

Dominican Republic

Destination Guide

ARRIVING IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- 1) You will be given immigration forms to fill out during your flight. Keep a pen, your passports, and travel documents easily accessible from your seat.
- 2) You will deplane using a set of steps and walk outside before entering the airport terminal. Please advise airline personnel if you will require mobility assistance.
- 3) Next you will enter the Immigration line. Have your passport and completed forms in hand, answer any questions from the officer.
- 4) Go to the luggage carousel and claim all of your checked bags.
- 5) Take all of your belongings to the Customs line. Your bags may be x-rayed, or selected for additional inspection.

NOTE: The previous requirement to purchase a \$10 tourist card has been discontinued. The cost is now included in your airline ticket.

FINDING YOUR HOTEL TRANSFER

After clearing Customs, you'll enter the arrivals hall. FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS IN YOUR TRAVEL DOCUMENTS TO LOCATE YOUR TRANSFER COMPANY, whose representative will be wearing the proper uniform and have your name on the reservation list. Ignore any timeshare representatives who may try to ask questions or get you to follow them.

CURRENCY

US Dollars are widely accepted for small purchases in tourist areas and at most resorts. If required, you can obtain Dominican pesos from an ATM or exchange bureau. Always verify which currency a vendor is using for a transaction, and know the exchange rate. Use caution when carrying or storing any amount of cash, and a credit card is often the safest bet.

LANGUAGE

Spanish is the primary language, but staff in tourist areas and at resort front desks often speak at least a little English. A friendly smile, patient attitude, and hand gestures can often bridge the gap. Learning a few basic Spanish phrases or using an app like Google Translate may be helpful.

TIMESHARE / VACATION CLUB

At the airport or resort you may be offered discounted tours, promotional items, or other "freebies" that are most likely connected with a timeshare or vacation club company. Their presentations often take up considerable time and can be high-pressure sales pitches. Firmly say no if you do not wish to be approached about this. If you do attend, USE EXTREME CAUTION before entering into a contractual agreement in a foreign country.

DRESS CODE

Your resort may have a dress code for restaurants. Most will require a bathing suit cover-up or shirt for midday meals. Dinner dress codes vary by resort and restaurant. Some may require collared shirts or closed-toed shoes for men, and flip-flops, shorts, or tank tops may be prohibited. Ask your Travel Specialist if you have questions about your resort's policies.

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STAYING HEALTHY

WATER – Do not drink or otherwise consume tap water. The resort will provide bottled water for drinking, and you may wish to use it for brushing your teeth. Use extra caution if eating or drinking outside of your resort.

SUN – Be sure to apply plenty of sunscreen in a higher SPF than normal, even on cloudy days. The sun in the tropics is more intense and can be reflected by the water and sand.

BUGS – Insects are common in the tropics. Consider using bug spray to ward off mosquitoes and no-see-ums, and bring along some anti-itch cream. Keep your balcony door closed and do not leave food in your hotel room.

RETURN TRANSFER TO THE AIRPORT

Your transfer company will confirm your pick-up time a day or two before your departure, via a phone call to your room or by requesting you to stop at their lobby desk.

Once you receive your scheduled pick-up time, compare it to your flight's departure time. Make sure to have adequate time for the drive to the airport, airline check in, and security screening. (Lines often move slowly, especially at peak travel times!) If you are not comfortable with the time scheduled, contact your transfer company.

The night before checkout, contact the bell staff to schedule assistance with your luggage for the next day.

Arrive in the hotel lobby at least 20 minutes before your scheduled pick-up time to complete your checkout.

RETURNING TO THE U.S.

1) You may be given immigration forms to fill out during your flight. Keep a pen, your passports, travel documents, and receipts from anything you purchased during your trip easily accessible from your seat.

2) After deplaning, you will enter the Immigration line. Have your passport and completed forms in hand, answer any questions from the officer. **NOTE:** Some airports now offer automated kiosks to enter your passport information, have your photo taken, and print a receipt to present to the Customs officer.

3) Go to the luggage carousel and claim all of your checked bags.

4) Take all of your luggage to the Customs line. You may be asked questions about what you are bringing back into the country, and your belongings may be subject to search.

5) For connecting flights or to reach the final airport exit, you may need to pass your checked luggage back to the airline. This is usually done at a counter outside of the Customs area.

6) **DUTY FREE REMINDER:** If you have to pass another security checkpoint before proceeding to the next gate or to the airport exit, you will not be able to carry your liquid duty-free purchases with you. These need to be placed in your checked bags before handing them over to the airline.