

Living in Santiago



Santiago is the second largest city in the Dominican Republic. Also referred to as the “Heart city” (La ciudad Corazón) is located at 155 Kms northeastern of Santo Domingo in the center of the country and is also the most important province in the Northern Region. It stands on the Cibao Valley, one of the most fertile lands in the island.

The “Santiagueros”, how the inhabitants of the city call themselves, are hospitable, hardworking and cheerful. The city is also an educational center home to several important universities as the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) and Universidad Tecnológica de Santiago (UTESA). It is not a coincidence that Santiago hosts to many cultural manifestations, attracting people from all over the country and the world.

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History: The First Santiago of America

One of the oldest cities of the New World, was originally founded in 1495 by Christopher Columbus, and moved in 1506 to its position in the center of the country.

The historical importance of Santiago de Los Caballeros started during the colonization in the late XV Century and continued to 1844 when the city hosted the battle of May 30 (Batalla del 30 de Marzo), decisive in the national independence from Haiti. In several occasions Santiago de Los Caballeros has become the Capital of the Dominican Republic.

It is known as the second
capital of the Dominican Republic.

It is the hometown of five Dominican ex-presidents, including Joaquín Balaguer who governed the island for 24 years and also Hipólito Mejía (2000-2004) head of PRD one of the three main Dominican political parties.

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Economy

Santiago is a commercial center that gathers many different business activities, providing the lowest rate of unemployment in the country and approximately 50% of the GPD (Gross Domestic product) in Cibao Region.

Economic activities

1. **Agriculture:** Because it has one of the country's most fertile lands, agriculture is among its main activities producing tobacco, cacao, coffee, sugarcane and cotton and many other products. It is known as the "World Capital of Tobacco," in fact the oldest tobacco company in the Dominican Republic, E. Leon Jiménez (Cigarros La Aurora), was established in 1903 in Don Pedro, municipality of Santiago as La Aurora and relocated to the city of Santiago de Los Caballeros in 1912.



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2. **Distilleries:** The Dominican Rum also holds a privilege spot in Santiago's economy, as some of the best distilleries are located there.

3. **Exportation:** Santiago is a distribution center for products and services in the Northern Region, due to its strategic location in the center of the country, which has also helped develop the export market, mostly to the United States and Europe.

4. **Other economic activities:** are based on light product manufacturing, textile production, service and communication. There are more than 14 industrial parks where free zones, mainly from the United States, manufacture:

- Processed foods
- Textile
- Leather shoes
- Pharmaceutical
- Call centers

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Communication systems

It has an excellent telecommunication system that allows worldwide access. In this regard the city has also developed an increasing offer of service providers that have established their operational centers there.

Health



The [Hospital Metropolitano de Santiago \(HOMS\)](#) is the second mayor hospital in the Dominican Republic and one of the most moderns in Latin America and the Caribbean. Plus Santiago has the most important public hospitals of Cibao Region in addition to many prestigious private clinics.

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Transportation

Air transportation:

The Cibao International Airport located in Santiago, offers international flights to the United States, Turks and Caicos, Puerto Rico, Panamá, among other important cities of the World.

Terrestrial transportation:

The Autopista Juan Pablo Duarte, one of the mayor highways of the Dominican Republic, connects the city of Santiago directly with Santo Domingo. There are other highways that communicate the city with Samaná, Puerto Plata and the rest of the Northern Region.

It is easy to access most provinces thanks to a very efficient transportation system that consists of private bus companies Metro, Caribe Tours, Aetra and Transporte Espinal.

Housing

Los Cerros de Gurabo is the most exclusive vicinity in Santiago where the richest and most prestigious families of the province have their villas. Other good neighborhoods are Reparto Tito Hernández and Villa Olga -where baseball executives and politicians reside, - La Trinitaria and La Zurza.

In contrast with the Capital, localities called Arroyo Hondo and Bella Vista are considered neighborhoods of bad reputation.

Shopping

In Santiago there are branches of the major stores, supermarkets, restaurants and financial institutions in the country. The city also has several big malls like Las Colinas Mall.

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Interesting sites and events

- **Monumento a los Héroes de la Restauración:** Located at the city entrance on a hill from where you can observe most of the city.



- **Centro Cultural Eduardo León Jiménez:** One of the best art museums in the Caribbean. <http://www.centroleon.org.do>. 27 de Febrero Ave. No. 146 Villa Progreso, Santiago de los Caballeros.
- **Mercado Modelo:** The place to find native arts, crafts and souvenirs, in many cases, hand-made. Calle El Sol.
- **Gran Teatro del Cibao:** A theater and cultural center where the most important national and international shows in the Cibao Region take place.

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- **Museo de Arte Folclórico Tomás Morel:** It exhibits a huge collection of “Caretas” that represent the yearly Carnival. It also exhibits different articles related to the life in Santiago since its foundation during the colonization. Calle Restauración No.174
- **Centro de la Cultura de Santiago:** It is a cultural center that holds most of the performing arts related activities (music, dancing, painting, sculpture). Calle El Sol and Benito Monción. <http://centrodelacultura.org/>
- **Carnaval:** The city’s folklore is expressed in every activity concerning the carnival, manifesting traditions and customs that only Santiago practices. The Caretas “El Lechón” are bright and colorful and famous all over the country. The great merengue music attracts thousands of visitors every year.
- **Parque Duarte:** It’s an area that encompasses many important buildings in Santiago:

✓ *Museo del Tabaco Dominicano*

✓ *Catedral de Santiago Apóstol*

✓ *Edificio del Obispado Provincial*

✓ *Escuelas Municipales de Bellas Artes*

✓ *Palacio Provincial de la Presidencia*

✓ *Centro de Recreo, el antiguo Palacio del Ayuntamiento*

✓ *Centro de la Cultura de Santiago*

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International Packers

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