



OPPORTUNITY
International
CANADA

INSIGHT TRIP

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



YOUR GUIDE TO DISCOVERING OPPORTUNITY

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This booklet is a resource to assist you in preparing for your trip. It includes information on the country and its culture and customs information as well as useful packing tips and travel policies. Please note that the information is not all-inclusive and should not be your sole guide to travel. While OIC does its best to maintain current information in this guide, we are not able to guarantee the accuracy of its content.

Get more information from <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/Dominican-Republic>



ABOUT OIC

At OIC, we are driven by a commitment to empower individuals on their journey out of poverty. Our mission began with a simple yet powerful idea: that every person, regardless of their circumstances, deserves the opportunity to build a better life for themselves and their families.

We provide financial resources, training, and support to help people start and grow their own businesses. By doing so, children are able to go to school, families are fed, jobs are created, and communities begin to thrive – that’s the potential of Opportunity!

Our Purpose.

OIC empowers families along their journeys out of extreme poverty toward new lives filled with strength, hope, resilience and the power to achieve their dreams.

Our Vision.

Our vision is a world free from poverty where all people can live a life of dignity.

Our Motivation.

We are motivated by Jesus’ call to love and serve the poor. We serve all people regardless of race, faith, ethnicity and gender. Just as some organizations are called to provide disaster relief or build houses or churches, OIC has been called to bring hope and economic security to the poor through microfinance and other financial services. We strive to emulate the Good Samaritan, whose compassion crossed ethnic groups and religions. We operate under this spirit of inclusion in everything we do.

OPPORTUNITY IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Today, for millions living in poverty in the DR, low productivity and wages combined with the skyrocketing cost of necessities are eroding family incomes and pushing decent livelihoods, access to healthcare, and good education even further beyond reach.

In the Dominican Republic, thousands of women work hard every day to build better lives for their families, yet many remain excluded from traditional banks and financial systems. Aspiring Together Women's Groups (ATWG) empower these women to take their first steps toward independence and stability.

Through small loans, training, and savings support, women come together in groups of 15–25 to build businesses, share accountability, and grow in confidence. They learn financial literacy, leadership, and entrepreneurship skills, while forming bonds of friendship and solidarity that extend beyond business. Together, they lift one another out of poverty — one decision, one investment, one dream at a time.



Each woman's journey is a story of resilience. You'll meet clients like Madeline, who started a small shop to provide for her children and now mentors others to do the same. You'll witness how access to opportunity transforms families — from improved nutrition and education to stronger, more vibrant communities.

By walking alongside these women, you'll see firsthand how partnership and perseverance can ignite lasting change. The Aspiring Together Women's Groups embody the heart of Opportunity's mission: empowering women to build livelihoods, strengthen families, and create a future filled with hope.



PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

EXIT & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Every country or territory decides who can enter or exit through its borders. The Government of Canada cannot intervene on your behalf if you do not meet your destination's requirements. We have obtained the following information from the Dominican Republic authorities. It can, however, change at any time.

Passport

Entry requirements vary depending on the type of passport you use for travel. Before you travel, check with your transportation provider about passport requirements. The airlines rules on passport validity may be more stringent than the visiting country's entry rules.

Regular Canadian Passport

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the date you expect to leave the Dominican Republic.

Electronic Ticket

An electronic ticket is required for entering and exiting the Dominican Republic. Complete the online form here: <https://eticket.migracion.gob.do>.

Visas

Canadians do not require a visa for stays of up to 90 days.

Useful Links

[Foreign Representatives in Canada](#)

[Canadian Passport](#)

[Travel advice by destination](#)



PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

STAYING HEALTHY

Travel advice for Canadians <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/Dominican-Republic>

Update yourself on the possible health risks and restrictions for Canadians traveling abroad at the above link. Follow this advice along with the advice of your physician. Some recommendations include:

- Consult a health care professional or visit a travel health clinic before you travel to get personalized health advice and recommendations.
- Confirm that your routine vaccinations, as per your province or territory, are up to date before traveling, regardless of your destination.
- Learn more about food and water precautions to take to avoid getting sick [here](#). Remember: Boil it, cook it, peel it, or leave it!
- Avoid getting water into your eyes, mouth or nose when showering, swimming or participating in water activities, particularly after flooding or heavy rain. Water may look clean but could still be contaminated.
- Protect your skin with sunscreen and mosquito repellent.
- Avoid travelers' diarrhea by being cautious when in areas of poor hygiene and sanitation - it is spread from eating or drinking contaminated food or water. Re-hydration is the best treatment.
- Some prescription medication may not be available where traveling. If you take medication, you're responsible for determining its legality in the country. Bring enough of your medication with you. Always keep your medication in the original container. Pack your medication in your carry-on luggage. Carry a copy of your prescriptions.
- Practice proper cough and sneeze etiquette, which includes coughing or sneezing into a tissue or the bend of your arm, not your hand. Reduce your risk of colds, the flu and other illnesses by washing your hands often.
- **Advise trip leaders immediately if you feel unwell.**



PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

SAFETY & SECURITY

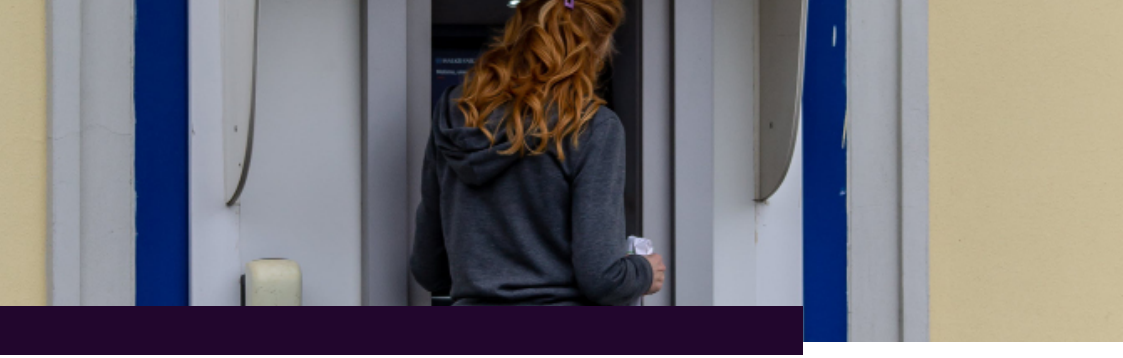
Travel advice for Canadians <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/Dominican-Republic>

Please follow these guidelines to ensure your safety at all times.

- Do not walk in dark, isolated or deserted areas alone or with our group.
- Avoid wearing jewelry, carrying a lot of cash, and showing your electronics.
- Use ATM's inside banks and other public places and only during business hours.
- If you're threatened, stay calm, hand over valuables without resistance.
- Secure your belongings, including passport and travel documents, at all times.
- Keep windows and doors in vehicles and your hotel room locked at all times.
- Avoid hailing taxis, use transportation that has been vetted by OIC and our Implementing Partner.
- Avoid using credit card readers with an irregular or unusual feature.
- Cover the keypad with one hand when entering your PIN.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

The official language of the Dominican Republic is Spanish with their own accent, colloquialisms, and idioms. They are known for being incredibly fast speakers. They abbreviate, skip syllables, and don't pronounce certain letters—such as the plural “s”.



PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

CURRENCY

DR's official currency is the Dominican Peso (DOP). Its symbol is RD\$. Its code is DOP. Each peso is divided into 100 centavos for which the ¢ symbol is used. Frequently used banknotes include: 50, 100, 200, 500, 1,000 and 2,000 pesos dominicanos.

When exchanging currency, use formal money exchange centers and avoid money changers on the streets. To avoid counterfeits, carry small bills to avoid getting large bills back as change. Keep your cash under wraps.

ATM is the best way to get cash in-country. Fees vary and can be expensive. You can withdraw DOP and there is often a daily limit. When using plastic (tarjeta de credito), you will be asked if it's credito or debito.

In restaurants, an 18% service charge is sometimes included. You may wish to leave extra in cash for exceptional service. Tipping in bars, cafés, taxis, and hotel porters and housekeepers is now common at about 18%.

The US dollar is widely accepted in the Dominican Republic's most touristy locations but you will be able to get more discounts at stores, restaurants and even in some hotels if you use the peso. If you bring US cash, it is recommended that you bring new, crisp bills. Some countries only accept new foreign cash.



PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

CULTURAL NOTES

In every country, there are cultural do's and don'ts. Here are things you should be mindful of in the Dominican Republic.

Never make light comments about drugs, violence, or politics.

Don't give thieves an opportunity. Always be aware of your surroundings. Never make it easy for someone to take advantage of you by openly showing your valuables, including smartphones.

Don't go too far with haggling. Haggling is a normal custom in markets – but not common at regular shops. When we buy from clients, we pay the asking price.

Don't dress too casually in nice places. Even when it's quite hot, most people do not wear shorts and flip flops in nice places. Casual, loose-fitting clothing is fine. Most locals will opt for tops with short sleeves instead of sleeveless.

Don't get too caught up in the time. Dominican Republic time is more relaxed than the punctuality we expect, so please be on time for pickups but don't be surprised if your 8am pickup arrives closer to 8:30am. Being aware of this can help minimize frustration, creating a better experience for everyone.

Don't get flush-happy. Drains and pipes in the Dominican Republic are narrow, poorly vented, and the sewage systems are only designed to process human waste. Use the basket next to the bowl for toilet paper, wipes, etc. to avoid a blocked or overflowing toilet.

Don't say later if you need it now. If you need something done right away, politely make it clear. Dominican's are not always direct about their "yes" or "no." Saying "later" will be interpreted to mean it's not urgent.



PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

WEATHER AND PACKING

Thanks to its Caribbean location, the Dominican Republic is sunny year-round. Summer is the warmest and rainiest season in the country, and humidity is at its most intense from April to October. Temperatures hover at 32°C (90°F) at the peak of the day, and rainstorms are more frequent but short lasting.

Packing for your trip to the Dominican Republic:

Clothing: Pack lightweight, breathable layers for hot days and possible rain. A light sweater or wrap is useful for air-conditioned spaces. Avoid shorts for client visits or meetings; choose travel pants, polo shirts, or simple blouses. Dinner attire is business or resort casual.

Footwear: Wear comfortable, closed-toed shoes (tennis shoes recommended) for dusty, uneven areas.

Accessories: Bring a hat or head covering, sunglasses, rain poncho, and a small bag for daily items. Conservative swimsuits are fine at hotel pools but not for public streets.

Health & Safety: Your trip leader will carry first aid kit. Bring sufficient personal medications.

Money: Carry Canadian or US cash to exchange into Dominican Peso at the hotel.

Electronics: The DR uses 120V/60Hz. Bring a power adaptor and consider surge protection.

Luggage: Keep essentials (documents, medications, glasses, toothbrush, one outfit, shoes) in your carry-on. Avoid bringing valuables.

OPPORTUNITY'S TRIP POLICIES

Emergency and Evacuation Insurance Policy

When traveling internationally, it is strongly recommended to obtain comprehensive evacuation insurance in addition to travel insurance to ensure access to emergency medical care and safe transport in the event of a crisis. Standard travel insurance policies or credit card benefits may not always include this type of coverage, so it's important to review your existing plan carefully. If evacuation services are not included, consider purchasing coverage through a reputable provider such as Allianz Travel Insurance or Sun Life. Having this protection in place can offer peace of mind and vital support during unexpected situations abroad.

Photography and Child Protection

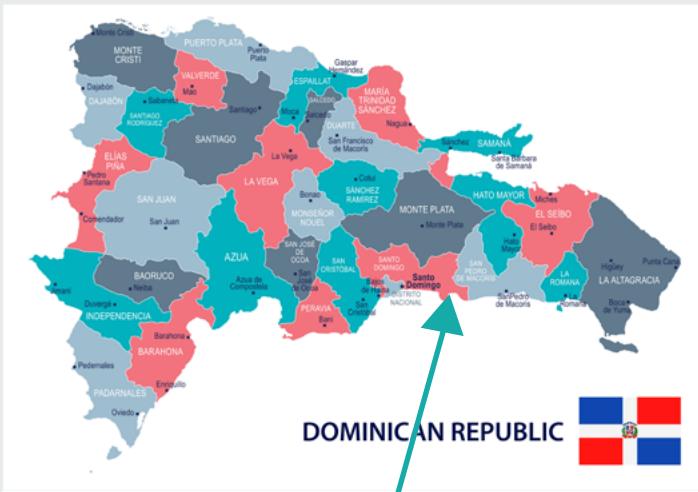
OIC is committed to treating all people with dignity and respect, and to ensuring effective mechanisms are in place to prevent exploitation, abuse and harassment. While OIC does not provide services directly to children, they are the indirect beneficiaries of our work, and we promote a child protection organizational culture. This is a culture where the rights of children to be protected from harm are upheld by staff, volunteers, supporters and program partners. OIC prohibits the photographing of children on Insight Trips. Occasionally, it's hard to avoid capturing the image of a client's child. In such a case, we ask you to please not share photographs on social media, nor outside your close family or friends. Photos of children where the child is pictured in an undignified way with tattered clothing or similar should be deleted. Clients and their families deserve their privacy and dignity.

While visiting clients, visitors must be accompanied by an OIC and/or partner staff member. A visitor should never spend time with a child or any other vulnerable person unsupervised. While we know the intentions are good, misunderstandings can take place in different cultures and with marginalized people.

Gift Policy

Gift giving can be culturally inappropriate and often doesn't help to foster relationships in alignment with our core values. As we have a business arrangement with clients, it is important not to compromise that relationship through gift giving, which can promote an undesirable expectation for future visits. Additionally, even though a gift to a child may seem like a small trinket, it may be more valuable than what the parents can afford for a special birthday or Christmas gift and can leave parents feeling ashamed or create impossible expectations for children. Do not give handouts in the streets as it may draw unwanted attention and become a security risk. Do not make donations directly to ASPIRE. All contact must go through OIC.

MAPS





101-2275 Upper Middle Road East
Oakville, ON L6H 0C3
TF 877.867.2448

opportunityinternational.ca