

VIEQUES insider

CONNECTING VISITORS TO VIEQUES

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20
AMAZING
VQS
BEACHES

YOUR
GUIDE
to Vieques

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CASA LIMONES represents a once in a lifetime opportunity to own a newly renovated ten-acre estate in the exclusive La Llave sector of Puerto Real on Vieques Island. Well known local architect Stanley Hutchinson designed and oversaw the original construction as well as designing and overseeing the renovations and additions



that were completed in 2021. Sitting atop one of the highest peaks on Vieques, Casa Limones stands alone in terms of privacy, luxury, comfort and beauty. Offering stunning 360° views of the magical island of Vieques, this turnkey estate has it all and is fully fenced and accessed by electronic control. The Modern design seamlessly combines indoor and outdoor spaces so that no matter where you are the views take your breath away. \$5,775,000

.....

THE SANDS is one of Vieques Island's most successful oceanfront rental properties or would make a magnificent private estate. It is located on Monte Santo Playa, one of the best swimming and snorkeling beaches on Vieques Island's North Shore. The property has benefited under new ownership with considerable upgrades and repairs, creating a turn key and income producing property. The compound is fully walled with



electronic access control, a tropical swimming pool that has been recently and beautifully refurbished, fruit trees, cutting flowers, and a private stairway to the beach with magnificent ocean views into the harbor at Isabel Segunda. The structure includes two separate houses with a shared laundry and dramatic views from both units. \$1,700,000

.....

CASA LADERA is a well known and successful Vieques Guesthouse/Private home compound located steps from Monte Santo Playa. The property has benefited under new ownership with considerable upgrades and repairs



creating a turn key and income producing property. The "country club"-like grounds showcase three self contained units, with an oversized pool and decks, a pool bathroom,

pool fountain, garage and storage rooms, all fully fenced. The park-like setting features Mango trees, a sweeping lawn and many blooming tropical plants. \$1,200,000



July In Bloom by Siddhia Hutchinson
21" X 21"
Mixed media collage

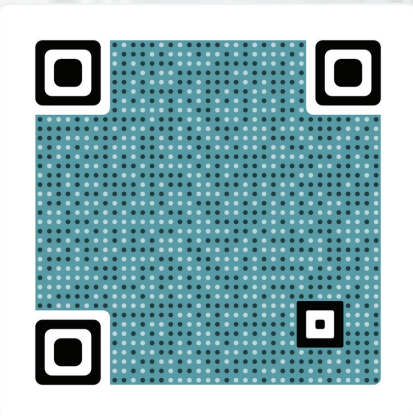
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Finca Victoria's transformation into a wellness hotel and retreat center signifies a remarkable shift in Vieques' tourism scene. It offers visitors a chance to bask in the island's natural beauty while indulging in vital self-care and personal growth. With its spa, yoga sessions, themed retreats, and the option to host your own retreat, the hotel is on the cusp of becoming Vieques' wellness hub.

What's more, for guests opting for extended stays, all rooms are now equipped with full kitchens. So, if you're seeking respite from the daily grind, hoping to revitalize your spirit, or eager to embark on a journey of self-discovery, look no further than Finca Victoria Hotel. It's more than just accommodation; it's a haven for well-being and transformation on Vieques, the enchanting island. Come and savor the new era of wellness in paradise.

WELLNESS CENTER

At the heart of Finca Victoria's retreat offerings lies the Ayurvedic Wellness Center, a sanctuary of rejuvenation. Here, guests can partake in a range of Ayurvedic therapies, from tailored Abhyanga massages to calming Basti treatments. For those seeking a deeper reset, Panchakarma cleansing programs are also available,

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For travelers & locals looking for a holistic retreat experience, we offer a variety of themed retreats. These immersive programs encompass a wide range of topics, from mindfulness and meditation to fitness and nutrition. Led by expert instructors and facilitators, these retreats provide a structured and supportive environment for personal growth and relaxation.

DAILY YOGA

Join us for daily yoga at 8 am, drop-ins are welcomed! Our sessions, set against the backdrop of Vieques' natural beauty and the Maloka's ocean view, emphasize practical well-being with a focus on strength, flexibility, and relaxation. For those preferring a virtual experience, we also offer our class via Zoom, which are free of charge. Find the link on our website for easy access.



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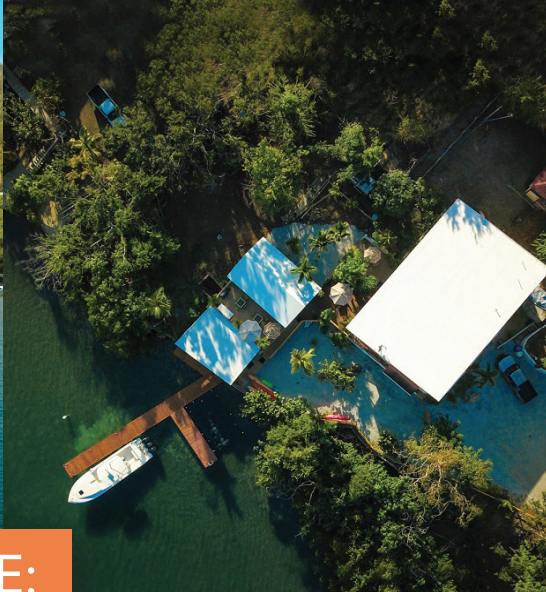
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SEEKERS



I have a few dear friends whom I call “Seekers” – those who never stop questioning life and looking for answers with the curiosity of a child. Some might think that seeking requires traveling all over the world in search of new journeys and landscapes. However, many of these friends explore,

discover, and uncover hidden secrets of their own existence right in their own homes and within their hearts and minds.

My best friend from our hometown in Pennsylvania delivers mail. Her work might seem mundane—if she wasn’t a seeker. Every day, she packs her (mail)bag and embarks on a journey to discover her personal connection to the world. House to house, through rain, sleet, and snow, she questions everything about life. She finds some answers in moving her body all day, receiving a hug from an elder, a wagging tail from a pet, and the beauty of ice-covered trees. She may not come up with all the answers, but she steps out of her comfort zone to ask the questions.

Through the pages of our magazine, we invite you to join us on this incredible journey of seeking new discoveries. We have compiled a treasure trove of tips on where to find what you seek and beyond. Our goal at Vieques Insider is to help you use your vacation time to connect with the island’s vibrant culture, history, people, and ecology. Finding and unleashing that inner curious child with a willingness to delve into the unknown, stepping out of your comfort zone, embarking on your own personal journey; well, that is up to you. Vieques has something unique and transformative to offer –if you seek it.

-Kelly Thompson

**¿Tienes una historia para compartir?
iVieques Insider te necesita!**

Comuníquese con nosotros si tiene ideas para una historia, le gustaría escribir, está dispuesto a entrevistar a personalidades de Vieques o desea compartir conocimientos sobre su hogar.

**Do you have a story to share?
Vieques Insider needs you!**

Contact us if you have story ideas, would like to write, are willing to interview Vieques personalities or want to share knowledge about your home.

Ooops. We may have missed something!

If it was you, we are truly sorry. If a phone number needs correcting or there is information that could help make our publication more informative, please let us know! Contact kelly@viequesinsider.com.

[VIEQUES]
insider

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Olga Gallego Smith (la española) is our contributing translator. She is originally from Spain, grew up in Venezuela, and is a retired professor of Spanish Applied Linguistics at the University of Michigan. Olga is a volunteer translator for VIEQUES LOVE and also serves on two Vieques nonprofit organizations— COREFI and VIDAS VIEQUENSES VALEN. She is the founder of LINGUASOL (Spanish/English Instruction-Translation-Interpreting).

Amy Gordon is a freelance travel writer who doesn’t feel quite right without a tan. Her articles have appeared in outlets including Harper Traveler, Where Traveler, BizBash and Slow Living.

Adolfo Rosa Miranda is the Vice Mayor of Vieques and contributor to the Municipality Updates page.

Tom O’Grady Jr. is a Philadelphia-born author, freelance writer and editor with literature and writing degrees from Temple University (B.A.) and Rutgers University (M.A.). Tom has five entertaining novels available in print and digital formats (Amazon), and writes and edits training, marketing, advertising and magazine content online. He currently resides in Northeast Florida.

Photographer AJ Stetson is a film set/unit stills and portrait photographer based in NYC. A dual citizen of the United States and Italy, AJ is also a drone pilot and scuba diver, and captures still and moving images on location around the world. His portrait work, very much like his persona, coaxes the gentle truth of his subject, exposing their very essence and authenticity. See AJ’s work at www.AJStetson.com or contact him at 646-450-5590 or AJ@AJStetson.com



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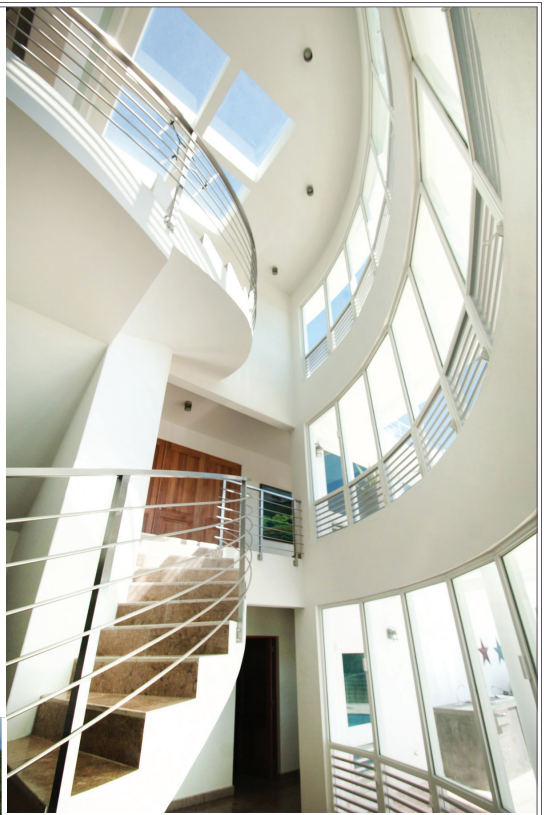
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VIEQUES INSIDER

YOUR **GUIDE** TO VIEQUES

BY: AMY GORDON

The amazing island of Vieques packs a lot of beauty into a little space. Only twenty miles from east to west and four miles from north to south, Vieques offers so much more than we could pack into this magazine. Spectacular beaches are at every turn, each one providing a unique experience. Our BioBay, the brightest in the world, is an experience that will stay with you a lifetime and should not to be missed if you are visiting. From casual cafés to elegant fine dining, Vieques teems with fantastic restaurants. Horses roam the island and the roosters remind us (sometimes a bit too early in the morning) that nature reigns supreme. When visiting, remember that Vieques is off the beaten path but there is much to discover. What you won't find here is a world of convenience. This issue of Vieques Insider aims to help you discover all that Vieques offers to make your vacation spectacular.

Please be mindful that most beaches and their surroundings remain unspoiled and unsupervised. We urge you to choose your activities and locations wisely, prioritizing safety and preserving the environment. We highly recommend using licensed tour and activity guides familiar with the island, weather, marine life, trails and dangers while paddleboarding, snorkeling, scuba diving, sailing, horseback riding, and taking Biobay trips.

We have included our advertisers in the guide listings. Find a more complete listing and more information at www.viequesinsider.com or scan the qr code. We look forward to new ideas and island insights! Contact us to share at kelly@viequesinsider.com.

This issue is
your guide on
where to stay,
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and find hidden
treasures of
Vieques.



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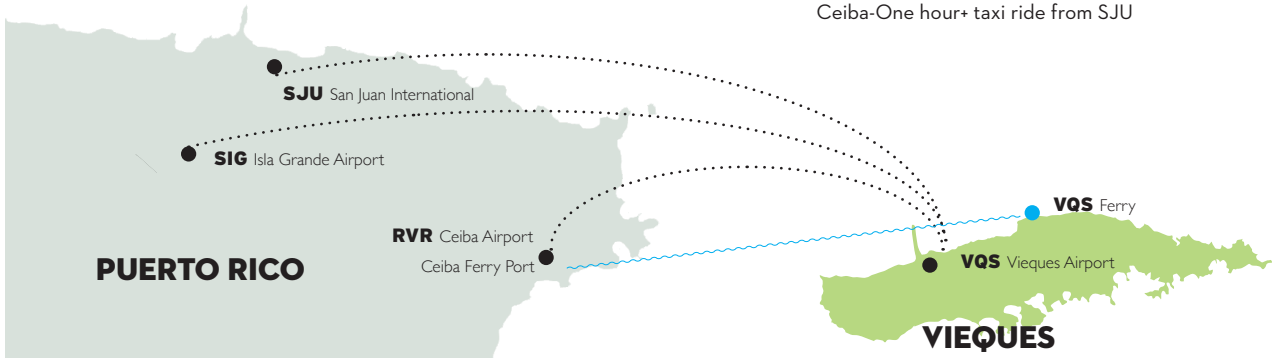
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🚗 Ferry from Ceiba to Vieques

Requires 1 hour 15 min taxi ride from San Juan International (SJU) to Ceiba (approx. \$100) Ferry ticket \$2 or you can purchase two days ahead of time on www.puertoricoferry.com with additional fees for luggage. There are additional charges for carry on items such as coolers, surfboards, beach chairs, etc. Be prepared to wait or possibly be bumped if ferry is full! Vieques residents are seated first. It is not uncommon for the ferry to be late.

🚗 **Publico Vans** are located outside baggage claim at SJU and can seat up to 10-12 people. They are managed by Puerto Rico Tourism and you will be supplied an invoice for your trip before getting in the van. Tips are accepted.

Insider recommendation: The ferry is used by Vieques residents to go to school, doctors appointments, shopping, work and to visit family. During high tourism season the ferry can fill up fast and residents get first boarding priority. If you don't want to chance being left at the ferry dock waiting hours for the next ferry or possibly even overnight, book a flight from one of the three airports!

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USE THIS APP TO PURCHASE FERRY TICKETS AND ALSO SEE HOW MANY TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE WINDOW IF THE ONLINE TICKETS ARE SOLD OUT.

- Take warm clothes on the ferry! It's very cold when the AC is on.
- Car rentals on Vieques have closing hours! If you arrive after closing time make prior arrangements with the company to receive your car.
- See page 41 for a list of publicos on Vieques.

INSIDER TIPS

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GETTING AROUND

RESERVE EARLY!

▶ PUBLICOS/PUBLICOS/TAXIS:

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▶ CAR/SCOOTER/UTV/GOLF CART RENTAL:

There are many rental car companies all within the same price range. Most offer Jeeps or SUVs to get you to the most remote beaches, but just because it's 4wd doesn't mean you can't get stuck. Vieques has some world class potholes that are surprisingly deep. When parking at the beach don't leave valuables in the car and leave the car unlocked. At Sunbay do not park on the ocean side of the



road, only in the grass on the opposite side. When returning cars you will be

charged for wet seats so think twice about leaving the top off the jeep. Make sure you rent from a licensed car rental company. Book early!

▶ **BIKE RENTAL:** Bikes can be rented by the hour or day. If you plan on using a bike as transportation make sure you research mileage on Google maps. Also, be aware that most beach roads are dirt, gravel or sand with some steep inclines. Hot, dusty roads; always have water!



Fix a Flat

Pick one of these up at any convenience store or gas station on the island and save yourself a lot of trouble. Just connect to your flat tire, inflate and go! It will only seal temporarily so call your rental company for directions on where to go to get it fixed.



A Twist or a Tap

If your car won't start when leaving the beach, before panicking, first check your battery cable connections. On rough roads they tend to bounce and loosen. Tighten them up, give them a tap and try again!

>> GOOD TO KNOW

1 GALLON = 3.78541 LITERS
NO ESTACIONAR = NO PARKING
YELLOW CURB = NO PARKING

GETTING YOUR BEARINGS

SOUTH SIDE

ESPERANZA

Esperanza, on the southern coast, boasts the deep aqua and crystal clear waters of the Caribbean Sea, gently lapping along a picturesque walkway known as the Malecón. Esperanza offers a walkable array of restaurants, museums, stores, piers, boating and social interaction. Sundays are full of music, dominos, and libations. Extend your pleasure east or west along the Caribbean shore to discover art, black sand, roadside food experiences and an endless string of unique beaches so visually outrageous you'll be at a loss for words and pictures.



NORTH SIDE

ISABEL II

Bordered by the wavy blue of the Atlantic, the north side offers a loosely organized configuration of main and side streets, churches, stores, bars, restaurants, shops and municipal offices, all loosely draped around the Plaza, a community square for great gatherings all year round. Charming and colorful, Isabel II ("town" or "el pueblo" to the residents) is named after the first reigning female monarch of Spain. Sitting like a decorated cake high above the town is the Fortin Conde de Mirasol, the last Spanish fort built in the Americas.



INSIDER TIP
GOLF CART TURN SIGNALS WON'T AUTOMATICALLY TURN OFF! MAKE A MENTAL NOTE-TURN IT OFF!

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A LIST OF PUBLICO AND TAXI NUMBERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 41.



a bit of history

Want to know a bit more about Vieques?

Here's a brief timeline to whet the appetite of the history buff in you.

✦ **2145 BCE** Archeological findings in Puerto Ferro date back to Pre-Arawak period.

✦ **1100 CE** Taino culture abounds in Esperanza.

✦ **1493** Columbus lands on the south side of Borinquen (now Puerto Rico) and claims it for Spain.



✦ **1508** Ponce de León initiates colonization of Puerto Rico.

✦ **1514** Taíno Chiefs Yaureibo and Cacimar from Bieke fight Spanish forces on the east side of Puerto Rico.

✦ **1683** British settlers from Anguilla invade Vieques. Danish forces from St. Thomas drive invaders away.

✦ **1698** Scottish settlers from Nevis, Anguilla and Tortola invade Vieques. Spanish forces drive invaders away.

✦ **1718** British settlers from Anguilla come to Vieques to establish a colony on two different occasions. Both times Spanish forces drive invaders away.

✦ **1811** The Spanish colonization of Vieques begins.

✦ **1815** Royal Decree of Graces allows other Europeans who swear loyalty to the Spanish Crown to remain in Puerto Rico. French settlers develop Vieques' agrarian economy.

✦ **1816** Simón Bolívar, Latin America's Great Liberator, comes to Vieques.



✦ **1822** The Spanish commence construction of a town, eventually called Punta Mulas (Isabel II today), on the north side of the island.

✦ **1832** Teófilo José Jaime María Le Guillou, a French emigre, is appointed military governor of Vieques.

✦ **1844** The municipality of Vieques is formally established; construction of original Catholic Church gets underway.

✦ **1845** Construction of Fortín Conde de Mirasol (the Fort) begins.

✦ **1863** Britain formally renounces all claims to Vieques.

✦ **1873** Abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico (March 22, 1873); Manuel E. Benitez is elected Vieques' first mayor when municipalities are extended the right to vote.

✦ **1893** All Saints Church is officially consecrated. Vieques and Ponce were the first places in Puerto Rico under Spanish Monarchy allowed to set up non-Catholic churches.

✦ **1896** Punta Mulas lighthouse (north side) is completed.

✦ **1898** Spanish-American War. Treaty of Paris gives United States temporary control of Cuba and ownership of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippine islands.

✦ **1899** Puerto Ferro lighthouse (south side) is completed.



✦ **1917** Jones Act grants United States Citizenship to all Puerto Ricans.

✦ **1925** On March 19, a powerful earthquake causes major structural damages to the Puerto Ferro lighthouse. The lighthouse is closed.

✦ **1941-49** The United States Navy expropriates nearly two thirds of Vieques for military maneuvers.



✦ **1948** Luis Muñoz Marín becomes 1st democratically elected governor of Puerto Rico.

✦ **1952** Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is established on July 25.

✦ **1961** The film *Lord of the Flies* is shot in Vieques.

✦ **1965** Osvaldo "Val" González-Duriex provides air transportation to Vieques and registers his enterprise as Vieques Air Link.

✦ **1976** Water from El Yunque (Puerto Rico's rain forest) via underwater pipeline becomes the main water supply for Vieques.

✦ **1977 - 1988** "Vieques Pony Express"— Ventura Camacho Dávila is hired by

the post office to initiate island-wide delivery of mail. For the next 11 years, Ventura Camacho does his job on horseback.



✦ **1978** "Fishermen's War": An international NATO backed training military exercise on Vieques is stopped by fishermen who position themselves in the direct line of fire.

✦ **1989** Hugo, since upgraded to a category 5 hurricane, devastates Vieques.

✦ **1991** Restoration of Fortín Conde de Mirasol is completed.

✦ **1999** David Sanes is killed by a bomb from U.S. Navy military exercises. The tragic death serves as the catalyst for a peace protest that galvanizes all of Puerto Rico. The 'Paz Para Vieques' movement garners international support and becomes instrumental in pressuring the United States Navy to end military exercises on the island.



✦ **2001** Vieques National Wildlife Refuge is established (3,100 acres on the western end of Vieques).

✦ **2003** U.S. Navy leaves Vieques; 14,573 acres of land on the east end are added to the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge is operated under the U.S.



Department of Interior and becomes the largest wildlife refuge in the Caribbean.

★ **2005** U.S. Congress designates parts of Vieques as a Superfund.

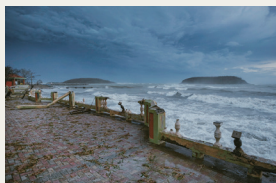
★ **2006** Montessori Education arrives in Vieques; Guinness World Records names Mosquito Bay the brightest Bio-bay in the world; MANTA, the educational outreach program of the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust (VCHT) wins EPA's highest award two years in a row.

★ **2007** Comunidad Verde Vieques is established. This is the first re-settlement inside former NAVY land.

★ **2009** First Bio-luminescent Symposium in Puerto Rico is held in Vieques and hosted by the VCHT.

★ **2011** White House report issued by the Vieques Task Force recommends military clean-up, a solid waste strategy, health care, renewable energy, protection of the BioBay and "green" tourism.

★ **2016** VCHT signs an agreement with the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources to co-manage the Mosquito nature reserve.



★ **2017** Hurricane Maria devastates Puerto Rico and Vieques with Category 5-force winds. Communication to the outside world is severed, and it takes 7 months to restore power. Numerous on- and off-island organizations form to provide help.

★ **2019** The death of 13-year old Jai Ventura sparks island-wide grief and a peaceful protest (justiceparajai) about the Vieques hospital. Destroyed in Hurricane Maria,



the hospital or CDT (Center for Diagnoses and Treatment) is in the process of being rebuilt.

★ **2019** The Covid-19 pandemic magnifies the island's humanitarian crisis after the devastation of Hurricane Maria and several earthquakes. Fortunately, response to the virus is rapid and thorough and controls the spread.

★ **2019-20** Puerto Rico experiences an unprecedented series of shock swarms. Over 9,000 earthquakes and aftershocks damage thousands of homes and buildings and closes schools.

TODAY

Six years later, Vieques continues to grapple with the lingering effects of Hurricane Maria, long after the storm left its devastating mark. Significant issues facing Vieques are the lack of medical services, insufficient ferry transportation, depleted economic opportunities and an education system afflicted by one challenge after another.

Additionally, Vieques, like many areas of the world, is experiencing the adverse effects of gentrification, leading to rising property prices and a displacement of long-time residents, threatening the unique cultural fabric of the island.

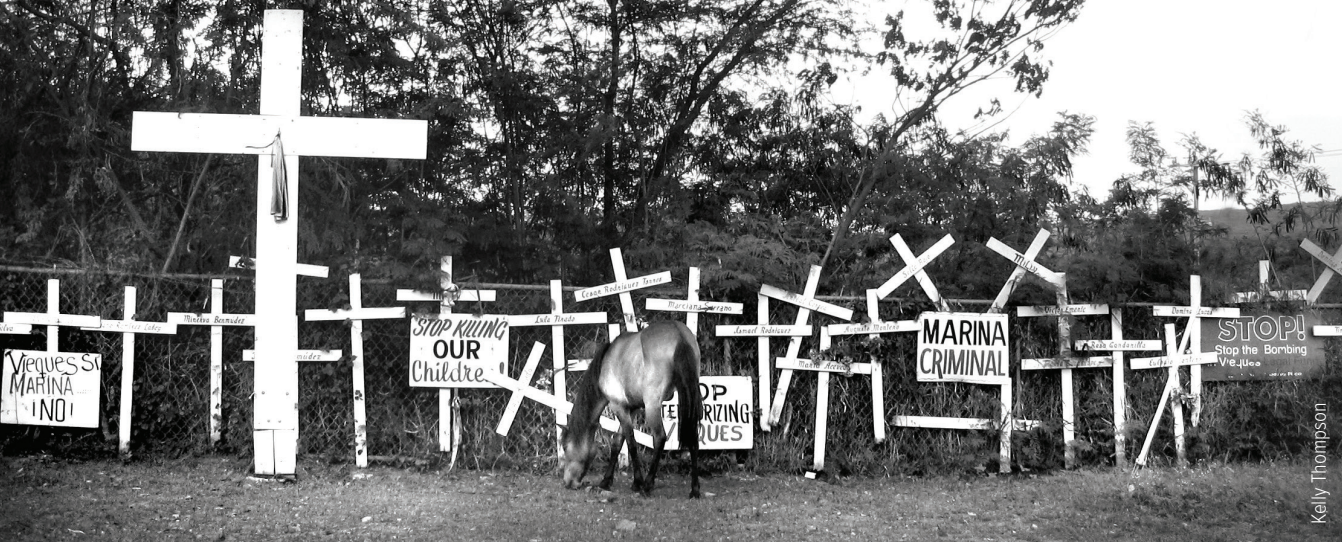
At press time, work on the hospital was getting underway by Caribe Techno, the company contracted to rebuild.

Despite these challenges, resilient Vieques residents remain determined to rebuild their community and preserve their way of life while advocating for equitable development and the necessary resources for a sustainable recovery.



OPERATION PORTREX In 1950 a simulated attack on Blue Beach (La Chiva) was staged by a joint effort of Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine forces. The "D-Day"-like maneuvers took two months of preparation by land forces charged with protecting the beach and inland areas from the "assault". As a result, the topography of La Chiva was substantially altered. Bulldozers scraped the land, digging deep anti-tank trenches and felling palm trees and bushes. Much of the thorny growth, mixed with barbed wire, was wrapped around the palm trunks as defensive barriers. A camouflaged, deeply-dug shelter for 50 caliber machine guns was also placed on the cayo off Blue Beach to disrupt the beach landing from behind.

Like many territories and cultures, Vieques has struggled to maintain its way of life. The many recorded histories of that struggle are, like the people of Vieques and Puerto Rico, filled with passion and persistence, and no shortage of perspectives. Vieques Insider endeavors to provide as accurate a timeline of that history as is available through our research, while taking into consideration the discrepancies that exist among historians. Our timeline is in no way a comprehensive account, only a brief outline. We encourage our readers seeking a greater knowledge of Vieques to access all accounts of its history. To discover more about Vieques locally, please visit El Fortín Conde Mirasol and the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust



Kelly Thompson

From Military Occupation to Community Resilience

Vieques' Ongoing Struggle for Health, Justice, and Environmental Restoration

Motivated by strategic military interests during World War II, the United States Navy took over two-thirds of Vieques (22,000 acres) to conduct wartime practices and weapons testing.

The expropriation process involved negotiation with some willing landowners but also employed eminent domain to forcefully acquire properties from those who resisted. Sugarcane operations, crucial to the Vieques economy, were not spared, leading to the displacement of numerous working families and significant changes in the island's social fabric.

The U.S. Navy conducted a wide range of military exercises, including bombing practice, amphibious assault training, naval gunfire support, close air support, and weapons testing, causing significant environmental and health concerns among the local population. In 1999, the killing of a civilian security guard, David Sanes, led to widespread protests and international attention. Years of protests and negotiations ensued until the U.S. Navy officially ceased its military exercises on Vieques in 2003, ending its longstanding presence on the island.

In 2001, the U.S. Congress established the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge on the western end of the island. After 2003 and the Navy's complete withdrawal from Vieques, the wildlife refuge added acreage on the eastern end, increasing it to approximately 18,000 acres of land. The Vieques National Wildlife Refuge is now home to a large collection of unique and stunning beaches that endlessly captivate visitors and locals alike, but much of the area and several beaches will remain closed to the public for years to come due to ongoing munitions removal.

In 2005 large areas of Vieques and surrounding waters were placed on the National Priorities List and since then the U.S. government and its various agencies (including the EPA)

The departure of the U.S. Navy from Vieques marked the culmination of years of activism and efforts by the local community and environmentalists to reclaim the land.

have been working to address the environmental contamination left behind on the island by decades of military exercises, including unexploded ordnances and toxic substances, which pose significant health risks.

Long after the U.S. Navy's departure, residents of Vieques today continue to grapple with the legacy of military exercises on their island. One pressing concern is the alarmingly high cancer rates among the population, which many attribute to the years of exposure to hazardous materials and contaminants from military activities. The struggle for Vieques has shifted from protesting the Navy's presence to demanding comprehensive healthcare support and environmental cleanup. Local activists, alongside environmental organizations and concerned citizens, continue their fight for adequate healthcare, environmental remediation, and social justice.

Faced now with increased property values and a rise in real estate prices, locals here, like elsewhere in the world, struggle with social and economic exclusion and displacement while continuing to advocate for the well-being and restoration of their land. ■



To learn more about Vieques history, visit [El Fortin Conde Mirasol](#).

The Vieques Environmental Restoration Program (RAB) engages community members in a forum for information exchange. Download an application to join the RAB at www.navfac.navy.mil/Vieques.

MUSEUM FORT COUNT MIRASOL

CONNECT TO VIEQUES PAST

Before heading out to the beautiful beaches of Vieques, take some time to connect to the island's past by visiting the last Spanish Colonial fort ever built in the Caribbean. The fort was constructed from 1845 to 1855 under the rule of the Spanish Governor of Puerto Rico, don Rafael Aristegui y Vélez, known as the Count of Mirasol, to fortify the island against potential threats. It also housed militia and served as a jail. Perched on the hill overlooking Isabel Segunda, it offers a commanding view and served as a crucial stronghold against pirates and foreign invasions.

Administered by the Puerto Rican Institute of Culture (ICP), the restored, Colonial-style building now houses a beautiful art gallery, an exquisite collection of indigenous and cultural artifacts, and the Vieques Historic Archives, an extensive library of documents related to the history of Vieques. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

Longtime activist Robert Rabin served as director of Fort Conde Mirasol for 32 years until his death in March of 2022. He will always be remembered, revered, and loved.



NEW CULTURAL ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR

NEISHA RAMOS BENJAMIN

A warm welcome to the new coordinator of cultural activities at the Fort Conde de Mirasol Museum, Neisha Ramos Benjamin. Born in San Juan, Neisha graduated from the Specialized School of Theater, José Julián Acosta, and continued her post-graduate studies as a Theater Teacher at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus. She has worked as an educator, creative director, youth leader, and cultural project manager. Committed to the socio-cultural work and development of the arts in the communities of Puerto Rico, she has collaborated as a professional resource for films, advertising, art, education, culture, human rights, public health, and social development projects. Over the years in Vieques, Neisha has worked with community-based organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Department of Education, Instituto Nueva Escuela, Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust, Vieques Love, and Club SOMOS, among others. To contact Neisha, email her at nramos@icp.pr.gov.



AJSteinson.com

El Fortín Conde de Mirasol

Hours: Wednesday to Sunday
Miércoles a domingo,
8:00AM - 12:00PM
1:00PM - 4:00PM

WINTER EXHIBITS/ EXHIBICIONES DE INVIERNO:

Art Exhibition "Four Artists, One Calling: Viequenses Lives Matter!" Featuring artists Myrna Pagán, Jackie Cruz, Ardelle Ferrer, and Isa Williams.
[Opening] Friday, Nov. 3 • 7:00 PM. - Dec. 23

Exhibición de Arte "Cuatro artistas, un llamado: ¡Vidas Viequenses Valen!" Artistas: Myrna Pagán, Jackie Cruz, Ardelle Ferrer e Isa Williams.
[Inauguración] Viernes, 3 de noviembre • 7PM - 23 de diciembre

CULTURAL AFTERNOONS AT THE FORT TARDES CULTURALES EN EL FORTÍN

Local crafts, art exhibitions, presentations, and more. FREE for the whole family. This event will take place one Saturday a month at Fort Conde de Mirasol Museum. Please check the Fort Conde de Mirasol Facebook page for future dates.

Saturday, Nov. 18
2:00PM - 6:00PM

Saturday, Dec. 9
1:00PM - 5:00PM.

Artesanía local, exhibiciones de arte, presentaciones y más. GRATIS para toda la familia. Este evento se llevará a cabo un sábado al mes en el Museo Fuerte Conde de Mirasol. Por favor, consulte la página de Facebook del Museo Fuerte Conde de Mirasol para conocer las fechas futuras.

Sábado, 18 de noviembre
2:00PM - 6:00 PM

Sábado, 9 de diciembre
1:00PM - 5:00PM

For more information visit www.culturalpr.com or Vieques Cultural on Instagram or Facebook.

'tis the season



On Vieques, the holiday season comes alive with vibrant festivities and unique traditions that honor the island's rich cultural heritage.



Fantasia Caribeña's
Emilia Santiago Legrand



Kamehila Mercado Feliciano
with son Luis Ivan Ayala
Mercado

The holiday **lighting of the Plaza** in Isabel Segunda will be on **December 2nd**, accompanied by a **holiday parade** beforehand featuring our own **Fantasia Caribeña**, the troupe that travels to NYC each year to represent Vieques in the Puerto Rican Day Parade.

On **Christmas Eve (Nochebuena)**, families gather for a grand feast featuring traditional dishes like lechón (roast pig), arroz con gandules (rice with pigeon peas), pasteles (Puerto Rico's version of tamales) and tembleque.

January 6th marks the **Feast of the Epiphany** or **Three Kings' Day**, a celebration where children in many Latin American and Spanish cultures traditionally receive holiday presents. For Christians worldwide, the holiday season concludes officially on the 12th day of Christmas, underlining the significance of the adoration of the baby Jesus by the Three Kings.

On the night before **Three Kings' Day**, a unique tradition unfolds in numerous Latin American and Viequense households. Children venture into their yards, gathering the freshest grass leaves, which they carefully place inside a shoe box. Positioned beside their beds, this box serves as a symbolic offering for the camels that carry the Three Kings upon their arrival. This practice is much like the North American tradition of leaving milk and cookies for Santa on Christmas Eve. In Latin America and Spain, millions of children eagerly anticipate **"el Día de los Reyes Magos,"** cherishing the anticipation of this special day. On Vieques there are numerous events to distribute toys on or around Jan 6th.



LECHÓN



Lechón, a slow-roasted pig, is a Christmas staple in Vieques, akin to Thanksgiving turkey in the States. A whole pig seasoned with “sazón,” a local seasoning mix made from ingredients like paprika, coriander, cumin, oregano, and garlic. The pigs are cooked overnight either with propane or charcoal for that traditional flavor. Chicharróns or the crispy, seasoned skin is as coveted as the meat.

.....

PASTELLES



Pasteles are sometimes described as Puerto Rican tamales, the difference being they are made with root vegetables instead of corn. Making them is labor intensive work which is why they are traditionally done during the holiday season. Fortunately, many restaurants here on Vieques serve pasteles around the holidays.

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TEMBLEQUE



Tembleque is a vegan dessert made from coconut milk, cornstarch, sugar, and a pinch of salt. Cooked on the stove until thickened, it gets its name from its wiggly texture when cooled. Sprinkled with ground cinnamon, it's a delicious treat for vegans. Look out for it on local menus. Enjoy!

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- **Dec. 2nd** • Holiday Parade and lighting of the Plaza in Isabel II
- **Dec 9th** • Holiday Gran Cabalgata • 1pm-4pm, Isabel II to Esperanza
- **Jan 4th** • Three King's Day toy give-away, Esperanza [to donate or volunteer call 787-223-8631]
- **Jan 6th** • Three King's Day

Coginito DO try this at home.

Our traditional homemade version of eggnog combines coconut, spices and of course, rum! No holiday festivity would be complete without this delicious, creamy concoction.

THE EASY RECIPE

- 2 cans (12 oz. each) Evaporated Milk
- 1 can (15 oz.) Cream of Coconut
- 1 can(13.5 oz.) Coconut Milk
- ½ cup Sweetened Condensed Milk
- ½ cup rum (optional)
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon, plus more for garnish, if desired

In bowl of blender, add evaporated milk, cream of coconut, coconut milk, sweetened condensed milk, rum (if using), vanilla extract and ground cinnamon. Blend on high until mixture is well combined. Pour coconut mixture into glass bottles or containers. Transfer to refrigerator. Chill until cold. To serve, stir or shake bottle well to combine. Pour coginito into small serving glasses. Garnish with ground cinnamon and cinnamon sticks, if desired.



Buen Provecho - *Enjoy your meal!*



HOLIDAY SPIRIT >> Each year one house stands out for its display of Christmas spirit. Miguel (Papito) Rivera Melendez's family has been de"lighting" the island with his Christmas light display for over 25 years. It takes 20-30 hours to string over 10,000 lights and required a dedicated electric panel to be added to the house. Papito keeps the family tradition alive for his mother, Mariita Melendez Sanes, granddaughters and nephews. It is a Vieques treasure during the holiday season and locals look forward to seeing it every year. Drive down Calle Flamboyán in Esperanza. You can't miss it!



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 BELLE PLAYA
 VIEQUES, PUERTO RICO



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CABALGATAS

Keeping Equestrian Tradition Alive

By: Olga Gallego Smith and Kelly Thompson

During your time on Vieques, you might be fortunate enough to witness a cabalgata, which is a cavalcade or horse procession. On Vieques horses are ridden daily for transportation but the cabalgatas are truly special to see. Riders adorn their horses and gather at an established meeting location. The procession then fills the streets with the taka, taka, sound of the hooves on pavement, and much laughter. The riders go from one establishment to the next, sometimes crossing the island north to south from Isabel Segunda to Esperanza. Along the route, there are regular stops for refreshments for both riders and horses.

Deeply rooted in Hispanic culture, historically cabalgatas were associated with medieval chivalry, where nobles paraded through the towns, showcasing their skills and their horses. On Vieques, cabalgatas have evolved into more than a celebration of local horse culture; they have become an opportunity to impart knowledge about horse care and riding to the youth.

Johnny “Wachu” Colon is actively trying to revive the cabalgatas to preserve the island’s heritage of equestrian traditions and teach the youth how to care for their horses. He, his wife Abigail Díaz, and their two daughters, operate a farm which is not only for horses but also for a variety

of farm animals. They organize weekly cabalgatas and encourage families and kids to join. Groups of riders, young and old, congregate near the ferry on Saturdays with the procession starting around 3pm.

A **Grand Cabalgata** is scheduled for **Dec 9**, beginning at 12 pm from El Yate Restaurant and Bar in Isabel II and concluding in Esperanza at the fishermen’s pier. The festivities, starting at 4 pm, include live music, games, raffles, food trucks, dominoes competitions, and local arts and crafts. The Cabalgata will make three stops: first at Gran Parada Bar and Restaurant, then at Kalientitos Bar and Restaurant, and it will wrap up at the entrance to Sunbay. All riders are welcome!

<< Johnny Colon mentors one of the youngest riders, Luis Ivan Ayala Mercado, to participate in the cabalgatas.



AJStetson.com



Betty Gilreath



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QUINTA JABALI One of the most spectacular settings in Vieques, located in La Hueca. Spacious indoor-outdoor living with one bedroom, two bath, modern architect-designed residence surrounded by 2 acres of beautifully landscaped desert tropical grounds. Has glorious views of the Caribbean, Playa Grande, and the cays south of Esperanza. House is built into the hillside of poured-in-place concrete. Off grid net-metered solar power with two Tesla powerwalls. Two 25,000-gallon cisterns that collect rain from the roof with water purification system. Wonderful saltwater pool overlooking the ocean. High end furnishings with antiques and unique ethnic artifacts. Two car extra-large garage. Storage/utility room. Pool pump room. Plans are available for a second-floor expansion. Showing by advance appointment only, between a very busy rental schedule. **\$2,250,000**

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GUESTHOUSE
VIEQUES, PUERTO RICO
**BEACH BAR
& GRILL**

BANANAS

ON THE MALECON
ESPERANZA
**787-354
0020**



from the Bananas Staff
Buen Provecho!

Please be considerate of horses on the roads and remember to slow down! Vieques roads have recently been repaved, greatly improving the driving experience. However, this improvement has unintended consequences for the horses, as drivers tend to speed up. While free-roaming horses are a picturesque sight on the beach, it's crucial to recognize that these animals need food, water, and medical care, which may not always be accessible to them when they roam freely. There are ways to assist these horses; one option is to contribute to nonprofits devoted to animal and horse care, as they are in urgent need of support. Your assistance can make a significant difference in their well-being. See page 56 to see how you can help.

Vieques speed limit on most of the main roads is 35 mph but slows to 5 to 15 on beach roads and school zones. What's your hurry? You're on Vieques!



9 DICIEMBRE

Gran Cabalgata
En la Isla de Vieques

Salida: **12:00pm**
Desde: El Yate

Actividad final: Esperanza Malecón

MÚSICA EN VIVO
RIFAS
TORNADO DE DOMINO
ARTESANOS
KIOSKOS
EL SHOW DE LOS INFLUENCERS
ARTISTAS LOCALES
MUCHAS SORPRESAS MÁS.

BURBO PR
DÍMELOFEA
PULLI LA MAGINA

MÚSICA EN VIVO
EL BANDILETO

Municipio de Vieques

Organizador: Johnny E. Colón "Wachu"
Contacto: (939) 529-4884

where to ride



▶ **Esperanza Riding Company**
787-435-0073
esperanzaridingcompany.com

▶ **Jurutungo Horseback Riding**
215-692-7374
juritungofarm.com

▶ **Seagate Horseback Riding Tours**
201-450-8238
787-741-4661
seagatehotel.com

▶ **Colon Horseback Riding Tours**
787-237-9236
colonhorsriding.com

VIEQUES BEACHES

Download the Vieques Insider Beach Guide at www.viequesinsider.com

For information on hiking trails visit: www.fws.gov/refuge/vieques
<https://www.ticatove.org/vqs-hiking-trails>

Caribe



SOUTH SHORE BEACHES

SUNBAY Accessible by the gated entrance off 997, Sunbay is a one mile stretch of beach. Sunbay has lifeguards and bathhouse. The entrance is 5 miles from Isabel II and 0.7 miles from Esperanza (the Malecon). There is an entrance fee of \$2-\$4 depending on time of year.

MEDIA LUNA Enter the gated entrance off 997 at Sunbay. Follow the dirt road at the end of Sunbay and travel 0.6 more miles to Media Luna. Great for small children, Media Luna is shallow. You can walk 30 ft out into the water and still be in waist deep water. Also, for a free "spa experience," enjoy an exfoliation from the silky, fine sand.

NAVIO Follow directions to Media Luna but pass Media Luna and take a left at the sign and go another 0.3 miles. The road is extremely rough and 4wd is sometimes required but you can also park at Media Luna and walk to Navío. Go into the cave on the left side of the beach (if facing the water) for an excellent photo spot! There's good surf so bring your boogie board!

ESPERANZA BEACH To the east and west of the fishing piers in Esperanza.

PLAYA NEGRA (BLACK SAND BEACH) Leave Esperanza on 996 going west. Come to T (201) and take left. Drive 0.1 mile and look for the Playa Negra sign at the trail head. Drive 100 feet more to the parking lot across from Gallery Oro. Walk down the path to the dried stream bed and follow to the right. It is about a 20

minute walk to the beach. If it has rained, stream bed will actually be a small stream. Bring bug spray and water.

VIEQUES NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE*

CARACAS* From 997, turn into the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge at Km Marker 3.2. Go 2.6 miles to a sign for Caracas. Turn right and go .7 more miles. Little shade except for picnic gazebos in the grass area. Watch out for the sand-burs! Be very careful where you step when you are in the grassy area and kids should wear their shoes down to the sand (or water's edge). Note: Only park in the parking lot, and not in the entire cul-de-sac at the very end, to avoid fines. It is only for emergency vehicle turn around.

PLAYUELA* From 997, turn into the Wildlife Refuge at Km Marker 3.2. Go 2.6 miles to the brown sign for Caracas. Turn right and go .6 mile to brown sign for Playuela and Tres Palmitas. Turn right and drive .1 mile to parking area for the Playuela Trail. Walk 10 min on a shaded trail and you're there!

PATA PRIETA* From 997, turn into the Wildlife Refuge at Km Marker 3.2 and go aprox 2 miles. Pass turn to Caracas and continue straight on dirt road for aprox 1 mile and turn right at Pata Prieta sign. After 0.2 miles, follow the road to the right to a small parking area with sign. Walk down the (slippery) gravel path to the left of the sign to the beach. Rough road so 4wd is recommended. Bring a beach umbrella as there is little shade!



LA CHIVA* From 997, turn into the Wildlife Refuge at Km Marker 3.2 and go aprox 2 miles to the end of the paved road. Pass the sign for Caracas and continue straight on the dirt road. La Chiva has numbered spots #1-20. At marker #12 the road splits so stay right if you want to explore La Chiva spots #16-21. There are composting toilets at #3 & #12.

LA PLATA* Follow directions to La Chiva but when road splits take left and go 0.5 miles to reach La Plata. Parking lots/entrances are from #21-26. La Platita is the natural boat ramp at the end of the road.

ON THE WEST SIDE

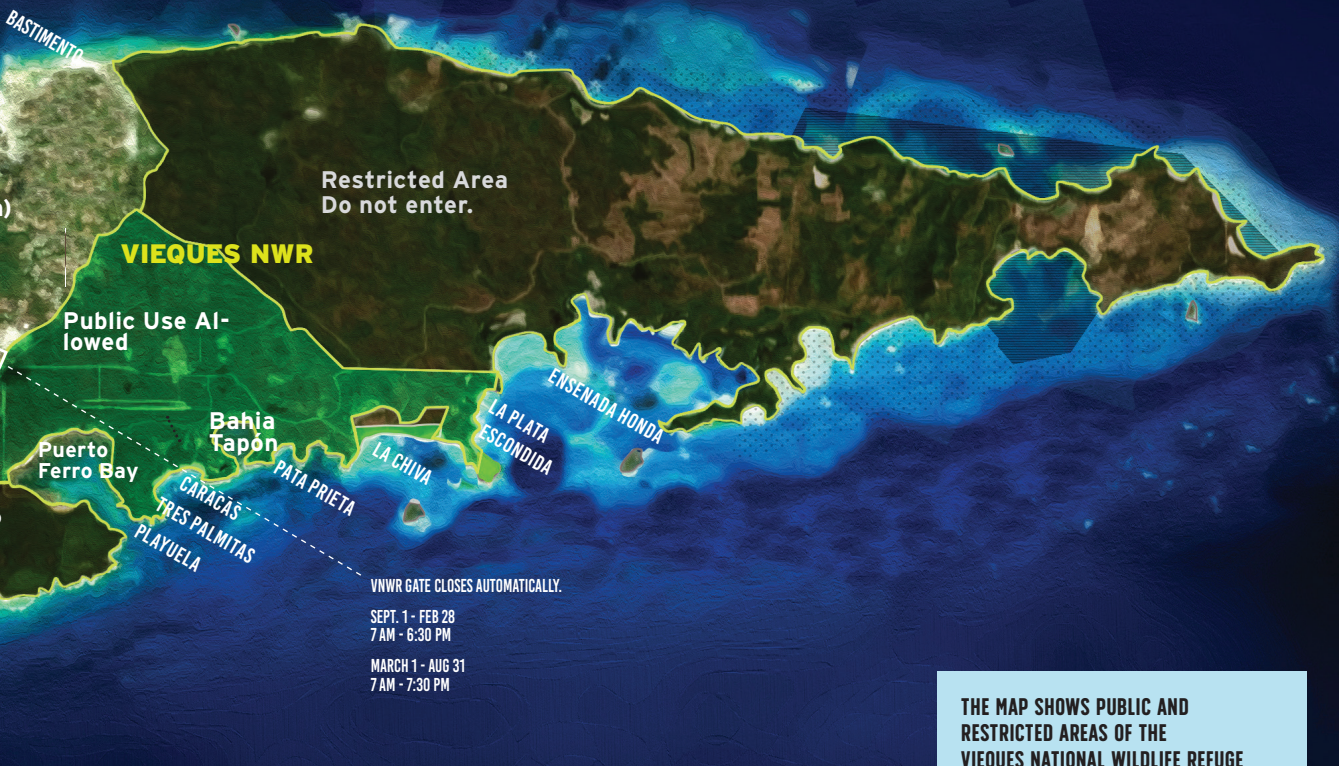
PLAYA GRANDE* Leave Esperanza on 996 going west and come to a T (rt. 201). Take a left. Go 1 mile to where the road dead ends and take a left. Follow road to the bottom of the hill, where you will be entering the southwest area of the Wildlife Refuge. Take a right onto dirt road to find a beach spot. Great beach for walking. Playa Grande is a turtle nesting beach so be sure to keep dogs on a leash and watch out for roped off nests. If you follow the dirt road west, you will run into the rugged Punta Vaca beach area. Good for hiking and nature exploration, but not safe for swimming.

PUNTA ARENAS* Follow directions to Rompeolas on the north shore but go past turn for pier and drive approximately 2 miles. You will come to a sign that says you are entering northwest area of the Wildlife Refuge. Drive 1 mile and come

PREVAILING WINDS:

WINTER - EAST TO NORTHEAST

SUMMER - SOUTHEAST



VNWNR GATE CLOSES AUTOMATICALLY.

SEPT. 1 - FEB 28
7 AM - 6:30 PM

MARCH 1 - AUG 31
7 AM - 7:30 PM

THE MAP SHOWS PUBLIC AND RESTRICTED AREAS OF THE VIEQUES NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

-  PUBLIC USE ALLOWED. ACCESO AL PÚBLICO PERMITIDO.
-  DO NOT ENTER. EXPLOSIVE HAZARD.
-  NO ENTRE. PELIGRO DE EXPLOSIÓN.
-  MARINERS PROHIBITED FROM ENTERING THIS AREA SE PROHIBE A LOS NAVEGANTES ENTRAR A ESTA AREA
-  MARINERS ARE PROHIBITED FROM ANCHORING, DREDGING, OR TRAWLING IN THIS AREA. SE PROHIBE A LOS NAVEGANTES ANCLAR, DRAGAR O LA PESCA DE ARRASTRE EN ESTA ÁREA.

to a T / there are spots to the left and to the right with the best snorkeling to your left. Make sure to bring water and bug spray. No-see-ums come out in the late afternoon.

NORTH SHORE BEACHES

SEA GLASS BEACH Drive into Isabel II on 200 and make a left onto main street (Calle Muñoz Rivera). Almost at the end of the street you will see an intersection with a church on your right. Make a left here and at the next intersection make a right. Park on the street (not in the yellow!) and walk to the left of the gazebo down a path to the beach.

LA CHATA Drive by the ferry on your left and go up the steep hill to the right of El Yaté Bar. Go by the lighthouse on your left and take the next right down a steep little hill. Curve to your left and follow along this shoreline road. Pass La Lanchita on left and drive approximately 0.35 miles to a left turn onto a small dirt drive with two palms and large rocks at the end. La Chata! Keep your eyes open for sea glass. Don't be surprised if you are swimming with horses! Many people come here to exercise them.

EL GALLITO Pass the W on 200 going west and look for a parking area and short peninsula on your right. The beach is on the right. Great place to be at sunset!

EL PARQUE CEIBA Go west on 201 approximately 1 mile past the airport and follow the sharp curve to the right. Go down a small hill and the Ceiba tree is on your right. Enjoy the Ceiba tree without climbing, marking or damaging the roots.

ROMPEOLAS Follow directions to the Ceiba tree but pass the Ceiba and continue on the main road to the left. Take the next right at the empty concrete structure with parking lot and this road will take you to the pier. Rompeolas pier is 1 mile long so it is great for beginning joggers or walkers! Great snorkeling on the left side of the pier but go with a guide. Twice a day the cargo barge docks at Rompeolas so you will find traffic in the early morning and late evening.

BLAYDIN BEACH OR MOSQUITO BEACH Follow directions to the pier but right before going out onto the pier there is a small sandy road to the left that leads to a shallow beach.

No-see-ums = sandflies that come out at sunset and they bite!

MUNITIONS SAFETY
If you see something that could be a munition, follow the 3Rs.

-  **RECOGNIZE**
-  **RETREAT**
-  **REPORT**



Cell Service at the Beach If you hire a publico to take you to the beaches remember to arrange a pick up time before they drive off because cell service may not be available.

Vieques has the highest number of public beaches of all the municipalities in Puerto Rico. Beaches are in protected areas and are safe. Stay in the designated public areas. Never enter restricted areas that are marked with extensive signage.

!Tú dispensario con propósito!

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WEEDMAPS

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a Fajardo!*

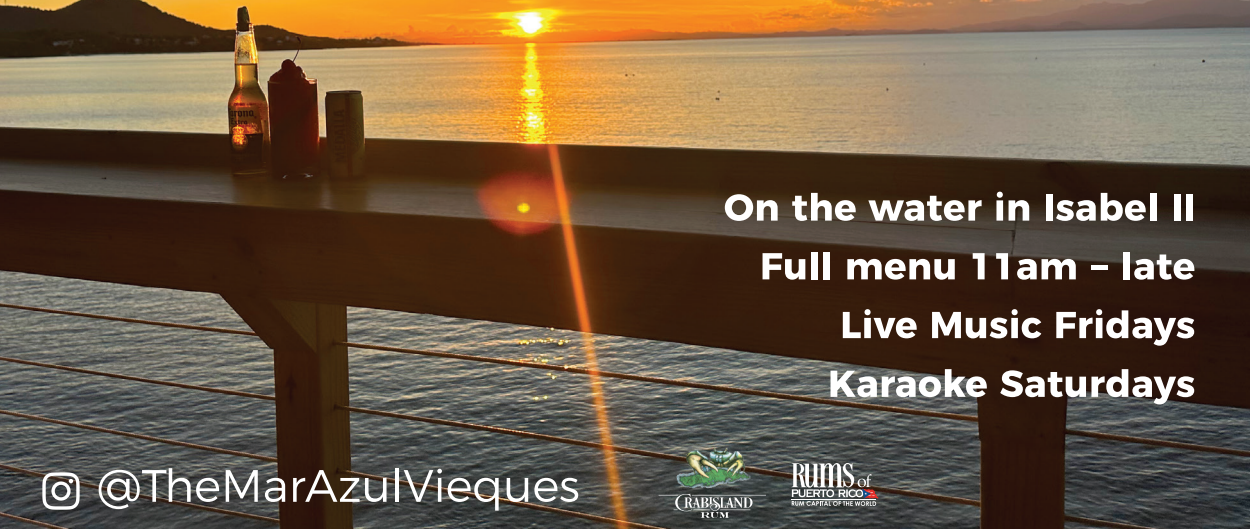
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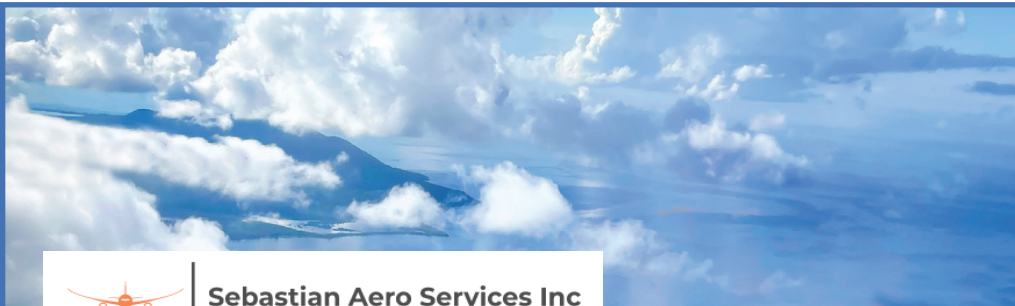
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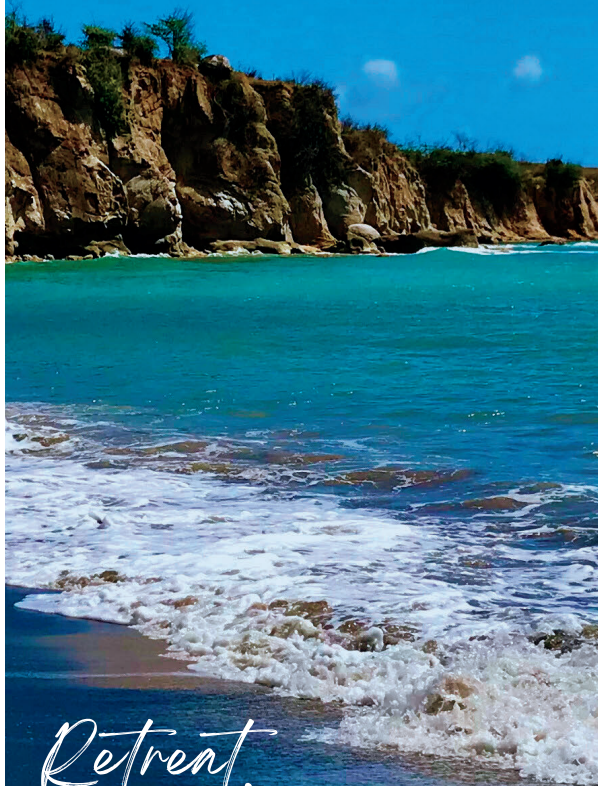


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Make this season extra special, give back, spread joy, and create lasting memories. Join **Boys & Girls Club of Vieques** as a **Volunteer** providing English tutoring, yoga classes, and art workshops while making a difference in the lives of our amazing kids!

Fill out our quick and easy online form and start creating heartwarming memories that will last a lifetime while feeling the love of our Vieques Club family.

Forge a bond with fellow volunteers and be a positive role model and mentor to the youth of Puerto Rico.

SCAN ME



where to stay



Encantada



Lejos Eco Retreat

INSIDER ECO TIP

Switch off your AC when you step out during the day to prevent condensation. This not only conserves electricity but also keeps mosquitoes away, as they are drawn to moisture!

ACCOMMODATIONS

On Vieques, accommodation options are diverse, ranging from charming guesthouses to luxurious villas and cozy Airbnbs, ensuring something for everyone. Chain hotels and all-inclusive resorts are notably absent. Expect exceptional places with hospitable hosts, but plan and communicate well to ensure a delightful stay.



Casa Cerromar

804-306-3423
lanesanson@gmail.com

Casa de Amistad

787-247-1017
www.casadeamistad.com

Casa de Colores

443-961-5242
www.casadecoloresvieques.com

Casa La Lanchita

845-891-1502
www.casalalanchita.com

Casa Sara

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wjdp22@gmail.com
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EcoCasa

www.ecocasavieques.com

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www.elblok.com
reserve@elblok.com

Encantada

EncantadaVieques@gmail.com
www.encantadavieques.com
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Finca Victoria

www.lafinca.com

Hacienda Tamarindo

787-741-8525
www.haciendatamarindo.com

Hix Island House

787-435-4590
www.hixislandhouse.com

Isla Hermosa Guesthouse

787-370-3321
www.islahermosaguesthouse.com

Last Terrazas

www.lasterrazas.biz
info@lasterrazas.biz

Lazy Guesthouse

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www.lazyguesthouse.com

Lejos Eco Retreat

787-254-8236
www.lejosecoretreat.com

Malecon House

939-239-7113
www.maleconhouse.com
info@maleconhouse.com

Martineau Belle Playa

www.luxuryvillavieques.com
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Old Crow Hotel & Suites

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www.oldcrowhotel.com

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airbnb-orita

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www.seagatehotel.com

The Vieques Guesthouse

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www.theviequesguesthouse.com

Tradewinds

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Villa Dos Palmas

802-272-0704
www.villadospalmas.net

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CAMPING ON VIEQUES

SunBay National Park offers beachside camping with ocean views and a mile-long stretch of sandy beach and turquoise water. Camping costs \$10.00 per night and is located in the field to the right of the SunBay administrative building. Check-in and out are coordinated through the Reserve Manager or staff. Facilities include open outdoor showers and a public bathroom, but campers need to bring their own supplies and paper products.

To camp, visitors need to check in at the SunBay administrative offices, open Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 5 pm. Head straight into SunBay (off Rt. 997) and continue straight to the walled parking area. The administrative offices are on the left under the roofed plaza. If arriving after office hours, campers can set up and pay the next day. Note that the camping area is partially fenced, allowing horses to roam, so campers need to be cautious about tent placement and avoid feeding or petting the horses.

- ▶ The SunBay main gate off Rt 997 is open 24/7 and the entrance fee is \$4.00 per vehicle, per day from 9am to 5pm. Walking in is free.
- ▶ Located next to the administrative offices is Arenamar Café which is open Friday to Sunday for lunch, including vegetarian options.



ACCOMMODATIONS

Altamira altamiravieques.com
 At the Waves 201-707-8476
 Bananas Guesthouse 787-354-0020
 Blue Horizon Boutique Resort 787-741-3318
 Casa de Amistad 787-247-1017
 Casa Colores 443-961-5242
 Casa Corona 404-788-2262
 Casa Coqui Verde 787-477-5182
 Casa Fuerte 802-272-0704
 Casa Iguana 802-683-6474
 Casa Tesoro on Facebook
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 Crab Island Adventures 787-608-8983
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 Hacienda Tamarindo 787-741-8525
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 Lazy Guesthouse 787-741-5555
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 800-774-4717

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 Malecon House 939-239-7113
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 Orita 510-682-3064
 SeaGate 201-450-8238
 787-741-4661

SoliMar Guest Studios 787-980-8717
 Suenos del Mar (Fajardo, PR) 787-435-0221
 The Blue 787-741-3318
 The Haven on Facebook
 Tradewinds Guesthouse 787-710-7440
 The Vieques Guesthouse 787-435-1513
 Villa Dos Palmas 802-272-0704
Culebra
 Pelicano Oceanfront Villa Rentals 787-398-8635

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Victor Simmons 787-936-7496

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 Isla Nena Composta 787-309-8408
 JaFlor 267-968-4197
 La Colmena Cimarrona 787-502-4088
 Extensión Agrícola 787-765-8000 x3921

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 Air Flamenco 787-724-1818
 Air Sunshine 954-434-8900
 Cape Air 800-227-3247
 M&N Aviation 787-791-7090
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 Vieques Air Link 888-901-9247

ANIMAL WELFARE

Hooves on the Ground 787-308-7876
 Juntos 787-436-6817
 Our Big Fat Caribbean Rescue 787-349-8480
 Vieques Humane Society & Animal Rescue 787.741.0209

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Arquitecto Stanley Hutchinson 787-556-5537

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 Painted Paw Studio/Sarah Shearer 615-812-9144
 Sandra Reyes 787-435-1155
 Siddhia Hutchinson
 Glen Wielgus Gallery 787-556-5409
 Vieques Historical Trust 787-741-8850

BEE REMOVAL

Apiario Bieke 787-312-5848

ATTORNEY

Gino Negretti VQS Office 787-725-5500
 San Juan Office 787-467-4349

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 JAK Water Sports 787-644-7112
 Fun Brothers 787-435-9372

BIOBAY TOURS

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 Aqua Sunset Tours 939-208-6147
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 Scooters for Rent 939-437-2053
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 Rosas Depot 787-741-1307
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 Tony's Painting 787-602-8359
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 Ivette Yolanda 787-435-1289

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High Quality Electrical Contractor 787-446-6063

ELECTRONICS/PHONE ACCESSORIES

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 Quiñones Electronics 787-400-1183

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 Fun Brothers 787-435-9372
 Jak Water Sports 787-644-7112

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 Salty Spirit 787-477-8664
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 Jak Water Sports 787-644-7112
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 Dra. Ivette Perez 787-468-2000
 Dr. José Figueroa 787-223-1687, 787-366-1931
 Dra. Fanny Garraton (dentist) 787-741-8765

Health Pro Med 787-468-2000
 Hospicio 800-981-0054
 Dr. Luis Rivera 787-718-2250
 Vieques CDT 787-685-3960, 787-741-0398

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 or 939-224-2773
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 Cocolo (late night) 787-328-3940
 Danny (Pinita) 787-556-9623
 Diego Quiñones 787-590-7068
 Esteban Carle (Tebin) 787-486-1145
 Esteban Ortiz (Tolo) 787-435-9608
 Freddi 787-672-9264
 Gabriel Cordero 787-245-7068
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 787-988-5357
 787-219-3899
 Hector (Tito) 787-710-6667
 Heraldo Pérez 787-486-9202
 José Felix (Cheo) 787-645-2329
 Juan Carmona 787-585-9560
 Kalet Pérez 787-328-3940
 Miguel Ayala 787-486-0267
 Tata Robles 787-380-3007
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 Letty Perez/Kiany Tours 939-208-1600
 M&M Taxi 787-741-TAXI 8294
 Vieques Taxi 787-397-2048
 Vieques Tours & Transportation

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 Daniel Rivera 787-239-4300/787-398-0231
 Als taxi 787-590-9001
 Efrain Ortiz 787-225-4944
 John's Publico 787-354-5851
 John Rosario 787-354-5851
 José Segura 939-272-1968
 Angelito 939-224-2760
 Julian 787-245-6145
 Palma's Transportation /Jay 787-627-8264
 Hernan Nieves 787-674-0984

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 Rainbow Realty 787-741-4312
 Broker Marin 787-225-5604
 Broker Wetherby 787-380-4990
 Agent Matthews 787-988-4731
 Vieques Properties 646-705-3549
 787-216-6213

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 Blue Moon Bar & Grill 787-741-3318
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 Carambola at The Blue 787-741-3318
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 D'Frozz 787-239-4081
 Don Tito's Lechon 787-741-2898
 El Local 787-245-0936
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 Finca Victoria 787-646-0011

Fusion @Vieques Guesthouse 787-435-1513
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 Lazy Jacks Pub 787-741-1447
 Mama Mia 787-692-0742
 Mango Taphouse & Gastropub 939-891-2764
 Marshmallows 787-930-2365
 Placita @ El Blok 787-741-6020
 Robin's Mojito Bar 787-231-8484
 Rincon del Café 787-423-4336
 Rincon del Sabor 939-358-1783
 Rincontaco 939-239-4808
 Rising Roost (Guake'te) on Facebook
 Sabor Unico, Inc 787-435-5243
 Mar Azul 939-402-9696
 Taverna 787-438-1100
 Trade Winds Restaurant 787-710-7440

SAILING

Vieques Sailing Charters 939-332-5778

SCUBA

Blackbeard Sports 939-283-6841

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 Edwin appliance repair 787-209-1709
 Francisco washer/dryer repair 787-209-0059
 Narcotics Anonymous 508-873-4576
 Isla Nena Exterminating 787-310-1363
 Fire Fi 619-708-1444/787-435-2024
 JDtailing Shampoo & Car Wash 787-556-6458
 Gofers 787-220-0943
 Marc Weems 787-564-5120
 Recycling 787-741-5000 x2351
 Tony's Painting 787-602-8359
 Upholstery NorthStar Canvas 945-882-8229
 Vieques Gas 787-741-2551
 WASPR, Inc. 939-717-2121
 Vieques Tech Services 858-337-3116
 Vieques Humane Society & Animal Rescue 787.741.0209

SHOPPING

Atrevida at El Blok 787-741-6020
 Bazar la Caridad (thrift) 787-590-8575
 Dulce Mango facebook
 El Pescador Fishing & Marine Store 787-231-2624
 Finca Victoria 787-646-0011
 Lulu's Ceramics 787-232-4976
 Luna Loca 787-685-2992, 803-292-3862
 MamaPlaya Himalaya 787-548-1010
 Muebleria Quiñones 787-400-4004
 Ola Loca Beach Store 843-271-1910
 Oro 510-682-3064
 Quiñones Electronics 787-400-1183
 Rosas Depot 787-741-1307
 Scallywags 787-966-7540
 Siddhia Hutchinson & Glen Wielgus Gallery 787-556-5409
 Trade Winds Gift Shop 787-710-7440
 VCHT Gift Shop 787-741-8850
 Vieques Gifts 787-435-1244

SIGHTSEEING TOURS

Bieque Eco Trips 787-922-2701
 Black Beard Sports 939-283-6841
 Vieques Island Tours &Transport. 787-397-2048
 Beach Hop VQS Island Tours 787-397-2048

SNORKEL/SNORKEL BOAT (B) TOURS

Abes (B) 787-435-1362
 Aqua Sunset Tours 939-208-6147
 Black Beard Sports (B) 939-283-6841
 Bieque Eco Trips (B) 787-922-2701
 Crystal Clear Vieques 787-242-1071
 Fun Brothers 787-435-9372
 Jak Water Sports (B) 787-644-7112
 Nauti Mermaid (luxury B) 754-216-8168
 Salty Spirit (B) 787-477-8664
 Taino Aqua Adventures (B) 787-349-6964
 Vieques Sailing Charters 939-332-5778
 Wai Vie 787-247-3249

SPA/SALON/ESTHETICIAN/HAIR

Beatriz Beauty Boutique & Spa 787-556-8662
 Finca Victoria 787-646-0011
 Vieques Boutique Spa 939-279-6920

TOWING

Alex 939-238-9033
 Biggie 787-233-0879
 Chepo Towing 787-966-3985
 Freddy 787-608-9914
 Josaeen Maldonado 939-247-9825

TRANSPORT

Gofers 787-220-0943
 Island Services & Management 787-238-9108
 Tranka Transport 939-475-0687

VET

Vieques Humane Society & Animal Rescue 787-741-0209

WEDDING/EVENT PLANNERS

Eva Bolivar 787-402-0357
 Green Eyed Girl Weddings 971-506-9406
 Vieques Natural Wellness 787-436-1055

YOGA / LIFE COACHING

Ayurveda Yoga & Massage 970-729-0505
 Esperanza Yoga w/Valerie 508-945-7643
 Vieques Natural Wellness 787-436-1055
 Vieques Pilates, Yoga & Wellness 231-383-1885

MUNICIPAL / GOV. AGENCIES / PUBLIC SERVICE

Banco Popular 787-741-2071
 City Hall/Alcaldía 787-741-5000
 Sun Bay 787-741-8198
 US Fish and Wildlife Office 787-741-2138
 Recycling Office 787-741-5000
 Post Office 787-741-3891
 PR Tourism Office Vieques Airport 787-741-2300
 Isabel II 787-741-0800
 AAA Autoridad de Acueductos 787-620-2482
 FWS 787-741-2138
 Vieques Post Office 202-791-7632
 Vieques Gas 787-469-7734
 Vieques Covid Hotline 787-340-3837

EMERGENCY

Ambulance 787-741-8261/911
 Hospital 787-741-3282
 Emergency 787-741-8261 or 911
 Fire Dept 787-741-2111
 Police 787-741-2020
 Municipal Office 787-741-5000
 787-741-5051, 939-239-4164

AA ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Monday-Catholic Church Rectory 8am
 Monday-VCHT Meeting Room, 5:00pm
 Tuesday-VCHT Meeting Room, 5:00pm
 Wednesday-Catholic Church Rectory (bilingual), 5:00pm
 Thursday-Playa Gallito, 8:30am
 Friday-Catholic Church Rectory (bilingual), 5:00pm
 Saturday-Catholic Church Rectory, 10:30am
 Sunday-Women's Discussion Ceiba Tree, 8:00am
 Sunday-Catholic Church Rectory, 10:30am
 Contact: Lin 787-380-4990 or Dotti 787-741-0639

Alanon- for the family dealing with any substance abuse

Wed -Call Lynn for location 787-309-0798, 9:30am

NA Narcotics Anonymous

Thursday -Catholic Church Rectory, 5pm
 Contact Kerry 917-834-3509 or Dotti 787-741-0639



Steve Simonson

where to play



Black Beard Sports

VIEQUES **WATER** ADVENTURES

Dive into a World of Possibilities Beneath the Waves

Discover Vieques' vibrant underwater world with must-see attractions. Its Bioluminescent Bay, recognized as the world's brightest, offers a breathtaking light display at night. Learn about bioluminescence and local conservation efforts at the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust in Esperanza.

Explore the island's colorful marine life through snorkeling tours, ranging from boat excursions to hidden reefs requiring guides and kayaks. Dive deeper with scuba diving classes from beginner to advanced levels with experienced guides.

Paddleboarding in calm waters is a popular family activity. For mangrove exploration, fishing, or open water adventures, consider kayaking tours tailored to your interests. For an adrenaline rush, jet-ski rentals are available in Esperanza, or join guided tours to white sand beaches (exercise caution around other watercraft and reefs).

Charter a boat for snorkeling trips to vibrant offshore reefs or book a fishing expedition for a memorable catch.

SAFETY FIRST! When venturing out to the watery wonders of Vieques you are better off not doing it on your own. The charters and tours available here are inexpensive, educational and the captains and guides know how to keep you and your family safe.



Insider Eco Tip: Refrain from collecting shells, rocks, or coral as souvenirs, as they play crucial roles in the ecosystem. Steer clear of stepping on coral reefs to prevent irreparable damage and never touch or disturb marine life.

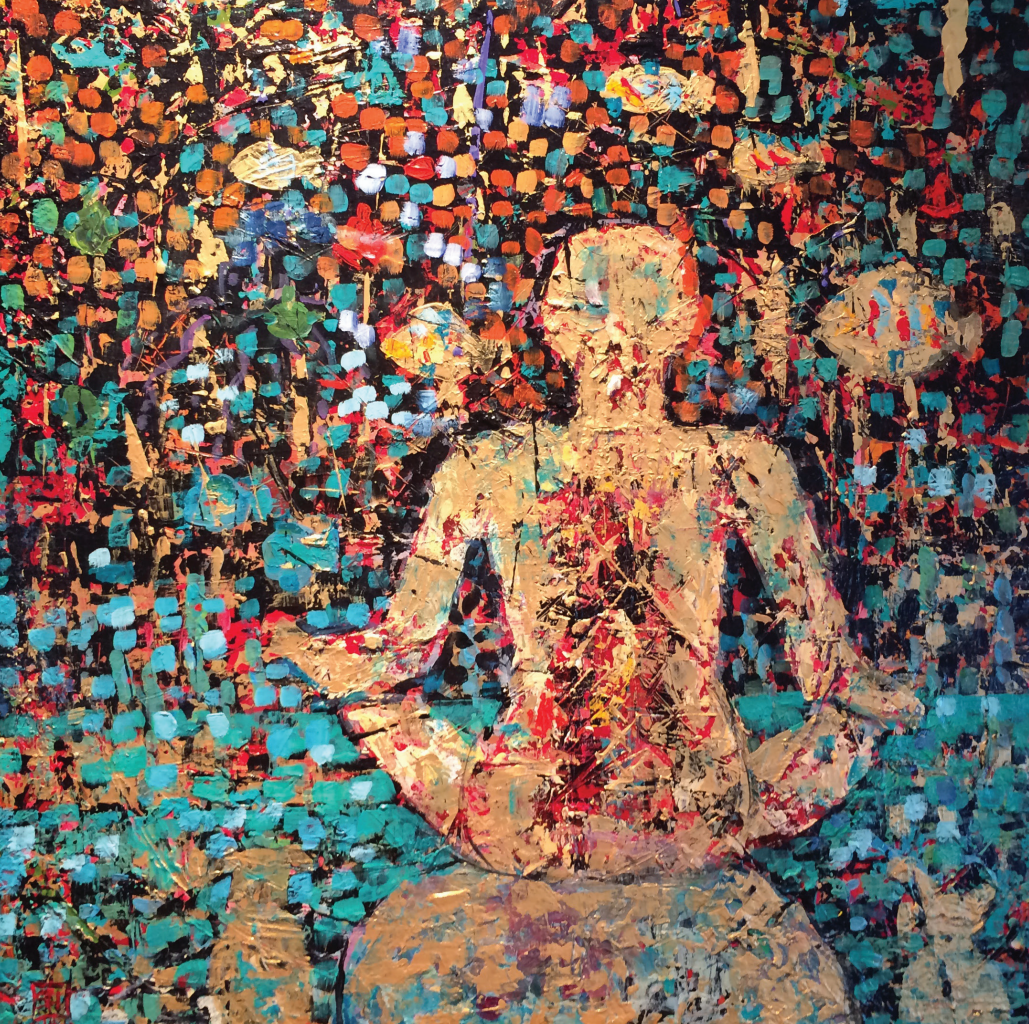


TOURS

		SNORKEL	KAYAK TOURS	BOAT TOURS	PADDLEBOARD	BIOBAY BOAT	BIOBAY KAYAK	SCUBA	FISHING BOAT	JETSKIS	SAILING CHARTERS	
Abe's BioBay and Snorkeling	787-435-1362	•	•		•	•						www.abessnorkeling.com
Amity Charters	787-502-3839								•			www.viequessportfishing.com
Black Beard Sports	939-283-6841	•	•	•	•	•	•					www.blackbeardsports.com
Fun Brothers	787-435-9372	•	•		•	•				•		www.funbrothers-vieques.com
Isla Nena Bio Bay	787-403-5581					•						www.borikuatourspr.com
JAK Water Sports	787-644-7112	•	•	•	•		•					www.jakwatersports.com
Salty Spirit	787-477-8664	•	•	•			•		•			www.salty-spirit.com
Tropical Reef Watersport	787-249-8914	•	•				•			•		www.tropicalreefwatersport.com
Vieques Sailing Charters	939-332-5778	•									•	www.viequessailingcharters.com

EQUIPMENT RENTAL

		SNORKEL RENTAL	KAYAK RENTAL	PADDLEBOARD RENTAL	FISHING SUPPLIES	BIKES	WATER BIKES	ELECTRIC BIKES	BEACH GEAR	JETSKI RENTAL	
Black Beard Sports	939-283-6841	•	•	•	•	•		•			www.blackbeardsports.com
Fun Brothers	787-435-9372	•	•	•				•	•	•	www.funbrothers-vieques.com
JAK Water Sports	787-644-7112	•	•	•		•					www.jakwatersports.com
Pescador Fishing & Marine Store	787-231-2624	•			•						



“Golden Buddha” by Siddhia Hutchinson. Mixed media collage.



SHOP, PAINT, LEARN

ISABEL II

DULCE MANGO
Mon-Fri 12-4
Sat 10-2

EL PESCADOR
FISHING & MARINE
SUPPLIES
Call 787-231-2624

FINCA VICTORIA
Everyday 8-7

LUNA LOCA ART
GALLERY AND GIFT
SHOP
803-292-3862
787-685-2992
Mon-Sat 9-6
Sun 9:30-4:30

OLA LOCA BEACH
STORE
843-271-1910
Mon-Sat 9-5:30
Sun 9:30-2:30

MAMAPLAYA
HIMALAYA
787-548-1010
Everyday 10-5

SCALLYWAGS
787-966-7540
Mon-Sat 9-5
Sun 9-2

ESPERANZA

ATREVIDA AT EL
BLOK
787-741-6020
Everyday 9-9

ROSAS DEPOT
787-741-1307
Mon-Fri 7:30-4
Sat 8-12

VIEQUES
CONSERVATION
AND HISTORICAL
TRUST GIFT SHOP
787-741-8850
Mon-Sat 10-12, 1-3

VIEQUES GIFTS
787-435-1244
everyday 10-5

TRADEWINDS GIFT
SHOP
787-710-7440
Everyday 11-5

**DEC 14TH
HOLIDAY STROLL**
Stores stay open
5pm-9pm for
refreshments
and shopping!

ART GALLERIES & SHOP

EL FORTÍN CONDE
MIRASOL
Wed-Sun 8-12

SIDDHIA HUTCHINSON
AND GLEN WIELGUS
GALLERY
787-556-5409
Mon-Sat 10-2
Sometimes Sun

LULU'S CERAMICS
787-232-4976
Thurs & Sat 10-2

ORO VIEQUES GALLERY
AND STORE
510-682-3064
facebook/orovieques

ART CLASSES

THE ART OF SEEING
203-444-1806
private or group
classes

PAINTED PAW
STUDIO
615-812-9144
facebook/insta @
paintedpawstudio



Vieques Natural Wellness Yoga

BODY,
SOUL
& MIND



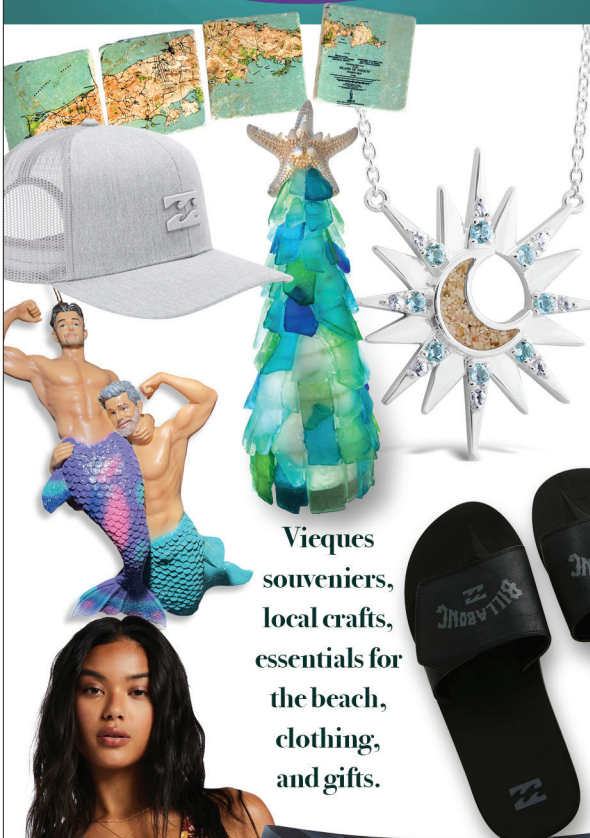
YOGA, TAI CHI, DANCE

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	PRIVATE CLASSES	
Vieques Natural Wellness Yoga	5pm El Blok Rooftop	check facebook	9AM Tradewinds	check facebook	9AM Tradewinds	6:30am El Blok Rooftop		●	787-436-1055
Finca Victoria Yoga	8am everyday vinyasa								www.lafinca.com
Tai Chi		5pm Qigong	8:30am Tai Chi		8:30am Qigong			●	Sunbay pavilion
Alicia Yoga								●	970-729-0505
Zumba w/Aurita	5pm Plaza Isabel II		9am Coliseum Isabel II		5pm Plaza Isabel II				787-477-1334
Ivette Yolanda Dance								●	787-435-1289

TREAT YOURSELF

	massage	couples massage	spa/body treatments	hair stylist	esthetic skincare	aromatherapy	arurvedic therapies	mani / pedi	lashes		
Ayurveda Yoga Massage	●					●				970-729-0505	ayurvedayogaalchemy
Beatriz Beauty Boutique	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	787-556-8662, 787-394-0414	beatrizbeautyboutique.com
Finca Victoria	●	●	●		●	●	●			787-646-0011	www.lafinca.com
Rising Dawn	●	●				●				248-470-5495, 939-389-5556	📍 Rising Dawn Therapeutic Massage
Vieques Massage	●									787-435-1313	www.viequesmassage.com
Vieques Boutique Spa			●		●			●	●	939-279-6920	IG-The_v_viequesboutiquespa

VIEQUES GIFTS



Vieques souvenirs, local crafts, essentials for the beach, clothing, and gifts.



787.435.1244
ON THE MALECON IN
ESPERANZA SINCE 2003
OPEN EVERYDAY



ABE'S Snorkeling & Bio-Bay Tours



“ Don't go to Vieques without taking this tour! ”

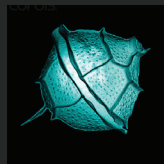
Biobay
Kayaking
Snorkeling
Paddle boarding
Private Tours



Online booking • abessnorkeling.com
(787) 435-1362

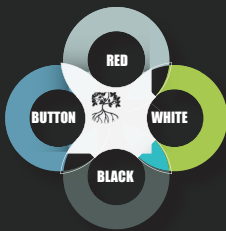
OUR AMAZING BIOBAY

There are few places in the world that classify as bioluminescent “bays”. Puerto Mosquito, Vieques’ bioluminescent bay, is considered by many to be one of the less known wonders of the world, having been declared the brightest in the world by Guinness World Records. The experience of taking a guided tour should absolutely not be missed if you are visiting. It is an experience that will stay with you a lifetime.



The magic of the Biobay is created by single cell organisms called Pyrodinium bahamense (whirling fire of the Bahamas), a type of luminescent dinoflagellate. This single cell microscopic plankton is able to convert

chemical energy into light energy by synthesizing luciferin with the enzyme luciferase, plus oxygen, produces a bluish-green light. The glow is thought to be a defense mechanism. The highest concentration of dinoflagellates in the bay to date was 3,319,267 per gallon. That concentration varies over time but the Biobay always bedazzles.



THE CONDITIONS

ALL FOUR TYPES OF MANGROVES LIVE IN THE BAY AND ARE PART OF THE ECOSYSTEM



MANGROVES provide nutrients for the dinoflagellates.



NARROW, SHALLOW ENTRANCE TO THE BAY traps dinoflagellates inside.



WATER DEPTH, TEMPERATURE AND SALINITY allow dinoflagellates to thrive.



PREVAILING WINDS from east to west prevent the dinoflagellates from flushing out.

DISCOVER THE BEST OF VIEQUES WITH US!



JETSKI TOURS
WITH SNORKELING ON THE ISLAND



BIOBAY TRANSPARENT KAYAK TOUR



BOOK NOW!

787-249-8914

www.tropicalreefwatersport.com

treefwatersport@gmail.com

WE ARE A VIEQUENSE COMPANY WITH 100% LOCAL AND HIGHLY EXPERIENCED GUIDES



Ride with us on
Playa Negra and
Playa Cocal!



TRAIL RIDES

1.5 hr group & 2hr private trail rides are offered daily @ 8AM & 4PM. Experience the natural beauty of the island from the back of a local Paso Fino horse. See expansive hilltop views of the center and southside of the island. Walk down idyllic palm tree-lined Playa Coqual & remote Playa Negra.

FAMILY FARM RIDE

20 minute mini trail ride around our beautiful waterfront pasture. Suited for children 4-10 years and their parents

PONY RIDE

15-minute hand-led ride for small children



787.435.0073

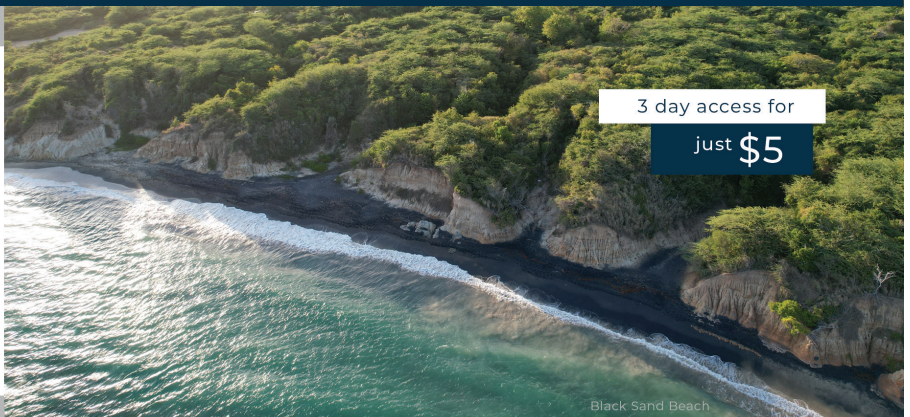
www.esperanzaridingcompany.com

• puertoricoadiotours.com • locally produced audio guide

Scan to listen:



PuertoRicoAudioTours.com



3 day access for

just \$5

Black Sand Beach



Punta Mulás Lighthouse

Listen to Vieques' history right on your phone.

Scan the QR code and start enjoying our history and hear the facts that make Vieques amazing! These audio tours are a great complement to your visit, as you get insight on the places you explore all around Vieques.

Facts about:

- Black Sand Beach
- Punta Mulás Lighthouse
- Mosquito Pier
- Archeological Findings
- Simon Bolívar
- NAVY Occupation



Sugar Pier In Esperanza

Adventure into the vibrant seas of the Spanish Virgin Islands aboard Vieques' largest, most luxurious motor Yacht Charter. NAUTIMERMAIDCHARTERS.COM



Luxury Coastal Cruises

Vieques, PR
754.216.8168

- 41 foot Bertram Cruiser
- Local Expertise and Crew
- Twin 450hp Diesel engines
- Snorkel Gear, Paddle-board, Clear bottom Kayaks, & rafts included
- Refreshments & Ample Shade
- Private Charters Available



The Place for Good Wine, Good People, Great Food

BAR & RESTAURANT SPECIALIZING IN PUERTO RICAN LOCAL CUISINE



IN ISABEL II
MON. - FRI. 11AM-11PM
SAT. 11AM-4PM
SUN. CLOSED

*The Freshest, Local Seafood
Keto and Vegetarian Menus
Cakes and Desserts to Order
Wedding Cakes*

*Concierge Services Available
+ Personal Grocery Services*

*Full Service Catering
or Catering Delivery*

Wedding & Event Planner

Private Chef

787-741-1504

787-435-9339

biekeshbistro.com

biekeshbistro@gmail.com

Cateringteambistro@gmail.com

where to dine



Executive Chef Jorge L. Mercado Castro from Carambola Restaurant at The Blue prepares a delicious pumpkin and ginger cinnamon cream soup and sautéed shrimp accompanied by tropical coconut rice, and blanched vegetables.



RESTAURANTS

DINE OUT!

		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	
AURORA'S CHICKEN & GRILL	787-407-9067	11-4:45							RT. 201
BANANAS BEACH BAR & GRILL	787-354-0020	11-9						11-9	ESPERANZA
BIEKES BISTRO	787-451-9061	11-11						11-4	ISABEL II
BLUE MOON BAR & GRILL	787-741-3318	9AM-10PM							ESPERANZA
CARAMBOLA AT THE BLUE	787-741-3318	7-3 AND 5-10							ESPERANZA
CARIBBEAN SMOOTHIE		CHECK HOURS AT CARIBBEANSMOOTHIE.COM							FERRY
COQUI FIRE CAFÉ	787-741-0401	5-9							ISABEL II
CRAB ISLAND RUM DISTILLERY					11-5		12-8	11-5	RT. 200
DEXTER'S BBQ	787-435-9173	FIND LOCATION 📍 DEXTERSBACKYARDBBQ							MOBILE
EL PLAZA	787-519-9510	5-10							ISABEL II
FINCA VICTORIA	787-646-0011	BREAKFAST EVERYDAY/VEGAN DINNERS ONLY FRI/RESERVATIONS NEEDED							RT. 995
KRISTY'S	717-226-6257	7AM-1PM			7AM-1PM				ESPERANZA
LAZY JACKS PUB	787-741-1447	11-1AM			11-2AM			11-1	ESPERANZA
MAMA MIA	787-692-0742		11-9					3-9	ISABEL II
MANGO PUBLIC HOUSE	939-891-2764	1-9				1-9			RT. 201
MARSHMALLOW'S	787-930-2365		10-5						ISABEL II
PLACITA @ EL BLOK	787-741-6020	5-10			5-10				ESPERANZA
ROOFTOP @ EL BLOK (BAR ONLY)	787-741-6020							4-8	ESPERANZA
RISING ROOST (GUAKE'TE)	ON FACEBOOK		8AM-1PM						ISABEL II
MAR AZUL	787-402-9696	11AM-CLOSE				11AM-2AM			ISABEL II
SABOR UNICO, INC	787-435-5243		8AM-5PM		8AM-9PM				
TAVERNA	787-438-1100			5:30-CLOSE					ISABEL II
TRADEWINDS	787-710-7440		4-8				4-8	9-2	ESPERANZA

Hours are subject to change. Please check the restaurant's facebook page for current hours.

NECESSITIES

GROCERIES

- ▶ FAMILY MARKET ISABEL II EVERYDAY 6AM-10PM
- ▶ MORALES SUPERDESCUENTO RT 200 MON-SAT 7:30AM-7PM SUN 7:30AM -12PM Holiday hours change
- ▶ MORALES EMPREZAS (PORTELA) ISABEL II MON-FRI 7AM-8PM SAT 7AM-7PM SUN 7AM-3PM
- ▶ MORALES ALMACENES ISABEL II MON-FRI 7AM-4PM SAT 8AM-12PM
- ▶ MOLINO ISABEL II MON-FRI 5AM-9:30 SAT-SUN 6AM-8:30

▶ VIEQUES FRUIT MARKET (MUNDO) MON-SAT 8AM-6PM

▶ MAMBOS (RT 997) EVERYDAY 7AM-9PM

GROCERY DELIVERY

- ▶ GOFERS PUERTO RICO GROCERY PICK UP FROM COSTCO, SAMS CLUB AND WALMART. Trips every other thursday. CALL 787-220-0943 for more info.
- ▶ PRPRODUCE GROCERIES OPTIONS - DELIVERED STRAIGHT TO YOUR DOOR. Shop at www.avieques.com. Place order by noon on Monday. Groceries delivered on Tuesday.

PESCADERIA (FISH MARKET)

▶ PESCADERIA ANGELYZ NEAR FERRY DOCK MON-FRI 10:30AM-2PM

VEGETABLE STAND

▶ PLACITA REYES TUES. AND FRI. 8AM-4PM CORNER OF 200 AND 201

PHARMACY

▶ PHARMACIA REY 52 C. BENITEZ GUZMAN MON-SAT 8AM-7PM SUN 10-6

LAUNDROMAT

▶ ISLA NENA LAUNDROMAT MON-FRI 9:30AM-12PM 2PM-4PM SAT 9:30AM-4:30PM 787-435-5615

GAS STATIONS

- ▶ THALERIA GAS STATION ISABEL II EVERYDAY 6AM-10PM
- ▶ MARISOL GAS STATION MONTE SANTO EVERYDAY 6AM-8PM
- ▶ MONTE SANTO GAS STATION EVERYDAY 6AM-9PM





GO YOUR WAY

With convenient pick-up and drop-off available at both Fajardo and Vieques ferry locations.

To make a reservation call:

1-800-633-3469

Ceiba Office (located at the Ceiba Airport):

787-885-0505

Vieques Office (located on Rt. 200 Vieques):

787-741-0284

avis.com

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At The Vieques Guesthouse
West end of the Malecón
in Esperanza




787.435.1513



Check out the Vieques Insider website for community events, past issues, a click to call phone directory, a free beach guide and more!

www.viequesinsider.com

**VIEQUES
CAR RENTAL**

**HOURS OF OPERATION:
9AM TO 5:30PM**

FOR AVAILABILITY AND RESERVATIONS:
WWW.VIEQUESCARENENTAL.COM

787-412-8540
ON RT. 201

787-237-9236
WWW.COLONHORSERIDING.COM



Spectacular Ride on the beach!



**COLON
HORSEBACK
RIDING**

KRISTY'S

Breakfast & Lunch
THURSDAY-MONDAY
7AM-1PM

OPEN

COFFEE

Home of the Fat Ass Pancakes!

Beautiful Caribbean View
Relaxing atmosphere & smiling faces!
On the Malecon Esperanza!
717-226-6257

kristys on the caribe

Mama Playa Himalaya

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CARIBBEAN FASHION
DESIGNED ON VIEQUES

THE CLOTHING BOUTIQUE WITH THE BEST SELECTION OF ISLAND WEAR, GIFTS & ACCESSORIES FOR WOMEN, MEN AND CHILDREN - TO FIT EVERYONE'S BUDGET!

787.548.1010
OPEN EVERYDAY
10AM-5PM

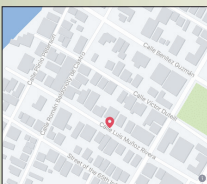
ISABEL II + 350 CALLE ANTONIO G. MELLADO
NEXT TO PANADERIA VIEQUENSE

Family Market
Centrahorros

The one stop market for all of your vacation needs!
(787) 968-3130



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#102, BO. ISABEL II
Vieques, Puerto Rico



- FRESH PRODUCE
- SPECIALITY MEATS AND CHEESES
- WINE AND CHAMPAGNE ROOM
- CRAFT BEER
- ORGANIC, KETO, KOSHER, & VEGAN
- GENERAL GROCERIES
- BAKERY AND DELI COUNTER
- PET SUPPLIES
- BEACH ITEMS
- AND MUCH MORE!

Convenient stop after arriving by plane or ferry!

facebook.com/Family-Market-Vieques

6am-10pm everyday!
Open holidays!



Ready for some **real** adventure? Let's go...

Beyond the beach!

Experience the magic of the offshore, remote coral reefs of Vieques in style, with Vieques Sailing Charters!

Half and full day all-inclusive tours for up to 6 guests, with food, drink, guided snorkeling, swimming, sailing, and more!

Licensed, insured, and fully permitted!

10 YEARS SAILING IN VIEQUES!

Book your adventure tour now!

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viequessailingcharters.com

GALERIA ISABEL SEGUNDA

A Collaborative Gallery with locally made art!

MONDAY-SATURDAY 10AM-4PM

MISSION TO VISION STATEMENT

Our purpose at Galeria Isabel Segunda is to sell and promote art, the arts, and the talented gifts of the people, for a profit of sustainability. Integral to our vision and mission is a model of HOPE-to enhance a greater earthly vibration through positive intention, visual and intrinsic beauty, and love. We the artists, agree to participate in the divine spirit of 'Goodness', and believe hope will lead to an abundance of all things necessary for the world's greater good.

434 Calle Carlos Lebrun
Isabel Segunda, Vieques
+1 207-467-0590

f Galeria Isabel Segunda
galeriaisabelsegundavqs

TRADITIONAL PUERTO RICAN CUISINE, COMFORT CLASSICS, VEGETARIAN/VEGAN OPTIONS

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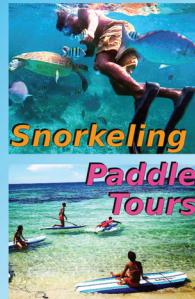
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501c3 Non-Profit

Our Big Fat Caribbean Rescue Needs Donations!

to continue **FREE spay & neuters** for all our island animals.

Donations gratefully accepted:
ourbigfatcaribbeanrescue.org/#donate



Our Big Fat Caribbean Rescue is a 501c3 non-profit offering free sterilization, non-profit vet care and humane education through an extensive community outreach program on the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico. Recognizing sterilization is the most effective model for humane animal population control on the island, OBFCR has proudly provided free spay/neuters to over 4,000 dogs and cats, provided vet care to hundreds and developed programs for dozens of students. OBFCR is proud to be a part of our community, helping our neighbors and their animals. Our great thanks to all our supporters over the years helping us help them.

WHERE TO DONATE OR GET INVOLVED

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- Boys & Girls Club**
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www.bgcp.org/24160/
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- Corefi**
787-905-6946
www.corefi.org
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- Fantasia Caribena De Vieques**
787-435-2288
facebook/Fantasia-Cari-
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- Fe Que Transforma**
787-308-5659
www.fequetransforma.com
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- Hooves On The Ground**
787-308-7876
facebook/Hoovesontheground
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- Hopebuilders**
239-633-2700
www.hopebuildersinc.org
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- Incubator Bieke Micro, Inc.**
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facebook/islanenacomposta
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www.juntosvieques.com
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- Jurutungo**
215-692-7374
www.jurutungofarm.com
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- Colmena Cimarrona**
787) 502-4088
www.lacolmenacimarrona.org
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- Our Big Fat Caribbean Rescue**
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www.ourbigfatcaribbeanres-
cue.org
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- Parque La Ceiba**
787-467-4352
facebook.com/Parque-La-Cei-
ba-De-Vieques
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- Rotary Club Of Vieques**
347-366-2211
www.rotaryvieques.com
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- Sail Relief Team**
202-680-8879
www.communitythroughcolors.
org
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- Navy League Vieques**
703-528-1775
facebook/navyleaguevieques/
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- Ticatove**
787-428-8288
www.ticatove.org
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- Vieques Concert Society**
787-225-5604
www.viequesconcertsociety.
org
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- Vieques Tennis**
787-435-2187
facebook/vieques.tennis.1
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- Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust**
787-741-8850
www.vcht.org
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- Vieques Emergency Response Inc**
787-901-7500
facebook/vqsemergency
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- Vieques En Rescate, Inc.**
787-408-7161
facebook/viequesenres-
cateinc/
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- Vieques Humane Society & Animal Rescue**
787.741.0209
www.viequeshumanesociety.
org
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- Vieques Island Animal Sanctuary**
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www.viequesanimalsanctuary.
org/
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www.viequeslove.org
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Did you know shelter pets:

- need enrichment activities every day?
- can get shelter fatigue and stress?
- need practice being part of a family to make them more adoptable?

Can you spare a little time while visiting Vieques to help a homeless pet?

Volunteer opportunities at Vieques Humane Society, our island's ONLY public animal shelter:

- Beach Doggy or Kitty Cuddle Session. Spend a little time with a shelter pet or take a pup for a beach walk.
- Dog for a Day. Our dogs love car rides, beach days, and day-trip adventures.
- Vacation Pet Proxy. Are your accommodations pet friendly? Consider fostering a shelter pet during your stay.
- Pet Escort. If you don't mind an extra carry-on, VHS animals often need to hitch a ride to folks waiting for them stateside (no cost to you).
- It's a Keeper. You've decided to adopt your new best friend. VHS can help with all the travel details, including what to do if you are travelling before your pet can see the vet (a travel requirement). See <https://viequeshumanesociety.org/travel>

Vieques Humane Society & Animal Rescue, Inc.
787.741.0209
hello@viequeshumanesociety.org

**Stop by: T-W (9-5),
Th-Sat (8-12).
Closed Sun-Mon
Rt. 200 km 1.4 in Santa Maria**

**www.viequeshumanesociety.org/volunteer
Adoptable Pets: <https://viequeshumanesociety.org/adopt>**

EDIBLE SOUVENIRS

We all want to bring exotic treats of our Vieques vacation home with us – it's natural. But according to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, (whose acronym, APHIS, is a clever reference to Aphis, the genus of a ubiquitous plant pest—the common aphid), all passenger baggage traveling from Puerto Rico to the U.S. mainland is subject to inspection. These inspections are conducted by officials of the USDA and APHIS prior to departure. Be prepared to open and close your baggage. If you have agricultural items with you, tell the inspector. Failure to do so can result in travel delays and fines of \$1,000 or more.

THERE ARE SEVERAL PLANTS THAT ARE ILLEGAL TO BRING BACK INTO THE UNITED STATES:



Mangos: because of the mango borer, which may infect the U. S. mango crop.



Pigeon peas (gandules in Spanish): because of the pigeon pea borer which might affect America's soybean and legume industry.



Citrus (of all types): because insect, bacterial, fungal and viral pathogens might be devastating to the Mainland's citrus industry.



Additionally, sour sop, passionfruit and potted plants are forbidden.



BUT HAPPILY, AVOCADO, PAPAYA, COCONUT AND PLANTAIN CAN BE TAKEN LEGALLY INTO THE U.S.

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 Visit viequeshumanesociety.org to donate; learn about volunteering, fostering & escorting animals to their forever homes; and about a wish list of items needed at the shelter.




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[f/viequeshumanesociety](https://www.facebook.com/viequeshumanesociety)
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hello@viequeshumanesociety.org
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LEY / LAW 51-2022

LEY PARA PROHIBIR EL EXPENDIO Y UTILIZACIÓN DE PLÁSTICOS DE UN SOLO USO EN TODO ESTABLECIMIENTO COMERCIAL

Para prohibir el expendio y utilización de plásticos de un solo uso en todo establecimiento comercial, de venta y de distribución autorizado a realizar negocios conforme a las leyes del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico; establecer un término de transición para cumplir con lo dispuesto en esta Ley; disponer de un procedimiento de orientación a tales fines; y establecer penalidades; y para otros fines relacionados.

La definición de plástico de un solo uso es todo artefacto de material plástico, tales como cubiertos, platos, sorbetos, vasos, tazas y contenedores hechos de poliestireno expandido (conocido como "foam"). Sea consumo inmediato (en establecimiento) o para llevar (to-go).

Esta Ley 51 entra en vigor el 1 de junio de 2024. En los primeros seis (6) meses de entrar en vigor la Ley al detectarse una infracción a la misma procederá la notificación de una falta. A partir del 1 de diciembre de 2024 la primera infracción es de \$500 dólares, la segunda infracción es de \$1,000 dólares y las infracciones ulteriores de \$5,000 dólares.

Excepciones a esta Ley - Declaración de Emergencia Nacional/Estatal (por el gobierno), Envasado de carne (cruda, comestibles).

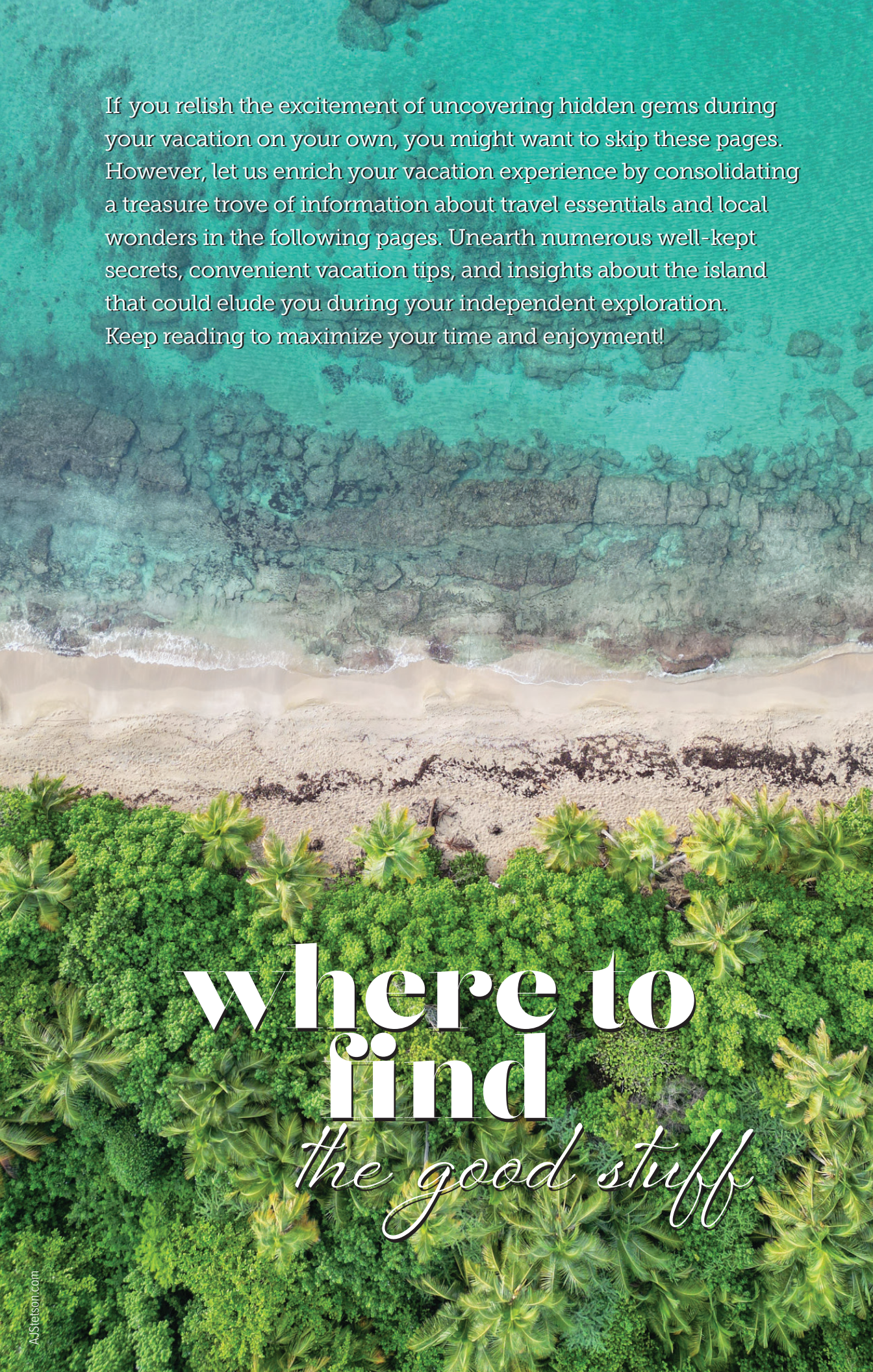
LAW TO PROHIBIT THE SALE AND USE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTICS IN ALL COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS A PARTIR DEL 1 DE JUNIO DE 2024

To prohibit the sale and use of single-use plastics in all commercial, retail, and distribution establishments authorized to function according to the laws of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; to establish a transition phase to comply with the provisions of the law; to provide guidelines for merchants and the general public; and to establish penalties for non-compliance with the mandates of the Law.

The sale and use of single-use plastics in all commercial, retail, and distribution establishments is prohibited by this Law. Law 51-2022 The definition or single use plastic are any plastic artifact, such as cutlery, plates, straws, cups, and food containers, and containers made of expanded polystyrene (better known as "styrofoam"), whether for immediate consumption (in store) or take out (to-go).

Law 51 comes into effect on June 1, 2024. In the first six (6) months after the Law comes into effect, if an infraction is detected, a notification of a violation will be issued. As of December 1, 2024, the first infringement will be \$500, the second infringement will be \$1,000 and subsequent infringement will be \$5,000. Exceptions to this law are: National/State Emergency Declaration (by government) and meat packaging (raw, groceries).

Dudas o preguntas (Doubts or questions contact):
servicio@daco.pr.gov
vieques.recicla.gmv@gmail.com



If you relish the excitement of uncovering hidden gems during your vacation on your own, you might want to skip these pages. However, let us enrich your vacation experience by consolidating a treasure trove of information about travel essentials and local wonders in the following pages. Unearth numerous well-kept secrets, convenient vacation tips, and insights about the island that could elude you during your independent exploration. Keep reading to maximize your time and enjoyment!

where to
find
the good stuff



Featured cocktail:
Brazilian Lemonade at Mar Azul

AJStetson.com



Where to find...

▶ **VIEQUES AUDIO TOURS** >> Visit www.puertoricoadiotours.com for an audio tour that explores Vieques history, facts about the military presence, sugarcane industry, and more!



▶ **FRESH FISH, LOBSTER AND CONCH** >> Head to Pescadería Angelyz near the ferry dock in Isabel II Mon-Fri 10:30 - 2pm to purchase fresh fish, lobster or conch when it is in season.

▶ **LIMBERS** >> Watch for the signs that say "Hay Limbers" at households around the island to purchase this frozen treat. Or stop by the Vieques En Rescate thrift store on the corner of Antonio G. Mellado and Muñoz Rivera in Isabel II where there is usually a freezer full of island flavors!

▶ **FARMERS MARKETS** >> Placita Reyes on the corner of 201 and 200 has fresh fruit and veggies on Tuesdays and Fridays 8am-5pm. Mercado Agroecológico Sambumbia is held

the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month 11-2pm in the Isabel II Plaza. Watch for events at La Colmena Cimarroña, the farm on 997 where you can sometimes find pop up agriculture markets.

▶ **SEAGLASS** >> Most beaches have some amount of seaglass but La Chata, Playa Cofi, and Playa Voltio are popular sites to find it. Check the Insider beach map on pages 20-21 for locations or visit www.viequesbeachmap.com for more information.

▶ **CHAMPAGNE AND WINE** >> Diverse selections can be found at the Family Market in Isabel II, Morales grocery store on 201, El Tienda Verde in Esperanza or El Sombrero Viejo in Isabel II.

▶ **PUERTO RICAN COFFEE** >> Rising Roost, Family Market and Morales are places where you can find Puerto Rican coffee beans, whole or ground.



▶ **VIEQUES ROASTED COFFEE** Bieke Beans -artisanal roasted coffee beans roasted right here on Vieques. Buy yours at Kristy's in Esperanza or Sombrero Viejo in Isabel II. Or call 413-531-0602.

▶ **LOCAL FOOD** >> Along with all of the great restaurants on the island, the food trucks and kiosks each have their own local specialties! Don't be shy! Step right up to these streetside trucks or kiosks on the side of the road and you will be greeted with some of the best local food and a smile!



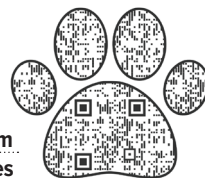
▶ **LOCAL RUM** >> Handcrafted right here on Vieques, CRAB ISLAND RUM is not to be missed. Find it in local restaurants or stores. Take a tour, have a drink at the bar and enjoy live music at the distillery Thurs-Sat. 12-8, Sun. 12-5



Make 2024 PAWsitively Special

Support Animals in Need with Your 2024 Calendar Purchase!

Your purchase of the 2024 Vieques Humane Society Calendar feeds 50 shelter animals for one day. Buy at Vieques Humane Society (Rt. 200 km 1.4 in Santa Maria), SeaGate Hotel, The Mar Azul, Bananas, Duffy's, Vieques Gifts or online at www.viequeshumanesociety.org/merch. Or scan here >>





Luis F. Medina Santiago
owner of Sabor Unico, Inc.

► **A FURRY FIX** >>Contact the Vieques Humane Society to arrange cuddle time with a cat, dog, kitten or puppy for an hour, a day, your entire stay or forever! Become a pet escort at no cost to you,

and help a cat or dog get to their forever home in the states. 787.741.0209



► **FRESH DONUTS/ SOFT ICE-CREAM** >>Obi's Mini Donuts are made fresh as you wait. Have them with a side of soft serve icecream and forget the diet. Look for the donut truck in the plaza in Isabel II on Friday and Saturday.

► **VEGAN FARE** >>Our talented restaurant chefs and diverse menus usually accommodate all diets, but for a vegan "experience" make reservations at Finca Victoria's Vegan Friday Dinner or watch for pop up vegan nights at El Plaza.

► **PALETAS** >>Locally made, fresh fruit treats, Paletas Don Lolo, can be found in the freezer at the Family Market. Look for flavors like mango, tamarind, coconut, passionfruit or seagrape. For another way to enjoy them, order a lolomosa at Rising Roost with Don Lolo flavored ice cubes!

► **CAR VACUUM AND TIRE AIR PUMP** >> Sand between your toes is good but when it's in your rental car you could be charged an additional

cleaning fee. Find a car vacuum and an air pump for your tires at Gomera Guzman on Rt. 200, at the intersection where there is a sign for La Praa.

► **CAR WASH AND DETAILING** >> JDtailing located in Barrio Cofi offers shampooing and interior /exterior car wash. 787-556-6458 for more information or to make an appointment. Open Tues-Fri 8AM-4PM, Sat. 8AM-1PM

► **THRIFT STORES**>> Visit the Vieques En Rescate thrift store on the corner of 200 and Calle Muñoz Rivera. Your purchase will benefit the cancer patients on Vieques. The Catholic Church Thrift Store is located across from Taverna Restauran.

► **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS** >> Find out what's happening this week at www.viequesinsider.com.



► **DANCING** >> El Blok rooftop- Sundays 4-8. Blue Horizon Ladies Night-Thursdays and special events. Crab Island Distillery has live music Thurs-Sat 12-8. La Nasa in Esperanza is the place to see talented locals dancing salsa, bachata and calypso on the weekends and especially Sunday nights.

► **BINGO** >>Try your luck at Isla Nena Cafe at the airport. Saturdays at 3PM.

► **LECHÓN** >> Don Tito's Lechonera on Calle Patricio. Tito Maldonado is roasts pigs on Friday night to fill orders for Saturdays and

holidays. Order by the pound before Thursday to pick up on the following Saturday 787-617-2748. Sabor Unico across from Morales roasts pigs Tues-Sat. Call or stop by to order 787-435-5243.

► **ROTISERRI CHICKEN** >> Auroras Chicken on RT 201 has roast and fried chicken every day 11AM-4:45PM • Sabor Unico across from Morales on 200 roasts Tues.-Thurs. 8am-5pm and Fri-Sat 8AM-9PM

► **TUESDAY NIGHT TRIVIA** >> At EL Sombrero Viejo in Isabel II. Starts around 7pm island time!

► **KARAOKE** >>Don't miss your chance at fame. Saturday nights at Mar Azul starting at 8PM island time!

► **CUSTOM PET PORTRAITS**>>The best Holiday Gift to hang on the tree or the wall. Contact Paintedpawstudios@gmail.com 615-812-9144

► **TRANSPORT INSURANCE** >>Did you know that you can purchase health insurance that covers emergency transport? Check out www.masamts.com



► **CHARGERS/ELECTRONICS**>> Forget something that you can't live without? Find chargers, phones and other electronics at Quiñones Electronics next to Banco Popular in Isabel II.



Stephanie Cruz Saez owner of La Heladeria Joliette

▶ **HELADO** >> Find this delicious frozen treat at La Heladeria Joliette along with other sweet desserts. In Isabel II across from Casa Nativo. Open Tues. - Sun 11AM - 7PM • Sat-Sun 1-9PM

▶ **CRAFTS AND PRINT SHOP** >> Find fun crafts, art supplies and festive decorations at JO-Chanel Crafts and Print Shop. Print photos, copies or marketing materials. Open Mon -Fri 9AM-5PM. Calle Regimiento 65 de Infanteria. jochanelshop@gmail.com

▶ **DISC GOLF** >> Play an 18 (sometimes 9 as it is volunteer run) hole course on Rt. 200 close to the Crab Island Rum Distillery. Find more information at www.Almendrosdiscgolf.com You can buy the disks at Ola Loca in Isabel II.

▶ **WORKOUT GYM** >> Flex Gym in Isabel II offers daily and weekly passes. Call or text for more information. 404-358-7831.

▶ **EDUCATIONAL BOOKS** >> Find books on the history, flora, fauna and marine life of Vieques at the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust Gift Shop.

▶ **FISHING EQUIPMENT** >> El Pescador Fishing and Marine Supply in Barrio Santa Maria sells everything you need for fishing including rods, yo-yo's, spear fishing equipment, lures and tackle. The owner Denise lives on-site but call to make sure it is open. 787-231-2624 Denise is also a wealth of information about fishing on Vieques!



▶ **FISHING BAIT** >> Find frozen calamari in the fish/freezer section at Morales Grocery store.

▶ **FISHING SPOTS** >> Kiani Lagoon, Rompeolas Pier, Punta Arenas or in front of Mar Azul are just a few of the favorite places to throw in a line!

▶ **ATMS** >> Find them on the North side at Banco Popular and the gas stations. On the South side there are machines at El Blok, Duffy's, Colmado Lydia and in Guayacan Plaza next to Vieques Gifts.

DID YOU KNOW?

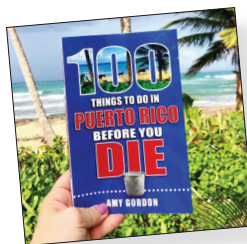
You don't need a fishing license to fish on Vieques.



▶ **CHARGERS/ELECTRONICS** >> Forget something that you can't live without? Find chargers, phones and other electronics at Quiñones Electronics next to Banco Popular in Isabel II.

▶ **PIZZA DELIVERY** >> Tu Punto Dulce y Sabroso, 787-689-2854, Mama Mia 939-489-9990, Taverna (pick up) 787-438-1100

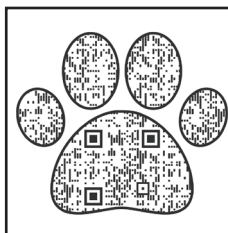
▶ **GUIDE FOR PUERTO RICO** >> The must-have guidebook for first-time visitors and long-time locals. Find it on Amazon, shops on Vieques and Puerto Rico or order a signed copy at www.100thingspuertorico.com



Dog-gone best Vieques souvenir!

Your purchase feeds 50 shelter animals for one day.

Miss Fuzzi's true story about little dog rescued from the street has become the voice for all our island animals who need help. Purchase this book at SeaGate Hotel, Sallywags, Vieques Gifts, Vieques Humane Society or scan the paw to purchase online! >>>



Miss Fuzzi

DID YOU KNOW?

Our drinking water comes from rivers of El Junque, the Rainforest of Puerto Rico. In compliance with state and federal regulations, the Aqueduct and Sewer Authority analyze more than 90 possible contaminants that may be in drinking water. Vieques drinking water is 100% compliant and verified by the EPA. It is safe to drink. So save your money and skip the bottled water! Bring your own thermoflask to take with you to the beach. Hydrate! Your body and the island will thank you!



WHERE TO

RECYCLE ON VIEQUES

Currently dry cardboard, washed plastic and aluminum cans are recycled (aluminum and plastic does not need to be separated). The recycling staff are doing everything they can with limited crew, equipment and without electricity or water at their processing location. The material is transported to ISCO in Caguas, Puerto Rico. Hector Melendez, Director of Recycling, has offered his personal cell number and has asked that locals organize within their neighborhoods to collect at a house and call them to come pick up the recyclables from that location on a weekly basis. If you call them, they will come!
Hector Melendez 787-646-4180.

DROP OFF LOCATIONS

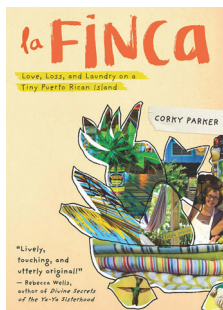
▶ **The corner of Calle Baldorioty de Castro and Benitez Guzman** in Isabel Segunda across from the Boys and Girls Club.

▶ **Bunker 403** on the West Side of Vieques on 994 serves as the recycling center. Past the airport, Parque La Ceiba and Crab Island Rum Distillery, the left turn to the recycling center is aprox 1 mi. past distillery. Look for painted, pallet signs. The recycling center is the third bunker on the right. Leave your bagged recyclables on the loading dock or in bins located at the entrance. Make a day of it by visiting the Ceiba tree, Rompeolas pier, Crab Island Rum Distillery and then visit the bunkers stopping at Bunker 403 to recycle!

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Inside FWS Refuge

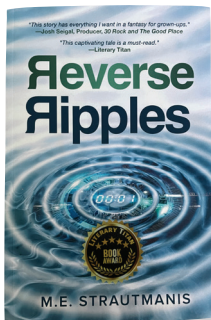
VIEQUES READS



La Finca, the memoir about Cory Parker's 24 years running beloved La Finca Caribe in Pilon was just awarded the distinguished 2022 Nancy Pearl Award for memoir. "The book is about my love affair with the Finca, and Vieques. I'll never stop missing the Vieques community, and honoring all it taught me, and shared with me". Earlier this year the self-illustrated memoir won the international University Presses award for both cover and book design. La Finca was published last year by Trinity University press, and is available on Vieques at Finca Victoria in Pilon, online or wherever books are sold.



Author, dance instructor, purple heart recipient and survivor, Aurita Maldonado lives on Vieques with her two children. This memoir is a remarkable woman's journey to stumble in style as she navigates seemingly insurmountable tragedies early in life. "I find it hard not to feel changed after reading this book. Aurita genuinely writes from the core of her soul." -GABRIEL QUILES. The book was recently awarded the Journey Book Award recognizing emerging new talent in the genre of Overcoming Adversity. Find it on Amazon, Goodreads.com, Gallery Oro or any of Aurita's zumba or dance classes listed on page 45.



Reverse Ripples has been forming in my mind since my first visit to Vieques in 1988. Bioluminescence, this magical island, the people and everything Vieques offers has captivated me and the story began to write itself. The island is the descriptive backdrop for this novel. Reverse Ripples is all about magic that happens when Pia, the protagonist, falls into the Bio Bay while kayaking. She returns home to NYC, starts her career and becomes aware of a magical power within her due to the fall in the bay. What she does with her magical power is the story. The Bio-bay is truly magical and everyone should experience it in their lifetime. -M.E. Strautmanis



FISH LIKE A LOCAL

Try something new.

Fish with a yo-yo. Yup, I said yo-yo. The Locals have been using yo-yo's for years with great success. They are 6 to 12 inch spools. Tie off the line end and wrap. Use 15 to 30 pound test. Tie on a hook and sinker, bait your hook, swing around overhead and let it fly. This is an inexpensive way to fish your kids will love. You'll be holding the line between your thumb and forefinger so have some protection for your forefinger. You can purchase special gloves or finger protection wrap at El Pescador Fishing and Marine Supply Store in Santa Maria (787-231-2624 or improvise with a piece of soft rubber or sturdy cloth.



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where to explore

Photos: Kelly Thompson



MONTE PIRATA

Open to the Public in 2024

BY: MARY HILLERY

Monte Pirata, the highest point in Vieques, stands within the western track of the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge. Towering at 987 feet high, it offers stunning panoramic views of the surrounding Caribbean Sea. The VNWR is committed to reopening this important landmark for public use in 2024.

There is a 1.2-mile paved road to the top, which is a steep-but doable 30-60 minute hike. Future plans include a pair of hiking trails through the forest allowing the hikers to enjoy the silence and notice the abundance of birds and insects while ascending from a subtropical dry zone to a subtropical moist zone.

Remarkably, Monte Pirata hosts the only subtropical moist forest of its kind among the 568 National Wildlife Refuges, that make up the world's most extensive conservation system. Along the trail, hikers might encounter indigenous plants, birds, and other wildlife, adding to the area's ecological significance.

TICATOVE, the conservation group that has partnered with the VNWR for twenty years, has raised \$32,000 in private donations to jump start the re-opening project. Noting strong public support, the federal government then matched the private donations. Two new parking lots, viewpoint benches, and a walk-around platform at the top have already been constructed. The goal is to open Monte Pirata to the public before the end of 2023 to help people connect with nature and enjoy the beautiful vista.

For those choosing to hike Monte Pirata, be prepared for a challenging 1.2-mile ascent with a steep 987 ft. elevation gain, suitable for those in good physical shape. Stay hydrated by carrying ample water during this demanding trek.



Talks & Walks with Ticatove!

TICATOVE is the conservation organization which has been working with the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge (VNWR) for almost twenty years. We are a volunteer group which holds educational talks and walks within and outside the Refuge. We support the biologists on various conservation projects such as monitoring endangered Sea Turtles on Vieques. Our Green Crew and TICATOVE Outdoors volunteers work to keep trails and open spaces maintained for the enjoyment of the public. We also partner with other conservation groups on shared conservation goals.

2023 HAS BEEN ACTIVE FOR US:

- We initiated a new volunteer crew within TICATOVE, called Ticatove Outdoors/Al Aire Libre. Volunteers organize beach cleanups, help when needed in trail grooming and in VNWR projects like the future opening of Monte Pirata.
- We organized educational hikes of Tapon Bay, El Pobre and the Puerto Mosquito NNL trails with talks on Land Crabs, Insects, History and Sea Turtles.
- We participated with other conservation groups and government agencies and the Municipality of Vieques on Earth Day, Arbor Day and International Coastal Cleanup Day.
- We assisted in the pilot program to create a youth summer Camp and led another pilot program, a 3-week long internship for two university students at the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge.

Hike with Ticatove!

Email Greg@ticatove.org to join hikes and conservation activities. Go to ticatove.org/trails to get more out of this diverse and wondrous island. Find out about beach cleanups and guided hikes with local experienced leaders as well as events appealing to the environmentally minded, young and old. Everyone is welcome.



Become a member for \$25 or donate to support environmental conservation on Vieques. Text us at 787-428-8288 • PO Box 217, Vieques, PR 00765 WWW.TICATOVE.ORG



VIEQUES NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



In 2001 Congress established the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge on the western end of Vieques. After 2003 and the Navy's withdrawal from Vieques, the wildlife refuge increased to approximately 18,000 acres of land by adding acreage on the eastern end. At one time a military base, a practice area for beach assaults, and an infamous bombing range, the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge is now home to a large collection of unique and stunning beaches that endlessly captivate visitors and locals alike.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuge is open to the public year round.

OCTOBER 1 - MARCH 31 • 6AM TO 6:30PM

APRIL 1 - SEPTEMBER 30 • 6AM TO 7:30PM

Don't get locked in! Gates are locked and closed at closing time!

START YOUR MORNING RIGHT

The road from the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge east entrance gate all the way to Caracas is paved, flat and offers some shade in the early morning but little in the afternoon. It is 1.8 mi to the turn off to Playa Caracas and another .7 mi. to the beach. If you arrive before the gate opens you can park your car in the lot near the road and walk through an opening to the left of the gate.

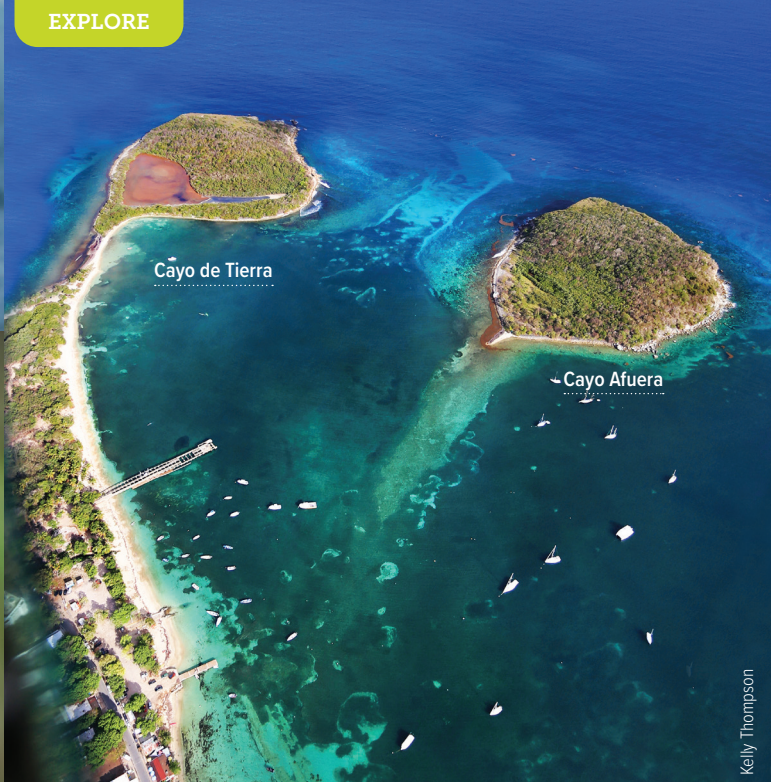




Brown Pelican



Northern Parula



Cayo de Tierra

Cayo Afuera

Kelly Thompson

THE CAYO DE TIERRA BIRDING TRAIL

BY: DAPHNE GEMMILL

Besides beaches and bioluminescence, Vieques has 105 “fairly common to common” birds and a variety of places and trails to see them. One popular bird walk begins at the Malecon in Esperanza, across the street from the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust. Walk 0.3 miles along Esperanza beach to Cayo de Tierra, the left of the two small islands off Esperanza. It’s less than a mile around the Cayo. We recommend starting early in the morning when most birds are active.

The rocky outcropping along the shore at the far western end of the Malecon in Esperanza is a favorite winter spot for the Royal Tern, American Oystercatcher, and an occasional Belted Kingfisher. You can also see the Brown Pelican, Brown Booby, and Magnificent Frigatebird year-round. Laughing Gulls and Least Terns are seen in summer. Look inland to find a Pearly-Eyed Thrasher, a Eurasian Collared Dove - a recent arrival to the island, a Puerto Rican subspecies of Bananaquit, and the ubiquitous European House Sparrow on the wires or in the trees or bushes. Birders can even expect the unexpected, such as an Antillean Palm-Swift flying over the palms along the Malecon, the first and only record of this species appearing in all of Puerto Rico. To continue, walk east along the road past Bananas Café.



At the large parking area on the right, go down to the shore and walk east along the beach towards Cayo de Tierra. Along the way, listen and watch for Gray Kingbirds, Bananaquits, Pearly-Eyed Thrashers, and Northern Mockingbirds. In late spring and summer, you might see Least and Sandwich Terns.

Soon, you will see a sandbar that connects Cayo de Tierra to the mainland. [If you want to drive to this point, a dirt road off of Rt. 997 a short distance past the Green Store ends at the sandbar.]

Cross the sandbar to the cayo — beware, your feet might get wet! Watch for Ruddy Turnstones, American Oystercatchers, Black-bellied plovers, Wilsons, and Semipalmated Sandpipers that regularly feed in the seaweed here. In the summer, the sandbar is a resting place for Least and Sandwich Terns. During migration, it is a hot spot for some of the rarer shorebirds like Sanderlings and White-rumped and Pectoral Sandpipers.

When you get to the cayo, walk to the right along the beach until you see a trail leading inland. This trail is easy, and the climb to



Palm Swift

the top is not as steep as the trail on the east side of the cayo. The first part of this trail is a mixture of small pieces of broken coral and sandy leaf litter before it turns to an earthen trail. On the left, several side paths lead to the edge of a small lagoon where Snowy Egrets and Great Blue, Little Blue, and Tricolored Herons feed. Black-necked Stilts and White-cheeked Pintails are often seen year round. Spotted Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Stilt, Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers, and Belted Kingfishers can be seen from September to March. During droughts, this lagoon can dry up.

As you climb the trail, look for Scaly-naped and White-crowned Pigeons, White-winged and Zenaida Doves, Common Ground-Doves, Mangrove Cuckoos, Gray and Loggerhead Kingbirds, Caribbean Elaenias, Puerto Rican Flycatchers, Adelaide's and Yellow Warblers, Bananaquits, and Black-faced Grassquits in any season. Prairie, Northern Parula, American Redstarts, Northern Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warblers, and other migrants are here in winter.

At the top of the island, you will find three side trails to the right leading to scenic overlooks. The last one takes you to a cliff edge, which is a good spot to observe seabirds if the (preferably strong) winds are out of the south or southeast. Scan the water for Brown Pelicans, White-Tailed Tropicbirds, Magnificent Frigatebirds, and Brown Boobies. February, March, and April are the best times to spot a Red-Billed Tropicbird.

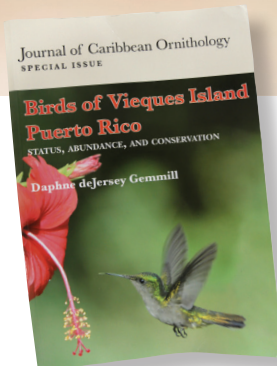
If you continue counterclockwise on the trail the walking becomes difficult due to a steep descent and a long stretch of loose coral to traverse. We recommend that you turn around and descend the same way you came. At this point you can return to your starting point or continue on to Sun Bay for a swim. Please share your sightings with others through eBird.org.



Belted Kingfisher



There are many iPhone and Android Birding apps, but our favorite one is All Birds PR -> Antigua, covering Puerto Rico + North East West Indies by Mullen & Pohland GbR (Apple users only). Other apps that may be useful are MerlinBird ID, BirdNET, Audubon, and eBird for the advanced user, especially in North America and Europe.



DAPHNE DEJERSEY GEMMILL'S BOOK *BIRDS OF VIEQUES ISLAND, PUERTO RICO*, covering 174 documented bird species, is available at the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust or purchase it through the online shop at www.natureforward.org/.



Did you know that one of Puerto Rico's most important archeological finds was discovered in Vieques? The 2000-year-old carved jadeite talisman of an Andean Condor reveals the likelihood of far-reaching trading routes from South America since neither jadeite nor Condors are native to Vieques. This majestic bird amulet became the symbol of The Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust when it was formed in 1984.

BIRDING WITH THE VIEQUES CONSERVATION AND HISTORICAL TRUST (VCHT)

Bird Walks during the 2023/2024 season are scheduled for:

December 20th
January 10th
January 24th
February 7th
February 21st
March 6th
March 20th

All Bird Walks start on the Malecon in front of The Vieques Conservation Trust in Esperanza, 138 Flamboyán Street at 7:30 a.m. For more information and to sign up, visit www.vcht.org/birding.

Please bring binoculars if you have them. Wear sturdy shoes as the walks occur in the woods, on the beach and around lagoons. Bring a hat and water, and wear reef-safe sunscreen and bug repellent.

December 30, 2023

The Vieques Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will take place on December 30. Regardless of your skill level, you are welcome to join us. Please email vcht.birding.team@gmail.com for additional information.

A visit to the Trust in Esperanza is worthwhile either before or after your bird walk. Check out the smallest aquarium in the world, the Taino exhibit, the bioluminescence room, and the gift shop. The gift shop sells a Vieques Bird Checklist (updated in 2022) and the popular The Birds of Vieques Island, Puerto Rico: Status, Abundance, and Conservation (2015) by Daphne Gemmill, along with local honey, jewelry, t-shirts, post-cards, books for all ages, and other items that make great gifts.

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Kelly Thompson

THE PUERTO FERRO

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Hidden in plain sight down a rough dirt path off Rt. 997 between Isabel Segunda and Esperanza lies one of the oldest archaeological sites in Puerto Rico and all of the Greater Antilles; the Puerto Ferro Archaeological Site. The oldest human remains ever found in Vieques were discovered at this site. They are dated somewhere between 700 BCE and 2145 BCE, a long stretch of time during which the original Pre-Arawak people of Vieques inhabited the site. Marking the site are “Las Rocas de Puerto Ferro”, giant boulders sometimes referred to as a mini-Stonehenge because they appear arranged in such a fashion that they elicit speculation. There is no scientific proof that the boulders were ever moved. They are, rather, the underground remains of the original volcanic formation of Vieques. More specifically, the stone formation is part of the estimated 65 million year old “Vieques Pluton”, a mass of igneous rock that originally covered the entire western half of Vieques and some of the east. The boulders are composed of granodiorite, which is intermediate between granite and diorite. In addition to the massive boulders at Puerto Ferro there is a line of smaller stones set low in the ground that runs 68 feet in length. Robert Marino, curator for the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust, believes the line of stones was used for celestial navigation. He has taken readings which seem to indicate the line points directly to an archaeological site in Salt River Bay, St. Croix. The line also cuts across Puerto Mosquito, Vieques’ bioluminescent bay. Salt River Bay has been intermittently bioluminescent in the past.

Directions: Look for the sign on Rt. 997 between the Refuge and Sun Bay.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1990 Luis Chanlatte and Yvonne Narganes discovered the bones of Puerto Ferro Man assumed to belong to one of the first groups of humans to inhabit Vieques.



Kelly Thompson

THE MATRIARCH OF VIEQUES CEIBA TREE

The Ceiba tree is revered in many cultures as the connection between heaven and earth and holds a significant place in the hearts of the local community on Vieques. Our Ceiba, central to Parque La Ceiba located on the West end of the island before Rompeolas pier, is over 300 years old.

The longevity of the Ceiba tree, also known as Kapok tree, is a marvel of nature. With a lifespan that can extend up to 500 years or more, it serves as a testament to longevity and resilience. One of the key factors contributing to its vitality is its adaptable root system. The Ceiba’s strong and extensive roots spread wide and deep, enabling it to absorb water and nutrients from various sources. The roots also grow to form “buckets” that collect rain water making them remarkably resistant to drought. In addition to its impressive root system, the Ceiba tree avoids broken limbs by growing hard pointed spikes on its branches, making them nearly impossible to climb on.

Visit Parque la Ceiba and take some time to appreciate her and feel the deep-rooted connections of the island’s history and resilience.

Directions: Drive west past the airport on Rt. 200. The park is on your right when you reach the curve to go toward Rompeolas pier.



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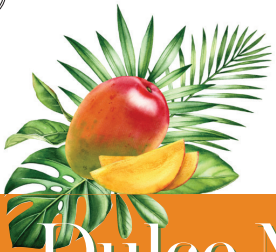
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CENTRO MÉDICO DE VIEQUES \$86,000,000 • FEMA y DOH

La construcción del nuevo Centro Médico en Vieques se llevará a cabo en tres fases. El contrato ha sido adjudicado a la compañía Caribe Techno para la construcción del Centro Médico según el diseño conceptual aprobado.

Fase I • Incluye la Sala de Emergencias y el Centro de Diálisis. El equipo y las oficinas están ya ubicados frente al lugar de construcción y se proyecta que el trabajo comience a principios de noviembre de 2023.

Fase II • Inicio propuesto para mediados de 2024.

Fase III • Inicio propuesto para finales de 2024

La construcción del edificio costará \$86 millones, frente a los \$43 millones que FEMA calculó en un principio, debido a los códigos y requisitos de construcción que no se tuvieron en cuenta cuando se calculó la construcción en las fases iniciales del proyecto. FEMA aportará \$43 millones. El 25% de estos fondos ya ha sido transferido al municipio para comenzar la construcción. Luego de muchas negociaciones con el Gobernador Pedro Pierluissi, la parte restante de la financiación será aportada por el Departamento de Salud de PR.

Las instalaciones nuevas incluirán una certificación de Construcción Ecológica y energía solar. Además, el Centro contará con Sala de Emergencias, Centro de Diálisis, Farmacia, Laboratorio, Sala de Imágenes, Centro de Neonatología y Parto, Centro de Cirugía Menor, Servicios Dentales, Servicios Sociales, y Clínicas Externas. El diseño aprobado incluye un helipuerto, cisterna, generador, ascensor y nueva zona de aparcamiento. También incluye residencias fuera del recinto para médicos visitantes y especialistas.

REPARACIÓN DE CARRETERAS

\$2,100,000 • PR DOT

El Departamento de Transportación del Estado ha financiado \$2 millones para reparar las carreteras PR 200 y PR 201. El primer proyecto será el tramo de la Carretera 201 desde La Hueca hasta el barrio Florida, que comenzará en abril. El segundo proyecto será pavimentar la carretera PR 200 desde la gasolinera del pueblo hasta Rompeolas. Con la financiación del municipio y la del CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) se repararán casi todas las carreteras de Santa María. El Municipio también está tratando de recuperar los fondos que se designaron para reparar carreteras en los años 2017-19 y que no se utilizaron. Los barrios que no se han pavimentado aún son Villa Borinquen, La PRR, Monte Carmelo y Martineau.

TERMINAL DEL FERRY A LA PLAZA DE ISABEL II

\$11,414,349.75 • CDBG

Se han asignado fondos para reparar y revitalizar carreteras, aceras, jardines y la plaza del pueblo.

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- Mejorar la fachada y la entrada de la Terminal del Ferry. \$2,813,210.90
- Mejorar la Plaza. \$1,857,522.00
- Mejorar las calles del centro urbano.

\$4,534.666

Actualmente se están realizando los diseños, permisos y estudios culturales/históricos para la zona específica de Isabel II. El objetivo es comenzar las obras en marzo o abril de 2024.

PARQUES

\$2,701,772.27 • FEMA

FEMA ha asignado fondos para revitalizar los parques de béisbol de los barrios Santa María, Monte Santo, Esperanza y Florida. Al cierre de esta edición, el trabajo de los parques se ha completado en un 85%. El proyecto está a la espera de recibir unos transformadores que no están disponibles en PR para que LUMA pueda conectar las luces.

COMPLEJO DEPORTIVO DE LUJÁN

\$2,700,000 • VIVIENDA

El Departamento de Vivienda ha asignado \$ 2.700.000 para la finalización del complejo deportivo. El plan revisado incluye la creación de espacios para oficinas, una cancha de baloncesto, voleibol y tenis en el edificio principal, y la construcción de dos canchas de béisbol. El estadio y las canchas de béisbol sólo se

utilizarán durante el día. El municipio ha publicado una RFP (solicitud de propuestas) para arreglar el tejado del edificio principal. Al cierre de esta edición se estaban esperando propuestas.

ADMINISTRACIÓN DEL BALNEARIO SUNBAY

La DNRA ha transferido la administración de Sunbay al Municipio de Vieques. La DNRA seguirá administrando Media Luna y Navio. El 80% de los fondos recaudados ahora por la entrada se usará por el Municipio para el mantenimiento y las operaciones y la DNRA se encargará de arreglar la verja y los gazebos. Visitaron nuestra isla representantes de los municipios de Fajardo, Camuy, Vega Alta, Cataño y Guaynabo. Junto con el Cuerpo de Bomberos de Vieques y otras agencias instalaron un letrero de bienvenida en un extremo de Sunbay, zafacones de basura y plantaron nuevas palmeras.

EQUIPOS Y EMPLEOS

- Camión cisterna de 2200 galones
- Camión de basura
- Jetski para la Policía Municipal
- Dos vehículos nuevos para la policía
- Una retroexcavadora (para finales de octubre 2023)
- Un tractor Bobcat con cortacésped (para finales de octubre de 2023)
- Empleos para añadir dos policías al cuerpo
- Empleos para añadir cuatro bomberos a la plantilla





Municipality Update

MAYOR:

JOSÉ A. CORCINO ACEVEDO

VICE MAYOR:

ADOLFO ROSA MIRANDA



VIEQUES HOSPITAL

\$86,000,000 • FEMA AND DOH

Construction of the new Vieques Hospital will happen in three phase. The contract has been awarded to Caribe Techno for design/build of the hospital according to the approved design concept.

Phase I • Will include the emergency room and dialysis center. Equipment and offices are currently installed across from the hospital site and construction work will begin by the beginning of Nov. 2023.

Phase II • Proposed start is mid 2024

Phase III • Proposed start is late 2024

Construction of the building will cost \$86 million as opposed to the original \$43 million FEMA estimate due to building codes and requirements that were not considered at that time. FEMA will provide \$43 million, and 25% of these funds have already been transferred to the municipality to begin construction. After many negotiations with Governor Pedro Pierluissi, the rest of the funding will be provided by the PR Department of Health.



The new facilities will include a Green Building certification and solar power. In addition, the center will have an emergency room, dialysis center, pharmacy, laboratory, imaging area, neonatal and birthing center, small surgery center, dental services, social services, external clinics and laboratory. The approved design includes a helipad, cistern, generator, elevator, and new parking area. It also includes off-site residential units for visiting physicians and specialists.

ROADS

\$2,100,000 • PR DOT

The State Department of Transportation has funded \$2 million to repair roads PR 200 and PR 201. The first two phases of paving-Rt. 201 from La Hueca to barrio Florida and Rt. 200 from the gas station in Isabel II to Rompeolas are complete. Lines still need to be painted on the roads. The Municipality funding combined with CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funding has repaired roads in Santa Maria, Poso Prieto, and one street in La PRRA. The municipality is also trying to recover funds from 2017-19 that were designated for roads but not utilized. Barrios still to be paved are Villa Borinquen, La PRRA, Monte Carmelo and Martineau.

FERRY PORT TO PLAZA, ISABEL II

\$11,414,349.75 • CDBG

Funding has been allocated to revitalize areas of Isabel II from the ferry port to the Plaza.

Projects include:

- Plaza del Mercado. \$2,208,950.00
 - Improve the facade and entrance to the ferry terminal. \$2,813,210.90
 - Improve the Public Plaza. \$1,857,522.00
 - Improve downtown streets \$4,534,666
- Designs, permits, and cultural/historic studies are currently underway for the specific area in Isabel. The aim is to commence work in March or April of 2024.

VIEQUES MUNICIPAL PARKS

\$2,701,772.27 • FEMA

FEMA has allocated funding to revitalize the baseball parks in barrios Santa Maria, Monte Santo, Esperanza and Florida. At press time work at the parks was 85% completed. The project is waiting on transformers that are not available in PR so Luma can connect the lights.

LUJAN SPORTS COMPLEX

\$2,700,000 • VIVIENDA

Department of Vivienda has allocated \$2.7 million for the completion of the sports complex. The revised plan is to create office spaces, a basketball, volleyball and tennis court in the main building and construct the two baseball fields. The stadium and baseball fields would

<< Complejo Deportivo de Luján
Luján Sports Complex

only be used during daylight hours. The municipality has published an RFP (Request for Proposals) to fix the roof of the main building. At press time awaiting proposals.

SUNBAY ADMINISTRATION

DNRA has transferred administration of Sunbay to the municipality. DNRA will continue to administrate Media Luna and Navio. 80% of the funds collected at the gate will now be used by the municipality for maintenance and operations, and DRNA will fix the fencing and gazebos. Representatives visited from municipalities Fajardo, Camuy, Vega Alta, Cataño and Guaynabo. Along with the Vieques Fire Department and other agencies they installed a welcome sign at the far end of Sunbay, trash cans and planted new palm trees.

NEW MUNICIPAL EQUIPMENT AND POSITIONS

Vieques has purchased:

- New 2200 gallon water truck
- New garbage truck
- A jetski for Municipal Police
- Two new police car vehicles
- 1 backhoe (receive by end of October 2023)
- 1 bobcat with grass cutter adapter (end of October 2023)
- Two additional municipal police officers added to the force.
- Four additional firefighters added to the squad

HOUSING

HUD funding will be building 110 new housing units. Project to begin by mid 2024 or end 2024 depending on the Department of State. No other informatoin available at press time.



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