

Ruta Panorámica Route Guide

SANTIAGO - LA CUMBRE - PUERTO PLATA

RDS 20.

Explore The Panoramic Highway...

...enjoy

- Amber Mines
- Spectacular views • Country cuisine • Eco lodge

...discover

- Zipline • Cascading
- Cycling • Hiking • Swimming holes • Horseback Riding • Off-Road

...shop for

- Fresh cheese and yogurts
- Exotic plants • Organic fruits and vegetables • Fresh free-range meats • Homemade sweets
- Amber • Souvenirs • Rustic furniture

...from ocean to mountains, enjoy 30 kms of Pure Nature!



About Us!

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Name

Gregorio Luperon Tourist Highway Signage

Objectives

- Brand and integrate Gregorio Luperon Tourist Highway as "The Santiago-Puerto Plata Panoramic Route" and promote it as a viable tourism/travel option in the Dominican Republic
- Re-stimulate traffic on the highway and promote its appeal as "30 kms of Pure Nature!"
- Inform travelers of the natural and cultural resources of the highway, including the amber mines of La Cumbre, the coffee traditions of Pedro García and the heritage of sugar cane in Montellano; the panoramic vistas of the Cordillera Septentrional mountain range and the culture of rural Dominican life;
- Promote the organic and natural production of local fruits vegetables and exotic plants
- Promote the use of renewable materials in the production of artisan products
- Promote local products such as amber jewelry, rustic furniture and local value-added foods
- Promote excursions and activities such as hiking, cascading, horseback riding, cycling, zipline, etc.

ABOUT US

This UMPC (Municipal Heritage Committee) unites three communities located on the Gregorio Luperon Tourist Highway. It is a non-governmental organization constituted to create frameworks for the development and co-management of ecotourism and cultural resources that promote sustainable development in the region.



This project is financed by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) through the TURISOPP initiative, focused on the development of rural tourism based on public-private sector cooperation in Puerto Plata Province; and coincides with initiatives of US-AID and the Puerto Plata Tourism Cluster to reform Puerto Plata's identity as a tourism destination.

Participation in this multi-faceted project is open to all stakeholders and interested parties. For information

Contact:

Tel: 809 696-6932

www.RutaPanoramica.com

TURISOPP





“Habitat for Humanity meets KOA Campgrounds”

Homestead Campsite Building Program

Our community organization recently received initial funding to launch a Homestead Camping program through which local families are trained as tourism hosts while we help them transform a plot of their own property into an income-producing campsite.

Through promotion on our website www.RutaPanoramica.com and in-country campaigns, camping facilities will increase visitor traffic to communities along the scenic La Ruta Panorámica and contribute in a tangible way to sustainable growth and opportunity in the region.

Eco-sensitive homestead camping sites provide travelers with a secure, equipped place to stay enhanced by a “family of services”: in addition to renting out their site, sisters, brothers and mothers participate by cooking for the campers, guiding, running errands and more. This is a truly tangible income earning opportunity carved out of their own backyard.

Capacitation: “poor is just a word”

The capacitation process is focused on helping people learn that “poor” is just a word; there’s a wealth of opportunity literally in their own backyard. As in this case, they are organizing the natural and cultural resources that surround them to provide what tourists want to pay money for: a unique, authentic local experience delivered with the boundless Dominican-brand hospitality that comes so naturally.

Handouts and giveaways are minimal and are limited to the components that a participating family is truly unable to acquire on their own.

When preparing their land for a campsite, the participating family must contribute the labor component and whatever renewable materials that they can garnish from their land, such as stones for paths, thatch for roofing, and posts for shelters. Actual cash disbursements are thus limited to pipes, wiring and other items the family might not have the cash to buy.

But the program’s emphasis is on much-needed external awareness and a program structure for participant families to follow.

Having never traveled very far from their own village, how can anyone know that their own backyard – a river, organic garden patch, mountaintop view or kitchen – can be of great interest to a visiting stranger?

Along with imparting this external awareness the program provides standards and teaches skills for maintaining the hygiene, esthetics and basic administration that ensure appeal and sustainability for their backyard business.

Service Program support: more than just the funding

While start-up funding is coming from The International Development Bank and United Nations, growth of this program is staked upon voluntourism and service project activities.

Campsite building is easy and fun even for the most inexperienced “builder” and costs are minimal.

Equally or more important than the material contribution is the value of the cultural exchange and the one-on-one learning experiences that flow both ways.

As homestead families strive to improve their skill as professional tourism hosts, the service volunteers give them the greatest gift: a real-life, human experience empowering them in the earliest phase of their venture to better understand their own world as seen through a visitor’s eye.

For more information about the Homestead Camping Program: tim@tubagua.com

Dominican Republic: helping youth create their own future in ecotourism



This opportunity-focused service experience puts students shoulder-to-shoulder with peers, who are working in their mountain village to create a sustainable tourism destination, working just with what they have. While sleeping in tiki huts and embarking on numerous adventures in this breathtaking mountain region, students will help local youth become professional tourism guides and while doing so gain insight into recognizing opportunity in their own lives

Program Activities	Learning Purpose & Outcomes
<p>Day 1: Fly to the Dominican Republic Meet your Tour Director at the airport Travel to Tubagua Attend an orientation meeting Participate in a Q&A session</p>	
<p>Day 2: Tubagua • Service Learning & Exploring Participate in a morning discussion or meditation group Participate in a community orientation tour Hike to God's Swimming Pool Have a Mud Bath Exfoliation Experience ¡yo hablo español! language challenge Discussion / Movie</p>	<p>Prep for the day. Talks help students develop conscious linkages between "here" and "home" Get to know the neighborhood, develop contextual awareness of local realities Physical challenge sets the week's pace, learn about local flora & fauna Innovate and create opportunity with things that surround you Acquire Spanish / Help with local guide training program De-brief, reflect in topics of global citizenship, social justice, cross-cultural learning, diversity and self-discovery. Movies explore local culture, history, issues to complement students' expanding historic/social/political awareness</p>
<p>Day 3: Tubagua • Service Learning & Exploring Participate in a morning discussion or meditation group Trip up the Ruta Panorámica. Visit Coffee Route and Amber mines River Swim & Garbage Cleanup ¡yo hablo español! language challenge Discussion / Movie</p>	<p>Learn local products and attractions and about efforts being made to develop them Engage in service learning project, contribute with positive impact to local environment</p>
<p>Day 4: Tubagua • Service Learning & Exploring Participate in a morning discussion or meditation group City Slum / School Visit Beach Swim ¡yo hablo español! language challenge Discussion / Movie</p>	<p>Awareness concerning the problem of urban migration and the need to develop rural tourism opportunities as a poverty reduction initiative</p>
<p>Day 5: Tubagua • Service Learning & Sports Participate in a morning discussion or meditation group Work on Service Learning Project Soccer or Volleyball game ¡yo hablo español! language challenge Discussion / Movie</p>	<p>Help build a homestead campsite / team skills, physical, manual, intercultural Mixed nationalities on each team promotes intercultural and team skills</p>
<p>Day 6: Tubagua • Service Learning & Exploring Participate in a morning discussion or meditation group Work on Service Learning Project Zipline Adventure ¡yo hablo español! language challenge Discussion / Movie</p>	
<p>Day 7: Sailing Adventure Participate in a morning discussion or meditation group Catamaran Day Sail Make your own jewelry with local artisan Village Farewell Party</p>	<p>Sailing trip along coast / reef snorkeling Learn local products / manual skills Community interaction</p>
<p>Day 8: Depart for home</p>	

Dominican Republic: Service Project Opportunity

Everything you get:

- ✓ Round-trip flights on major carriers
- ✓ Bus transfers
- ✓ 7 overnight stays at Tubagua Plantation Eco Villae
- ✓ 3 meals daily (Days 2-7) • dinner on arrival day • breakfast on departure day
- ✓ Full-time Tour Director • Service Director
- ✓ Entrances: Waterfall trek • Zipline Adventure • Coffee Plantation • Amber mines •
Catamaran Sailing Adventure with snorkeling
- ✓ Experiential learning: 50 hours of service learning

For more information about Tubagua and the region it serves

www.tubagua.com

www.RutaPanoramica.com

or write tim@tubagua.com

Dominican Republic: Service Project Opportunity

The most vital contribution that students will make on this trip will not be collecting garbage or planting trees or mixing cement or giving away toothbrushes. Rather they be helping local youth learn as they become professional guides and tourism hosts. In other words, they will be contributing directly to local youth's ability to work and make a living. To this end, students will participate in the

¡Yo Hablo Español! Language Challenge Game

Here's how it works:

Students will be split into several teams and each team will have on it a local student who is learning how to be a local tourism host or guide. The trainee has little or no experience—has not even had the opportunity to learn what it is in his/her environment that might be of interest to visitors!

The objective of each team is to help their trainee learn how to see his/her own environment through a visitor's eye. as well as to help get over shyness and build confidence when interacting with visitors. We're going to do that using words, in a language challenge that will run through the entire week. At the end, the trainee will receive a cash prize; thus, the more words a team learns the more cash their guide makes! The cash is a strong motivator for the trainee to dedicate effort to be great at helping visitors learn about their culture and region.

Trainees will accompany their team on each day of activity. Team members must work with the trainee, prompting the trainee with questions, in order to learn the Spanish words and phrases for things they see and do, all related to each day's activity. Each team member must learn at least five words each day. There are no rules applied to accomplishing this; they can use simple conversation, dictionaries, charades, they can write them down, draw pictures, whatever works... However, students must come to the supper table with nothing but their memories.

Immediately after supper, teams will be given several minutes to write down their acquired words on Post-it notes to be pasted on a wallboard for everyone to see. For the next half-hour or so, the words will be reviewed, translated and interpreted, put into sentences and otherwise reinforced into their consciousness through group interaction. Points will be added up and recorded.

During the village party at the end of the week, a ceremony will be held to recognize the trainees with a certificate and cash prize.

Purpose & Outcomes

- Learn Spanish, interact and communicate more meaningfully with locals
- Stimulate learning and engagement within social and environmental context
- Stimulate communication and intercultural exchange
- Develop insight and interpretation skills
- Contribute to meaningful employment training for local guides
- Develop team building and participation skills
- Compete/strive for the benefit of others

Note: there is a special role for Spanish-speaking students, as facilitators

Country program manager rates the Tubagua experience

*David DeMinico
Program Coordinator, ISV DR
Feb 2013*

As Program Coordinator for International Student Volunteers, Dominican Republic, an internationally recognized volunteer and study abroad organization, I am responsible for coordinating appropriate transportation and lodging for hundreds of North American students each season. Tubagua Eco-Lodge provides an excellent option for our student groups, exceeding our needs from a safety and comfort perspective, while offering our students an authentic and tastefully rustic lodging experience throughout the duration of their stay. Our hard-working volunteers spend between 2-5 weeks working long-days at various development project sites in rural Dominican communities, and their safety both at the project site and back at the lodging is one area on which we were not willing to compromise.

From a safety perspective, Tubagua Eco-Lodge has it covered. With over 25 years experience working in the Dominican Republic, the management at Tubagua is acutely aware of all operational challenges when running student programs in the Dominican Republic. They are attentive to student needs, to our organization's safety protocols, flexible and extremely responsive to particular requests that may arise.

Reliable and skilled grounds and maintenance staff made sure all facilities are working properly, including the accessibility and functionality of all emergency and fire systems. The cleaning staff is extremely thorough; both the common areas and the sleeping quarters are regularly tidied and an affordable laundry service is available for our student groups. Lastly, the professional and

highly experienced kitchen staff prepare a variety of delicious Dominican and international fair that is both healthy and filling. Food allergies are explicitly and meticulously honored in food preparations and even with some extremely sensitive health and allergy conditions, I am always confident that our students will be in good hands while at Tubagua Eco-Lodge. Safety is our number one priority and it is evident that Tubagua shares this value.

In terms of comfort and authenticity, Tubagua Eco-Lodge is perfect for first time travelers and student groups who's expectations will be met with local Dominican hospitality and some of the comforts from back home. In fact, students very quickly feel at home at Tubagua, even those that are not used to being in a natural environment or a foreign country. Free and reliable wireless internet allows students to keep in touch with family and friends back home. The natural feel of the Eco-Lodge is only matched by the unbeatable view from the dining and common area (and most rooms), overlooking the Montellano and Puerto Plata valleys stretching to the North Coast. The unique layout of Tubagua seems to conform to the natural architecture of its semi-rural setting, with well-lit slated pathways, flowers and lilly pools, tastefully designed wood framed lodges and a few quirky surprises like an Eco-Gym that all guests enjoy without fail. Tubagua strikes the perfect balance between rustic and comfort, all wrapped in an environmentally conscientious blanket. Tubagua Eco-Lodge is unbeatable in the Caribbean for student groups of all sorts.

ISV has hosted over 2,000 students in the Dominican Republic and Tubagua has not only been the highest overall, student-rated accommodations for two consecutive years, but also the most reliable and desirable lodging option for our student groups. In my opinion, no group leader can go wrong in selecting Tubagua for their students.