using complimentary transportation services.</p> <p>Select the affordable Barceló All Inclusive program and take advantage of bountiful buffets, convenient services and extensive amenities included in this package.</p> <p>Families searching for a Caribbean paradise where endless options for excitement and adventure await will love this resort. Request the services of their on-site babysitter or allow your children to let loose at their Kids Club featuring fun-filled arts and crafts, activities and games. Barceló Bávaro Palace Deluxe also caters to couples seeking a tropical wedding destination, a seaside haven for honeymooners, or just a place for a picturesque romantic getaway.</p> <p>Plan your next beach vacation at the Barceló Bávaro Palace Deluxe and revel in the lush surroundings featuring white, powdery beaches, warm, clear waters, and cool Caribbean breezes.</p>
Location	On spectacular Bavaro Beach and just 20km from Punta Cana International Airport.
Accommodation	There are 488 suites in four 3-storey buildings. The Junior Suites feature air-conditioning, flat screen TV's, outdoor whirlpools and can accommodate up to four persons.
Services	There's a daily activity program, a nightly entertainment line-up and multiple pools at this luxurious resort.
Dining	There's seafood and Dominican a la carte restaurants, plus three restaurants at the Barcelo Bavaro Beach Caribe.
All-Inclusive	Buffet breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, domestic drinks and wine, activities, entertainment
Kids	Free kids club for children aged 4 to 12 years and children's pool. Babysitting is available at an extra charge.
Activities	Free rounds of golf are included in the all inclusive deal with Transat, as well as selected non-motorised water-sports, intro scuba lesson, volleyball, tennis, gym and mini-golf.
Deals with Transat Holidays	Free wedding and honeymoon packages are available with Transat Early booking bonus: Book up to 35 days prior to departure and save \$320 per couple per week. Prices for a one week all-inclusive package range from \$1069 to \$2649.

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<p>DOMINICAN REPUBLIC</p>	<p>Come away to paradise in the Dominican Republic. Explore the white sandy beaches, impressive mountain ranges, spectacular waterfalls and lush greenery of the Dominican Republic. And the history, music, food and culture that give it such charm and spirit.</p> <p>Puerto Plata Expect beautiful beaches, lush green valleys and majestic mountains, along with lively resorts, great nightlife, kite surfing and fabulous windsurfing. This popular destination features a wide range of activities to choose from! Sail to Paradise Island, go swimming with dolphins, enjoy a cabaret show and savour a delicious dinner, or simply spend the day sailing and snorkelling.</p> <p>La Romana Deserted beaches, protected lagoons, lush mangroves, towering cliffs and incredible snorkelling are features of this idyllic destination. You will never run out of things to do. La Romana offers a wide array of activities, including snorkelling, golf, 4 x 4 rides through the countryside, cave exploration, and excursions to Catalina, an uninhabited island.</p> <p>Samana Eco-friendly Samana offers long sandy beaches, majestic mountains and lush vegetation. The Samana peninsula is the ideal destination for nature lovers and sports enthusiasts alike. Once there, the options are endless! Lounge on the beach, tour the countryside in a Jeep, go whale watching, explore Las Haitises National Park, visit Cayo Levantado or simply sail the seas aboard a comfortable catamaran.</p> <p>Punta Cana Here there are miles of silky-fine white sand, gorgeous beaches, coconut palms, crystal clear turquoise waters and lush vegetation - Punta Cana certainly has the wow factor. Beyond its exceptional natural beauty, this vacation spot offers something for everyone. Sail to the idyllic island of Saona, play a round or two of golf at one of the many courses, swim with dolphins, discover the countryside as you drive your own Jeep or go zip lining above the trees.</p> <p>Transat Holidays and its sister company Nolitours have weekly direct flights to all the major destinations in the Dominican Republic. For departures beginning on November 1, 2010, Transat Holidays and Nolitours will offer not only packages but also the flexibility of air only flights to the Dominican Republic.</p>
<p>Location</p>	<p>In the heart of the Caribbean archipelago - nestled amid Cuba, Jamaica,</p>

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	<p>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</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.</p> <p>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 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 a 3 day hike, \$240 plus 4 mules</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, 37 pesos = Cdn \$ at 5 November 2010
Tipping	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.

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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 threats 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 theft, robberies, and muggings, and most of it is limited to Santo Domingo. There is a low incidence of violent crime against tourists, however. Follow some simple common-sense rules, and you should 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	30 degrees Centigrade and cloudy for 6 November 2010.
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	The new "Samaná International Airport" at El Catey makes the Samaná Peninsula accessible to direct international air travel. This adds to the existing airports of Santo Domingo, Puerto Plata, Punta Cana and La Romana to allow visitors to fly directly to the resorts of choice.
Flying time	It's just over a 4 hour flight from Toronto or Montreal with Air Transat.

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	<p>There is a departure tax of US\$20 which must be paid in U.S. currency as at November 2010.</p>
<p>Destinations</p>	<p>Punta Cana: 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> <p>Puerto Plata: Columbus wanted to establish a city at Puerto Plata and name it La Isabela. Unfortunately, a storm detained him, so it wasn't until 1502 that Nicolás de Ovando founded Puerto Plata ("port of silver"), 209km northwest of Santo Domingo. The port became the last stop for ships going back to Europe, their holds laden with treasures taken from the New World.</p> <p>Puerto Plata appeals to a mass-market crowd that prefers less-expensive all-inclusives. More accommodations of this kind continue to pop up on this coast, and yet many are still booked solid almost year-round.</p> <p>Most of the hotels are not actually in Puerto Plata itself but in a tourist zone called Playa Dorada, which consists of major hotels, a scattering of secluded condominiums and villas, a Robert Trent Jones, Jr.-designed golf course, and a riding stable.</p> <p>This was the first custom-built tourist haven in the Dominican Republic. If you enjoy beige sand that's rarely too hot to walk on, and a never-ending array of water-sports kiosks, chaise lounges, and loudspeakers projecting merengue music, you'll be happy here. One important note: It</p>

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rains sometimes in Puerto Plata during the winter. If you want guaranteed sun, go to Punta Cana or the beaches on the southern coast.

Samana: Samaná has a distinctly modern and airy feel that is not found in most Dominican towns and cities. There is a simple reason for this: although its origins stretch far back in time, the town had to be rebuilt after it was completely destroyed by fire in 1946. Today, wide avenues, traffic circles and recently constructed buildings give it a very distinctive look that is not without its charms. Samaná's location, sheltered by mountains and overlooking the magnificent Bahía de Samaná dotted with fishing boats and yachts, adds greatly to the appeal of the town. This lively city boasts a pretty little port, one of the most colourful public markets in the country, a few quality hotels and several good restaurants.

The structure known as La Churcha, in downtown Samaná, was brought here from England in 1820. Originally a Methodist church, it is now home to the Evangelical Church of Samaná. The Sunday services are celebrated with gospels. The little island of Cayo Vigía can be reached via a long footbridge located just behind the Cayacoa hotel. The island has experienced more prosperous times in the past; the view, however, is still striking, encompassing Samaná, the port, and the bay, and visitors can go for a swim here.

La Romana: On the southeast coast of the Dominican Republic, La Romana was once a sleepy sugar-cane town that specialized in cattle-raising. Visitors didn't come near the place until Gulf + Western Industries opened a luxurious tropical paradise resort, the Casa de Campo, about 2km east of town. It's the finest resort in the Dominican Republic, and especially popular among golfers.

Just east of Casa de Campo is Altos de Chavón, a charming and whimsical copy of what might have been a fortified medieval village in Spain, southern France, or Italy. It's the country's leading attraction.

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.

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

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	<p>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>Cabarete: The winds that blow constantly southward off the Atlantic swept in a hip young crowd in the 1990s, as Cabarete emerged as the premier windsurfing site in the Caribbean. But only a small portion of the visitors who come here today are actually interested in the waves and jumping on a board. Many bask in the glory of the surfers by day and strut their stuff in the hyper hip town bars by night. News of Cabarete's allure has spread among the 20-something populations of Europe. Especially prevalent are visitors from northern Europe; there are fewer North Americans here than you'd expect. The big attraction is Cabarete Beach, with its white sands and ideal wind and surf conditions. Cabarete isn't particularly distinguished architecturally, consisting of a series of relatively small-scale hotels, restaurants, and gift shops lining either side of the highway that parallels the north coast. Virtually everything in town lies along this street (Calle Principal), with the exception of small-scale shops that are found on narrow alleyways that bisect the main street. But as word of the resort has spread, there have been increasing numbers of large all-inclusive hotels built on the outskirts of town. Cabarete hosts an annual weeklong windsurfing tournament every June. Only amateurs are allowed to participate.</p>
Distances	Santo Domingo to Puerto Plata: 235km; to La Romana: 130km; to Punta Cana: 225km; to La Samana: 320km
Ferries	Shuttle boats to Cayo Levantado from Samana Also ferry to Sabana de la Mar across Samana Bay
Trains	There is no passenger train service in the DR
Car Rental	<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</p>

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	downtown Santo Domingo. Avis and Hertz also have offices in La Romana and in Punta Cana.
Buses	<p>Públicos are unmetered multipassenger taxis that travel along main 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¢/8p). The minimum fare is RD\$3 (10¢/5p).</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>

ACCOMMODATION TYPES	Transat Holidays and Nolitours feature the widest range of hotels and resorts in the DR, with Barcelo Hotels and Resorts perhaps being the best known group of resorts; they are located in most of the destinations.
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TARGET GROUPS	
Kids	<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>Ocean World, Puerto Plata Phone: (809) 291-1000 Website: www.oceanworld.net This large marine theme park offers interactive experiences such as swimming with bottlenose dolphins in the world's largest dolphin lagoon, feeding stingrays, exploring an artificial reef, getting close to sharks in the world's first shark interaction pool and swimming just inches from tigers. Parents need not worry, as children and tigers are safely separated by glass. Guests have the opportunity to experience a rainforest complete with waterfalls, beaches, lagoons and wildlife. Birds, iguanas, lizards, frogs, snakes, fish and tigers will captivate park visitors.</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</p>

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	<p>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 Zoologico 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 Zoologico 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 to enjoy their visit to Santo Domingo's National Zoo.</p>
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 for those romantic strolls at sunset!
Honeymoons & Weddings	Transat can help you arrange weddings, honeymoons and vow renewals in the Dominican Republic. Let them know through your travel agent and take a look at page 17 of their Transat Holidays 2010/2011 brochure for more details.
Seniors	Endless beaches, excellent resorts and accessible tours to the countryside make this an excellent choice for the older vacationer.
UNIQUES	Usually starting in January and lasting until late March , Samana's humpback whales return every year to these tropical waters. Tours

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	<p>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>
<p>Surprising</p>	<p>Los Altos de Chavon village near the south coast is an oddball 16th century Italian style confection on hilltop, crafts, workshops, Taino Art Museum, great views, shopping, restaurants.</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</p>

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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 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

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	<p>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.)</p> <p>Following Trujillo's death, political unrest again prevailed. The Dominican Republic went through a series of leaders until 1965 when Lyndon B. 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>
Books	<p>Frommer's Caribbean 2011 An Adventure Guide to the Dominican Republic by Harry Pariser See also an article I have written for one of the airline inflight magazines: http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/travelarticles/TA_Dominican.pdf</p>
1000 Places to see before you die	<p>Casa de Campo near La Romana – one of the world's best golf and sporting destinations</p>
Must Sees	<p>The Cascada el Limón waterfall is immersed in a tropical forest on the Samaná peninsula. Tours offer you a relaxing, pleasant and unforgettable trip; a one- to two-hour donkey ride through tropical forest leads to this striking 55-metre waterfall. After bathing in the refreshing, crystal-clear water, you can enjoy a typical meal in the local restaurant.</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</p>
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	<p>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>
Golf	<p>Punta Cana: The Bávaro Golf Course, at Barcelo Bávaro Beach, Golf & Casino Resort, Bávaro Beach (tel. 809/686-5797), is the best golf course on this end of the island, and bears the honor of being the golf course whose allure helped open the eastern DR to the tourist boom. Greens fees are RD\$1,920 for 18 holes, with cart rentals going for RD\$1,440. Guests of the hotel pay only 50% of greens fees. Open daily 7am to 5pm.</p> <p>Punta Cana Golf Club, near the Punta Cana Resort and Club (tel. 809/959-4653), is the best and most sought-after of the four golf courses now flourishing in Punta Cana. 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. For 18 holes, hotel guests pay RD\$3,520, and non guests are charged RD\$4,800. In summer, greens fees are reduced to RD\$2,144 for hotel guests, RD\$2,944 for non-guests.</p>
Fishing	<p>Sea fishing is great in all the resorts for Marlin, sailfish, benito, tarpon, dorado, snook.</p> <p>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. A 3-hour tour costs RD\$868 (US\$31/) per person, and includes tackle, bait, and soft drinks.</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</p>

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	reasonable distance of one another. For RD\$1,800 (US\$54) an hour, 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.
Hiking	In the National Park and along the endless beaches the walks are superb. For a special hike, there's a three day guided hike up Pico Duarte , the highest mountain in the Caribbean.
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	A few blocks back from the waterfront in Samana, the old First African Wesleyan Methodist Church of Samaná, popularly known as La Churcha, on Santa Bárbara and Duarte (daily 9am–6pm), tangibly maintains what African-American culture is left in Samaná. The prefabricated, tin-roofed structure was originally shipped over by the English Methodist Church in 1823, in support of a recently emigrated African-American community that still remains here. These days it's known as the Dominican Evangelical Church.
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</p> <p>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</p>

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	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 honored with two regional festivals each year.
Films	Cayo Levantado is the original Bacardi Island photographed in the 1970s rum campaign
Museums	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.
Festivals	<p>Dominican Republic Jazz Festival: November 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 – Diabolo 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>

ATTRACTIONS	
Beaches	<p>Playa Bonita, 13km of uninterrupted beach that begins just west of Playa Las Ballenas, 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>
Wildlife	<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; December to March is the season for whale watching here.</p>

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	The hutia is an endemic mammal, nocturnal, 30cms, lives in caves and is rarely seen.
Parks	<p>Los Haitises National Park is 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 in the park.</p> <p>There are 16 national parks across the country and 67 protected areas. Wildlife includes caimans in the southwest; flamingos, parrots; the solenodon (the Caribbean's only insectivorous mammal, almost extinct); sea turtles, and whales galore!</p>
Gardens	<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. Tel 809-385-2611</p> <p>www.jbn-sdq.org</p>
Historical Buildings	<p>Santo Domingo:</p> <p>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. 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>

OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	<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 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.</p> <p>Notable cigar brands include: Santiago, Cibao Valley, Davidoff, Churchill</p>

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Markets	Most of the towns have fun markets to explore. Samana town has one of the most colourful public markets in the DR.
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>Samaná has a great nightlife scene during the busier times of the year, with most of the action centred around the outdoor food and liquor shacks on the western end of the Malecón, e.g. Naomi, a slick dark, bustling place with great light shows and sound system, playing a mix of merengue and European techno.</p>
Casinos	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.

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> <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>

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	<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.</p> <p>Local beers, which are very good, are Quisqueya and El Presidente.</p>
Rum	<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 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>
Restaurants	<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</p>

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	<p>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>In Samana: Le France, Camilo's, La Hacienda, Tropical Lodge, Chino's up the hill; El Riconcito, with typical Dominican food and a few restaurants on the market with fresh fried fish or chicken.</p>
MORE INFO	DR Tourism Office: 514-499-1918
Brochures	Transat Holidays and Nolitours 2010/2011 brochures available at travel agents
Websites	www.transatholidays.com and www.nolitours.com www.barcelo.com www.godominicanrepublic.com
PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	Puerto Plata – Jarabacoa; South Coast – Boca Chica, Santo Domingo, Isla Saona; Punta Cana

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<p>TRANSAT AND NOLITOURS</p>	<p>Transat Holidays features eight Barceló resorts in its Transat Distinction Collection, an outstanding line of luxury hotels offered exclusively to Transat Holidays clients. New and exclusive to Transat Holidays is the Barceló Bávaro Palace Deluxe Prestige Class with Superior Rooms. The fantastic resort is in a unique and spectacular location, situated directly on Bávaro Beach, protected by a coral reef that makes for a perfect, totally calm sea.</p>
<p>Transat Background</p>	<p>Transat is now the largest tour operator in Canada, and is at the core of the vertical integration process developing and marketing vacation products as well as flights to destinations in the South and Europe. The company acts as a master craftsman in assembling different components of leisure travel: air transportation, passenger transfers from airport to hotel, accommodation, recreational and cultural activities, meals, cruises, and much more.</p> <p>As an industry leader, Transat Holidays offers departures from many Canadian cities including: St-John's, Halifax, Moncton, Fredericton, Montréal, Québec, Ottawa, Hamilton, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Vancouver, Victoria, Comox, Abbotsford, Prince George and Kelowna. (as at 2010)</p>
<p>Mission</p>	<p>Transat Holidays 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>Products</p>	<p>Packages, Cruises, Hotels, Flights, Tours, Car Rentals & 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 Holidays are subject to a rigorous standard review.</p>
<p>Wider Seats</p>	<p>Air Transat has added more legroom on all their aircraft, making the journey to and from your destination even more comfortable.</p>
<p>Air Transat Upgrades</p>	<p>Air Transat have introduced its new Economy Class meal service on sun destination flights.</p> <p>As part of its ongoing efforts to provide clients with the best possible service, Air Transat has upgraded its onboard service. Passengers flying south will now be welcomed onboard with a glass of champagne, while early morning passengers will be greeted with a mimosa. The meal service has also been improved. The airline will now offer passengers a more complete meal tray, including a choice of two hot meals, a complimentary glass of wine and dessert.</p>

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Awards	Agent's Choice Awards: Transat Holidays ranked number one for a third year in a row in 2009 by Canada's travel agents according to the results of the Agents' Choice Awards, a survey carried out by Canadian Travel Press and Travel Courier.
Current Brochures	Transat Holidays Sun 2010-2011 and Nolitours Sun 2010-2011 brochures are available at your local travel agent.
Air Transat Kids Club	<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 while 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>
Transat Club Class	<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> <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

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of gourmet meals • Choice of wine and more
Option Plus	<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 for southbound destinations and \$99 for European destinations.</p>
Transat and Sustainable Tourism	<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>"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."</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. Air Transat, which proved its forward-looking approach by adopting a strict fuel-management system in 2003, has since 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>
Gift Certificates	<p>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.</p> <p>Travel gift certificates are always appreciated, and they are appropriate</p>

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	<p>for all occasions, whether for a wedding, anniversary, graduation, or simply to show you care.</p> <p>Transat gift certificates are valid on all Air Transat, Nolitours, or Transat Holidays products in our brochures. They can be redeemed at a travel agent's office at the time of reservation.</p> <p>To order your gift certificates call 1-800-322-6649.</p>
<p>Hurricane Guarantee</p>	<p>Nolitours and Transat Holidays provide vacationers with true peace of mind. Vacationers can now travel secure in the knowledge that their sun holiday will be protected should a hurricane warning affect their destination in Florida, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America. The Nolitours/Transat Holidays Hurricane Policy is available free of charge to its passengers and is automatically applied for departures between June 1 and November 30, 2010. Passengers can choose from one of the following four options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travel at a later date Passengers who choose to travel at a later date can do so at no additional cost. Travel must be completed on or before December 15, 2010. The destination, hotel and room category must remain the same. 2. Travel to another destination Passengers who choose to travel to another destination can do so by selecting another Nolitours/Transat Holidays destination that is not at risk of a hurricane. Travel must take place within four weeks of the original departure date. In the event the package price is higher than the original booking, the passenger will be responsible for paying the difference. 3. Travel to the original destination Passengers who want to travel to their original destination may do so, provided Nolitours/Transat Holidays is still operating at the destination. No refund will be issued if this option is taken. 4. Cancel with a full refund Passengers who choose NOT to travel may cancel with a full refund (Excluding travel insurance costs, if purchased).
<p>Transat Excursions from Punta Cana</p>	<p>ZIP LINE Soar like a bird over the treetops on the ten different zip-lines in an eco tourist park. The professional and knowledgeable guides will provide you with an unforgettable experience.</p> <p>BAVARO RUNNERS – SAFARI ADVENTURE Discover the Dominican countryside with its traditional villages, mountains and sugar cane plantations. Stops are scheduled for lunch and swimming. Experience the Dominican way of life. Unforgettable!</p> <p>SWIM WITH THE DOLPHINS</p>

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A once-in-a-lifetime experience and a dream come true... Learn about these amazing mammals as you interact with them!

BUGGY EXCURSION

Drive your own dune buggy through the Dominican countryside, then stop off to relax or go for a swim. A day to remember!

SAONA CATAMARAN – MOTOR BOAT

Sail the crystal-clear Caribbean Sea on the catamaran cruise of your dreams. On the way back, experience a thrilling speedboat ride and go swimming in one of the world's most beautiful natural pools!

MARINARIUM

Swim with sharks and stingrays at this unique marine park, the only one of its kind in Punta Cana. A unique experience, not to be missed!

HORSEBACK RIDING

Enjoy a beautiful horseback ride on the beach.

SANTO DOMINGO

Enjoy a cultural and fascinating tour of the capital of the Dominican Republic, the oldest city in the Americas. Visit the first Cathedral of the New World, the Alcazar of Columbus, the Pantheon, the colonial city, and "Los Tres Ojos", the amazing underground caverns.

TROPICAL STORM FULL DAY

Go to a beautiful snorkelling area, enjoy a bath in the natural pool, have a nice lunch on the boat and learn how to dance the bachata and merengue! All this while sailing on a magnificent catamaran along the beautiful Bavaro coast.

TROPICAL STORM SUNSET

Enjoy a beautiful sunset cruise aboard a catamaran, bathe in a natural pool and finish up this magical evening with a lobster dinner in one of the most popular restaurants on the beach.

BUCANEROS – SPEED BOAT

Discover the beautiful turquoise waters aboard your own speed boat. This 3-hour tour will show you the best of this spectacular area.

DEEP-SEA FISHING

Did someone say fishing? We have everything you need for a private fishing trip or a shared charter excursion. An unforgettable experience!

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	<p>HIGUEY SIGHTSEEING Visit historic Higüey City, and marvel at magnificent Nuestra Señora de la Altagracia Basilica. Go souvenir shopping in local stores, and finish up this fascinating excursion with a visit to a rum factory located near a Taino cave.</p> <p>ANIMAL ADVENTURE PARK Come and visit this unique park, where you get to interact with animals. Become a trainer for a day and work with sea lions. Different animal shows are also available throughout the park.</p> <p>QUAD EXCURSION This tour will bring out the Indiana Jones in you. Drive your own four-wheeler on the beach and through some breathtaking scenery. Stop at a lovely beach for a refreshing swim. The tour guides will look after you every step of the way.</p>
<p>Transat Excursions from Samana</p>	<p>ADVENTURE AT EL LIMON WATERFALL Ride on horseback through the exotic forest and find yourself at the foot of a spectacular 55-metre waterfall. Go swimming in its crystal-clear waters and enjoy an excellent Dominican meal at a traditional ranch. An unforgettable discovery in the heart of the jungle.</p> <p>LOS HAITISES NATIONAL PARK Sail across Samana Bay to the National Park of Los Haitises. Expect to be amazed by this tropical jungle with its immense mangroves, wonderful islands and caverns with authentic native pictograms by the Taino Indians. On your way back, stop at the spectacular island of Cayo Levantado.</p> <p>CATAMARAN Spend a relaxing day aboard a superb catamaran. Sail the beautiful turquoise sea. Snorkel and discover the wonders of the underwater world before enjoying an excellent Dominican meal. It will be a day to remember.</p> <p>SAMANA RUNNERS Tour the Dominican countryside by Jeep: meet the locals, see how they live and visit a typical dwelling. Enjoy a fabulous meal and swim in the river among waterfalls. A tropical adventure not to be missed.</p> <p>WHALE WATCHING Meet Samana's most faithful visitors; the humpback whales. Known as the best whale watching spot in the Caribbean, this spectacular area welcomes over 1000 whales from mid-January to mid-March.</p>

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	<p>Experience nature at its best.</p> <p>QUAD + BOAT + SNORKELLING Drive a 4-wheel quad through the countryside and tropical forest. Go on a snorkelling adventure and explore life under the sea, followed by a delicious Dominican meal and a swim in the spectacular Playa Rincon.</p> <p>AVENTURA TROPICAL Take a 4 x 4 to Samana’s countryside to see how the people live and go horseback riding on scenic jungle trails. Visit one of the country’s most pristine beaches and savour authentic Dominican cuisine. Relaxing; yet unforgettable.</p> <p>SANTO DOMINGO Enjoy a fascinating cultural tour of the capital of the Dominican Republic, the oldest city in the Americas. Visit the first Cathedral of the New World, the Alcazar of Columbus, the Pantheon, the colonial city, and “Los Tres Ojos”, the amazing underground caverns.</p>
<p>Transat Excursions from Puerto Plata</p>	<p>PUERTO PLATA RUNNERS Explore the Dominican countryside as you tour typical villages, mountains and rivers, and enjoy the spectacular scenery. Stops are scheduled for lunch and swimming. White-sand beaches, crystal-clear waters, lush forests and rich culture.</p> <p>OCEANWORLD The newest jewel in the Caribbean offering the most exciting animal encounters. Swim with dolphins, pet and feed sharks or play with sea lions. The marine park is also home to stingrays, tropical fish, exotic birds, reptiles and even tigers.</p> <p>RAFTING Hop on a raft and enjoy the cool waters of the Yaque del Norte, the longest river in the Caribbean. Professional guides will take you through canyons, rapids and rarely seen spots. Action and nature together.</p> <p>DOLPHIN SWIM Feed and snuggle up with two playful dolphins, who will give you a thrilling dorsal fin ride.</p> <p>BRAVISSIMO Enjoy an exquisite dinner in an elegant environment overlooking the Ocean World Marina. The meal is followed by the Bravissimo show, which offers tropical rhythms and astonishing costumes that will take you on an enchanted journey through the Caribbean. Try your luck at the</p>

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casino before you leave.

ISLA PARAISO

Pass plantations and cactus plants, and sail to a beautiful island surrounded by coral reefs and crystal-clear waters, where you can snorkel or simply relax in the sun.

SANTO DOMINGO

Enjoy a fascinating cultural tour of the capital of the Dominican Republic, the oldest city in the Americas. Visit the first Cathedral of the New World, the Alcazar of Columbus, the Pantheon, the colonial city, and “Los Tres Ojos”, the amazing underground caverns.

TIP TOP SOSUA

Fun in the sun onboard this catamaran. Enjoy some snorkelling or just take in the rays. Lunch onboard.

BRIANDA JEEP SAFARI

For vacationers in Rio San Juan: the most popular excursion. Experience the culture of the people and venture into the real Dominican Republic. See the inside of a typical home and visit a local school. The most memorable day of your vacation.

HORSEBACK RIDING

Travel through mountains and country villages on horseback and enjoy a refreshing swim. Take a boat ride across the Gri-Gri Laguna, the mangroves, a swallow cave and the natural swimming pool (weather permitting). Top it all off with Playa Grande’s crystal blue waters and white sand.

PUERTO PLATA AND SOSUA

Visit Puerto Plata’s main attractions: the San Felipe Fort, Brugal rum factory, the downtown area with its old Victorian houses and an amber gallery. Spend a leisurely afternoon at the flea market or relax on the beach of Sosua.

QUAD – 4 WHEELER

Drive your own 4-wheeler through the countryside, amidst sugarcane fields and tropical fruit plantations. Refresh yourself in a river and go swimming at Bergantin Beach.

FIESTA 151

Enjoy a typical Dominican night-time carnival celebration. It’s a cultural adventure, but most importantly it’s a fiesta! You’ll enjoy a fantastic

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	<p>Dominican-style 5-course feast with free-flowing drinks, and the dancers will be sure to keep you entertained.</p> <p>TIP TOP LUPERON Embark on a luxurious catamaran. Journey along the most breathtaking coastline of the North Coast and enjoy the serenity of Cambiaso Bay. Snorkelling, swimming and lunch on the beach under palm trees!</p>
<p>Transat Excursions from La Romana Area</p>	<p>SANTO DOMINGO Enjoy a fascinating cultural tour of the capital of the Dominican Republic, the oldest city in the Americas. Visit the first Cathedral of the New World, the Alcazar of Columbus, the Pantheon, the colonial city, and the amazing underground caverns, “Los Tres Ojos”.</p> <p>SAONA CATAMARAN – MOTOR BOAT Sail the crystal-clear Caribbean Sea on the catamaran cruise of your dreams. On the way back, experience a thrilling speedboat ride and go swimming in one of the world’s most beautiful natural pools.</p> <p>BAYAHIBE RUNNERS – SAFARI ADVENTURE Discover the Dominican countryside’s traditional villages, mountains and sugar cane plantations. Stops are scheduled for lunch, swimming and much more. Experience the Dominican way of life.</p> <p>ALTOS DE CHAVON Visit a cigar factory, the Central Park, a local fruit and meat market, and a supermarket for great shopping at local prices. Visit Altos de Chavon, a replica of a medieval Italian village with a breathtaking view of the Chavon River.</p> <p>CRAZY WHEELS Drive through the countryside on an ATV. Pass through bateys (Haitian villages) to the sugar cane fields and stop at the village of Gato on the Chavon River for a sampling of local fruit. A fun excursion you are sure to remember.</p> <p>BLUE LAGOON SPEEDBOAT Ride a two-passenger speedboat to the Chavon River and admire the spectacular scenery or sail along the Bayahibe coast to the pristine natural pool for a swim among starfish.</p> <p>PRO SAONA SNORKELLING Discover Saona and explore Catalinita, abundant in seashells, go snorkelling on a coral reef, have lunch on the beach and enjoy a swim in a natural pool.</p>

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	<p>MARINARIUM Swim with sharks and stingrays at this unique marine park, the only one of its kind in Punta Cana.</p>
<p>Transat Special Deals</p>	<p>Transat currently has some very special deals with Barcelo Hotels and Resorts this winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Early booking deals of up to \$320 per couple per week- Free wedding and honeymoon packages- Nov 27 2010 dept 7 nts all inclusive at Barcelo Punta Cana from Toronto: \$528 + \$331 tax- Nov 26 2010 dept 7 nts all inclusive at Barcelo Punta Cana from Montreal: \$1829 tax incl <p>Check out their website at www.TransatHolidays.com for latest deals</p>

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