

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: WHALE WATCHING PARADISE



Dominican Republic is often described as the earthly paradise, and while that is for the tourists to confirm, whales have already selected it as their own safe haven. From January to March, local Samana Bay becomes the best place in the world to watch these fascinating animals.

Whales often seem like some magical creatures coming from a different time and it is no surprise whale watching has become so popular. Finding the gentle giants may be somewhat challenging, unless one knows where to look. **Dominican Republic happens to be one of the places which will soon become a whale watching paradise.** The Samana Bay attracts thousands of humpbacks every year, and in a few days, the spectacle is starting.

Each mid-January, up to 5000 whales migrate there to mate and give birth. Most stay in the bay until mid-March but excursions are running as long as there are animals to watch. These rare mammals have been coming there for centuries, as many of local ancient cave drawings suggest. The determined males tend to linger in the outer bays to compete for females, while these remain in the shallow waters to look after their young. **A sanctuary was created there in 1966**, one of the first of its kind. Tourists marvel at the number of whales present, which never drops below 300 at any given time.

Whale watching is unique enough to attract travellers, but in Dominican Republic, it presents only the tip of the iceberg. Puerto Plata is one of the most popular places to start, the natural wonders continue with Los Haitises National park, the 27 Waterfalls of Damajagua, the Pico Duarte - the highest mountain in the Caribbean. Local varied landscape is equally challenging for trekking and hiking enthusiasts as well as kayaking devotees. Scuba divers praise local pristine waters and local reputation as an unrivalled golf destination certainly grows. Dominican Republic is simply at the top of the list.

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