



Country Intelligence Brief

Puerto Rico

Overall Risk Rating

2.5 - Moderate

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Ratings Overview

Security

2.25 - Low

Civil Unrest	● 2.50
Crime	● 2.75
Kidnapping	● 1.00
Terrorism	● 2.25
Armed Conflict	● 1.00
Security Services	● 3.00

Infrastructure

2.50 - Moderate

Ground Transport	● 2.25
Cyber	● 2.50
Maritime Security	● 1.50
Air Travel	● 1.00
Utilities	● 2.75

Environment

2.50 - Moderate

Man-Made Hazards	● 2.00
Seismic	● 2.75
Storm System	● 3.00
Natural Hazards	● 2.50

Health and Medical

2.25 - Low

Disease and Health Threats	● 1.50
Medical Facilities and Services	● 3.25
Mental Health	● 2.50
Food and Water Safety	● 1.25

Political

2.25 - Low

Corruption	● 3.00
Government Stability	● 2.25
Rule of Law	● 2.25
Sanctions	● 1.50

FactBox

Location	Puerto Rico
Government Type	Presidential democracy; a self-governing commonwealth in political association with the US
Population	3,189 000 (2016)
Languages	Official languages: Spanish, English. Other languages that are considered official or widely spoken: None. Languages that should be used discreetly: None.
International Country Code	+1
Time Zones	UTC-4
Traffic	Drives on the right
Drinking Water	Safe to Drink

Overview

2.5 - Moderate

Puerto Rico, an island nation that is simultaneously a US commonwealth, is an oddity within the Caribbean. Along with the neighboring US Virgin Islands, it is the only US territory in the region and arguably the US' best known colonial-era possession, though terms used to describe the island's status vary and can stir controversy. The island was once underpinned by both significant tourism and manufacturing sectors, but the latter has sputtered as special federal tax benefits for manufacturers have since been phased out. As such, the island now finds itself in a financial crisis that has resulted in a US federal oversight board taking country of Puerto Rican finances.

The biggest threat for those visiting Puerto Rico is opportunistic crime, with chances of experiencing violent crime significantly greater than on the US mainland but still somewhat low relative to Latin American averages. The island's location squarely within the hurricane belt also makes tropical activity an annual concern.

Security

2.25 - Low

Crime is high compared to US mainland averages but remains low-to-moderate by Latin American standards. Unrest, particularly in the form of labor strikes and political demonstrations, occurs frequently in Puerto Rico and can prove disruptive, though not physically dangerous. There is a residual risk of transnational terrorism due to the island's relationship with the US and also a low risk of domestic terrorism because of internal disagreements over said relationship. There is no notable conflict threat to Puerto Rico, nor is one expected to develop.

Civil Unrest

2.50

Puerto Rico often sees unrest due to the particularly difficult political and economic circumstances facing the island; strikes and organized marches are the most common forms of protest. Labor strikes, depending upon their duration, do have the potential to disrupt essential services for visitors and islanders alike, but such events are generally non-violent. Political unrest frequently revolves around corruption, debt-related issues, austerity measures, unemployment, social welfare programs, and the US' relationship with the island, including the existence of the fiscal oversight board.

Most protest events on the island are small in nature and rarely gain national traction. While protests were mostly peaceful, there were some violent clashes between protesters and security forces in Old San Juan. The movement was historic in terms of both its longevity, its appeal across demographics, and its success in ultimately securing Rossello's resignation, which in turn may encourage other such movements in the future when public outrage is at play.

Crime

2.75

Puerto Rico is known for experiencing crime rates higher than those of most US states, including violent crime. The bulk of criminal incidents are opportunistic in nature and non-violent, often occurring in crowded areas and venues as well as on beaches when items are left unattended. Armed muggings are less common, but do occur in isolated areas and/or at night, including on beaches as well as in socioeconomically poorer parts of municipalities such as San Juan, Bayamon, and Ponce. Smaller islands, including Vieques and particularly Culebra, have much lower crime rates than the main island.

Violent crime is principally directed at fellow Puerto Ricans, though violence – especially sexual assault and rape – against tourists not unheard of. As such, female travelers in particular should remain aware of their surroundings at all times. Gang- and drug-related violence also has a strong presence in parts of many of the island's cities, but is highly unlikely to affect visitors. In general, levels of violent crime still remain below Latin American averages, a fact which has been aided in recent years by improved policing and increased involvement from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The effects of the island's financial crisis on the economy could, however, reverse this trend.

Kidnapping

● 1.00

The threat of kidnapping in Puerto Rico is minimal; kidnapers are more likely to target locals. The most common type of abduction in Puerto Rico is likely child abduction. Victims are usually released unharmed and relatively quickly.

Terrorism

● 2.25

Puerto Rico has no history of transnational terrorism but does bear a slight risk of experiencing such an incident because of its unique ties to the US. A domestic terrorist movement did exist on the island decades ago as waged by pro-independence radicals, but most of these individuals have been jailed or killed. Pro-independence activists today generally reject all violence and form an integral part of the island's political landscape. More militant groups do exist, but rarely if ever use violence.

Armed Conflict

● 1.00

Puerto Rico maintains generally friendly relations with all states in the Americas. Although its status as part of the US technically involves it in numerous conflicts abroad, such conflicts never reaches the US mainland, much less the island's shores. Internal conflict is also not an issue for Puerto Rico.

Security Services

● 3.00

The capabilities and responsiveness of security services in Puerto Rico are generally adequate (risk is moderate). Although Puerto Rico has a number of different security forces, the municipal police are likely to be the most relevant for foreign nationals and local staff. Police officers are typically able to speak English and Spanish. Police are typically helpful in responding to emergencies. However, many crimes, especially petty crimes, go uninvestigated and unsolved.

Infrastructure

2.5 - Moderate

International carriers are considered safe for travel to Puerto Rico.

Because of the island's relatively smaller size, its road network is comprehensive, though road conditions may vary.

Basic services such as water, electricity, and fuel availability are generally reliable in Puerto Rico, with certain exceptions (e.g. following major hurricanes).

Puerto Rico is not known to be a sponsor of cyberattacks, nor is it known to particularly suffer from them.

Ground Transport

● 2.25

Main roads and highways in Puerto Rico are in good shape year-round. However, secondary and tertiary roads are often insufficiently wide, dirt-based, or otherwise in somewhat deteriorated condition. Additionally, storms during hurricane season (June – November) can damage roads at a faster rate than repairs can take place.

Local Buses

● Unrated

Intercity buses are not available between most major cities.

City buses are available in most urban centers. City buses in Puerto Rico have a poor safety record.

Mass Transit

● Unrated

A metro system is available in the capital of Puerto Rico. The system is generally efficient and safe.

Taxis

● Unrated

Taxis are readily available in most major cities in Puerto Rico. Overcharging is commonly perpetrated against taxi passengers, especially foreign nationals. Taxis arranged in advance by upscale hotels or trusted business associates are generally safer than those hailed on the street.

Ride-sharing services or vehicles ordered through online apps are available in few major cities in Puerto Rico.

Minibuses are available in cities in Puerto Rico and have a poor safety record due to overcrowding.

Train Travel

● Unrated

Puerto Rico does not have a passenger rail network.

Vehicles and Roads

● Unrated

Road safety conditions in Puerto Rico are generally poor. Traffic in Puerto Rico drives on the right. Roads in cities are generally poorly maintained. Drivers generally ignore traffic laws. Heavy traffic congestion is pervasive in major cities. Criminals sometimes steal from parked vehicles. Foreigners planning to drive in Puerto Rico must have a valid driver's license. Car rentals are available in most major cities.

International Road Travel

Puerto Rico does not have any international road connections.

Cyber

● 2.50

Puerto Rico is not understood to engage in cyberattacks, nor does it have a particularly sophisticated infrastructure to thwart them. While there are some US federal safeguards in place in the event of such an attack, the response from the island itself would likely be weak. However, nor does the island generally offer many salient targets for cyberattacks in the way that the US federal government does.

Maritime Security

● 1.50

Puerto Rico is part of the United States. It does not experience any maritime concerns.

Air Travel

● 1.00

There are no major concerns regarding air travel to or from Puerto Rico, and the island's aviation safety record is considered on par with international standards. Puerto Rico is in compliance with all relevant ICAO and EU guidelines. However, travelers should note that flights to the territory's smaller islands and to other nearby island nations may utilize smaller aircraft and thus pose a greater risk of airsickness.

Utilities

● 2.75

Because of its generally developed economy by Latin American standards, there are usually no issues with the supply of basic utilities in Puerto Rico, including in more rural areas. Internet and telecommunications are also of modern international standards. However, the island is susceptible to droughts, and water-rationing measures have been imposed in San Juan and elsewhere in the past. Additionally, electrical grid failures do occur, causing blackouts.

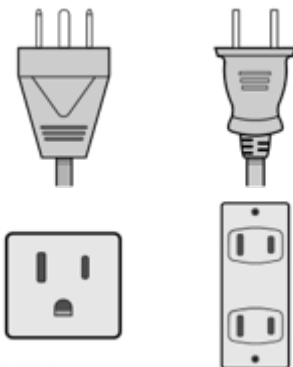
Following the passage of Hurricane Maria over the island, the entire electrical grid was effectively destroyed. Running water was also halted, though came back online quicker than the electric grid. Though electricity has since been completely restored, the grid remains weak, and power outages occur with a much higher frequency than on the US mainland.

Electricity

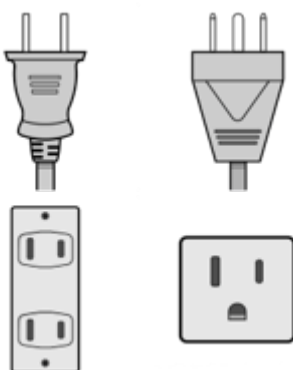
● Unrated

Electricity is supplied in Puerto Rico at 120 V, 60 Hz. Puerto Rico uses Type A and B plugs.

Plug Types



Types de prises



Internet and Telecommunications

● Unrated

Internet service in Puerto Rico is readily available in most public accommodations. Internet activity is considered private and secure in most areas - see Information Security advice sheet.

Environment

2.5 - Moderate

Puerto Rico has a tropical climate year-round, with temperatures often soaring in the summer months. Due to its location within the Caribbean hurricane belt, the island regularly sees tropical storm activity each year during hurricane season from June through November, with activity peaking by September. It lies within a somewhat active seismic zone and has the potential to experience mild-to-moderate earthquakes. Because of the island's considerable level of development and industry, pollution is a risk. However, US federal standards mitigate this threat.

Man-Made Hazards

2.00

Pollution is not generally an issue in Puerto Rico due to decently strong US environmental regulations on the island as well as regulations that come from the island's government itself. However, particularly on beaches and in bays near major towns such as San Juan, Fajardo, and Ponce, water pollution can become an issue, often from runoff after storms.

Seismic

2.75

Mild earthquakes are felt every year on the island, though there are generally no reports of significant damage. An exception, however, occurred in early January 2020 when - following a number of foreshocks - a 6.4-magnitude event severely damaged buildings along the south coast. Among these buildings was a major power plant, thereby causing a blackout across the main island. Power was restored in the days following despite continued aftershocks, but the event demonstrated the potential for island-wide impacts despite a localized quake of moderate-to-strong intensity.

Additionally, parts of Puerto Rican coastal areas are also somewhat vulnerable to tsunamis should a major earthquake ever occur.

Storm System

3.00

Given its location well within the Caribbean hurricane belt, there is generally some level of tropical activity every year from June through November. However, this does not necessarily imply full-blown hurricanes, but rather a range of activity from disorganized tropical bands to high-intensity hurricanes. The territory's relatively high level of development and the ability to leverage US federal assistance generally means that it is able to mount recovery and reconstruction efforts better than other island nations.

Natural Hazards

2.50

The island's climate presents no major issues, although visitors at sea level should prepare themselves for excessively high temperatures during the summer months from June through August. Dehydration can be a concern for those who do not drink adequate fluids, especially during this period; the island has also been prone to bouts of drought, which further exacerbates the potential for dehydration when such weather events do infrequently occur.

Air Quality

Unrated

Air Quality

Air pollution routinely exceeds recommended thresholds in urban areas. Individuals with asthma or chronic cardiorespiratory conditions should consult with a healthcare provider and carry necessary medications. On days when air quality is particularly poor, affected individuals should take personal precautions to reduce respiratory stress ([map](#)).

Health and Medical

2.25 - Low

Puerto Rico has had serious outbreaks of mosquito-borne illnesses in the past, notably Zika. There are no other major disease concerns. Healthcare facilities are equipped to handle nearly any medical need. However, travel to a major city may be required. All major medications can be obtained in some form on Puerto Rico, particularly in the major cities.

Disease and Health Threats

● 1.50

- **African Tick-Bite Fever:** Transmitted through tick bites. The symptoms usually develop within two weeks after a tick bite. Symptoms include fever, headache, and muscle soreness. Some individuals will develop a red sore with a dark center at the site of the tick bite.
- **Dengue Fever:** Transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito, mostly during the day. Bite prevention is essential. Symptoms of dengue fever include a sudden onset of fever and at least one of the following: severe headache, severe pain behind the eyes, muscle and/or joint pain, rash, easy bruising, and/or nose or gum bleeding. Fever and other symptoms generally appear abruptly four to seven days after being bitten. Some people have reported experiencing no symptoms. Risk of infection exists nationwide, and is year-round; however, risk is highest August-December.
- **Hantavirus:** Transmitted through inhalation or ingestion of infected rodent urine or feces. Early symptoms including fever, headaches, muscle aches, stomach aches, dizziness, and chills. Late symptoms include potentially fatal fluid in the lungs and shortness of breath. Late stage symptoms generally appear four to 10 days after early symptoms.
- **Hepatitis A:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. Hepatitis A does not always cause symptoms. If they occur, symptoms appear two to six weeks after exposure and include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, dark urine, loss of appetite, joint pain, and jaundice. Intermediate risk in Puerto Rico..
- **Hepatitis B:** Transmitted through infected blood and bodily fluids, and effectively prevented with vaccination. An unexpected medical or dental emergency may place the unvaccinated traveler at risk. Practice safe sex and ensure medical procedures, tattoos, or piercings are conducted using sterile equipment. Symptoms include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, dark urine, loss of appetite, joint pain, and jaundice. Intermediate risk in Puerto Rico.
- **Hepatitis E:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. Symptoms appear two to eight weeks after exposure and include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, joint pain, and jaundice.
- **HIV/AIDS:** Transmitted through infected blood and bodily fluids. Practice safe sex and ensure medical procedures, tattoos, or piercings are conducted using sterile equipment. Within two to four weeks of HIV infection, many people, but not all, experience influenza-like illness including fever, swollen glands, sore throat, rash, fatigue, muscle and joint pains, and headache. These symptoms, also called acute retroviral syndrome (ARS), can last from days to weeks. The infection later progresses to a clinical latency stage, and in the late stage, to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).
- **Leptospirosis:** Transmitted through exposure or ingestion of water contaminated with the urine of infected animals. Flooding poses an additional risk for contracting leptospirosis. Initial symptoms of leptospirosis typically develop two days to four weeks after exposure. Such symptoms include headache, fever, muscle aches, chills, diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. Those who may be at high risk can take an antibiotic prophylaxis. Leptospirosis is endemic in Puerto Rico.

- **Polio:** Transmitted through a virus found in contaminated fecal material. Polio is highly infectious and can spread rapidly in a non-immunized population. One in 200 cases may lead to irreversible paralysis or death. Contaminated food or water can spread the disease, especially in areas without improved water or sewer infrastructures. Polio is vaccine-preventable.
- **Rabies:** Transmitted through the saliva of infected wild or domesticated mammals, usually by a bite or scratch. Do not approach unfamiliar animals. Wild animals pose the greatest threat.
- **Traveler's Diarrhea:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. This is the most common illness in travelers. People who become ill by an infectious agent that causes traveler's diarrhea most often experience nausea, vomiting, fever, bloody stools, and/or the urge to constantly pass stools despite an empty gastrointestinal tract. Intermediate risk in Puerto Rico.
- **Tuberculosis:** Transmitted through respiratory droplets released by coughing or sneezing. Individuals planning an extended stay should consider obtaining a PPD skin test to reference against future suspected infections. Symptoms commonly include chest pain, bad cough lasting three weeks or longer, and coughing up blood and/or sputum. Some people also experience chills, weight loss, fever, weakness, night sweats, and loss of appetite. Low risk in Puerto Rico.
- **Typhoid Fever:** Transmitted by contaminated milk, water, and food. Raw fish and shellfish from contaminated waters are likely to be infected. Symptoms of typhoid fever usually include fever, abdominal pain or discomfort, chills and body aches, weakness, and loss of appetite.
- **Zika:** Transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito, mostly during the day, or sexually through an infected partner. Mosquito-bite prevention and practicing safe sex are essential. In many cases, Zika virus is asymptomatic; however, in some, it may cause symptoms similar to dengue and chikungunya, including fever, rash, joint pain and red eyes. Significant birth defects have been associated with Zika virus infection in pregnant women. Partners of women who have recently traveled to an area with Zika virus circulation are encouraged to use condoms for at least six months or for the duration of a partner's pregnancy. Risk of infection exists nationwide and is year-round.

Health Requirements

● Unrated

Yellow Fever: Vaccination Not Required

There are no recommendations or requirements for yellow fever vaccination in Puerto Rico. There is no risk of yellow fever.

HIV Testing

No known restrictions.

Health Recommendations

● Unrated

Recommended Immunizations for Travel to Puerto Rico

Travelers should ensure that they have routine vaccination courses and boosters. You should visit a health care professional at least four to six weeks prior to the trip. Travelers should ensure that they have routine vaccination courses and boosters. Routine vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, varicella (chickenpox), polio, and annual flu vaccine. Travelers should consider obtaining COVID vaccination where available, even if the destination country does not require it.

- **Hepatitis A:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated. Two doses are recommended administered six months apart, are required for long-lasting protection. If full series is six to 12 months apart; there is no need for booster. One dose usually provides enough protection to a healthy adult for international travel. Vaccination will provide some protection within days but should ideally be administered at least two weeks before travel.

- **Hepatitis B:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated. Widely used formulations require three doses administered over the course of six to 18 months, depending on the recipient's age and vaccination history. Booster doses after complete series are usually not required to maintain immunity. If exposed before finalizing full series, individuals may receive a special booster within 24 hours to receive short-term protection.

- **Rabies:** Unless contraindicated, recommended for individuals whose activities bring them into direct contact with dogs, bats, and other mammals; long-term travelers and expatriates; and children. Pre-exposure vaccination requires three doses administered over the course of 28 days. Post-exposure vaccination is still required in the event of potential rabies exposure, but a full-course of pre-exposure vaccination reduces the course of post-exposure treatment and eliminates need for Rabies Immune Globulin, which can be in short supply in many areas. Puerto Rico has reported rabies in domestic and wild animals, thus most travelers are at risk. Bats are likely to carry bat rabies.

- **Typhoid Fever:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated, including those visiting friends and family in endemic areas, those in contact with an infected person, young children, extended-stay travelers, and individuals visiting areas of poor sanitation. Available in both injectable and oral formulations. Widely used formulations require between two and four doses, depending on the formulation and the recipient's vaccination history. Booster vaccination is required every two or five years, depending on the formulation. The last dose should be taken at least one week before travel.

Medical Facilities and Services

● 3.25

Healthcare on the island of Puerto Rico is heavily influenced by the island's relationship with the US in terms of training and technology. There are very few circumstances in which medical evacuation would be required from the island, though serious emergencies may require travel to facilities in one of the island's few major cities, such as San Juan. Serious emergencies on the islands of Vieques and Culebra may require air or maritime evacuation to facilities in Fajardo or elsewhere on the main island. There are growing concerns that the island's ongoing financial crisis will result in increasing closures of hospitals and clinics.

Healthcare facilities on the island were significantly affected in an adverse fashion by the passage of Hurricane Maria. While facilities in major urban centers have recovered, the lack of electricity in more rural areas forced many medical centers there to either curtail operations or otherwise close; the availability of healthcare in such areas is still somewhat variable.

Major US insurance carriers will likely be accepted, depending upon the insured's exact policy. International insurance carriers may also be accepted, although scenarios in which patients pay costs upfront and are later reimbursed by their international carriers are also highly plausible.

Mental Health

● 2.50

Mental health services are available in most locations, particularly urban areas, and conditions are somewhat managed.

Food and Water Safety

● 1.25

Drinking water is generally safe in Puerto Rico. However, officials still recommend drinking bottled or otherwise purified water whenever possible to reduce the risk of traveler's diarrhea or other gastrointestinal illnesses. Ensure that food is properly handled and prepared. Wash raw produce before eating. Consume only pasteurized milk and dairy products, or use powdered or canned milk and cured cheeses. Consider avoiding street vendors and unregulated food establishments.

Political

2.25 - Low

Puerto Rico's political system has traditionally been stable though does have the potential to change should the status question finally be addressed. Rule of law in Puerto Rico is considered strong, and sanctions are not an issue. Corruption in Puerto Rico is considered to be low-to-moderate by regional standards though higher than US averages.

Corruption

● 3.00

Corruption within Puerto Rico exceeds US mainland averages and is rarely prosecuted outside of US federal cases, such as previous high-profile arrests of former government officials by federal agents. Corruption is a significant economic drag and one of the causes of the island's current financial crisis. Within law enforcement, corruption is also a problem, though federal efforts to improve the island's police force, which were largely supported by the island's government, have yielded positive results.

Government Stability

● 2.25

Puerto Rico is highly similar to a US state in many respects, as it has a governor - currently Pedro Pierluisi of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party (PNP) - which leads the executive branch, a bicameral Legislative Assembly which comprises the legislative branch, and an independent judiciary. However, the island's status as a US territory prevents residents from voting in US federal elections and, controversially, also gives the US Congress significant oversight powers, though until recently the island was mostly ignored by federal lawmakers. Most aspects of national defense and foreign policy are prerogatives of the US federal government.

Currently, the three major political parties on the island correspond to one of the three major scenarios for Puerto Rico's relationship with the US: maintenance of the status quo (free associated state), statehood within the US, and full independence. However, the path that the island's government will ultimately take regarding political status is determined through elections, plebiscites, and the amenability of the US federal government.

Rule of Law

● 2.25

Rule of law is perceived as strong in most aspects, and the Puerto Rican system of governance closely mirrors that of a US state. The island also comes under the purview of US federal appeals courts and is subject to most US constitutional law. Corruption in government does pose a notable problem, but otherwise there are no issues with rule of law in governance and politics.

Sanctions

● 1.50

Puerto Rico is not currently under major international sanctions, although is subject to adverse effects from any punitive economic measures or penalties levied against the US, primarily in terms of trade disputes. The island is also subject to specific US regulations, largely anachronistic, that are protectionist in measure and increase cost of living on the island. Puerto Rico's multiple financial defaults have the potential consequence of freezing it out of financial markets, and multiple lawsuits have already been brought against it by creditors, but the imposition of the federal oversight board has largely averted most negative effects of the defaults so far.

Legal

Unrated

Visitors to Puerto Rico are subject to local laws, which may not mirror, either in whole or in part, those of their home country. Those deemed to be in violation, even unknowingly, may be fined, detained, imprisoned, temporarily or permanently expelled, depending on the nature of the offense. Home-country consular officers are typically systematically informed of a detention and permitted to provide support services to their detained citizens. When there is no treaty in force, notification and access depend on whether the two countries have direct or indirect diplomatic relations. Consular officers cannot interfere with local judicial proceedings, nor provide legal advice or representation at trial, and are unable to pay legal fees or fines with government funds. The status of dual nationals will be determined by local officials, with all attendant ramifications for access and support.

Emergency Contacts

● Unrated

Emergency Contacts

Ambulance 911

Fire 911

Police 911

Embassies and Consulates

● Unrated

German Honorary Consul

Address Copters Hangar Lot # 1, South Access, Isla Grande Airport, PR 00907 San Juan

Fax [\(1\) 787 722 83 46](tel:17877228346)

Email san-juan@hk-diplo.de

Web Site <http://www.washington.diplo.de>

Entry/Exit

Unrated

Travelers can obtain specific information about visas and other entry-exit requirements at : <https://app.worldcue.com/TimaticApp/timatic?pagetype=passport>).

Pre-Departure

● Unrated

- Travelers should have adequate travel insurance in place to enable rapid medical treatment or emergency extraction and should review contingency operations, business continuity, and crisis management plans.
- Travelers should provide friends and family with a copy of their travel itinerary, make a copy of important travel and identification documents, and, if applicable, obtain their visa prior to arrival. Travelers should also have information on their meeting host, accommodation, relevant embassies, and trusted local contacts easily accessible.

On Arrival

● Unrated

- There are no significant measures that should be undertaken on arrival.

In Transit

● Unrated

- The safest form of travel is by a hired car with driver, rental car, or taxi through a reputable dispatch service.

In the Street

● Unrated

- Travelers should avoid overt displays of wealth and dress discreetly and appropriately to the environment. Do not display money, jewelry, or valuables, and keep a low profile.
- Travelers should use only small denominations of the local currency and keep large amounts of cash and cards in a separate place on their person. Reduce the contents of wallets or purses, particularly cards which may denote affiliations, memberships, and accounts. Do not use credit or debit cards unless absolutely necessary and then only at respected, well-known retail and service establishments.
- Travelers should ensure that their mobile phone is carried with sufficient battery life and programmed with appropriate emergency numbers. Travelers should also carry an ID card or passport and emergency medical information.
- Travelers should be aware of their location and surroundings. Avoid high-crime areas and walking through dimly lit streets after dark. Travelers should know routes and carry a map if necessary, but keep it concealed.
- In crowded situations, travelers should be aware of jostling, as this may be a ploy for pick-pockets. Travelers should also be aware of people loitering and that attackers may first pass their victims to attack from behind.
- Travelers should ignore verbal 'bait' from passers-by. Do not get into an argument, and avoid eye contact with strangers.
- LGBT+ travelers should note that, as a US territory, most US federal laws and constitutional protections apply in Puerto Rico, including those concerning LGBT+ issues. In general, attitudes in the territory are liberal by Latin American standards, but perhaps slightly more conservative than US averages. As such, same-sex displays of affection may still elicit harassment and discrimination. Outright violence, while rare, is also a possibility, particularly in more conservative rural areas.

Culture

Unrated

Standard Hours of Operation

Business: Monday-Friday, 0900-1800

Government: Monday-Friday, 0900-1700

Banking: Monday-Friday, 0830-1430; Saturday, 0945-1200

Business attire is generally formal. For men, conservative business suits or a buttoned-down shirt and tie is appropriate. For women, conservative business suits or a dress and blouse is appropriate.

Appointments are best scheduled Monday-Friday between 0900-1800. Arriving early to meetings or social engagements is a common practice. Informal or personal discussions are common. Scheduled meetings will typically end on time. If a meeting includes dining out, the host offers to pay the check. Alcohol taken during lunch or dinner is usually acceptable.

English and Spanish are commonly used for business purposes. Attempts by visitors to use phrases in the native language are well received but are not expected. Business cards are widely used. Always use Mr./Ms. or a local honorific/title until the host indicates that using first names is appropriate. Addressing the host according to their official title is seen as a sign of respect. When beginning or departing a meeting, shake hands with everyone.

Gestures

● Unrated

Business cards are widely used and can be presented in any manner.

Shake hands with everyone when beginning a meeting. When departing, shake hands again with everyone at the meeting.

Use direct communication and phrasing when speaking with people from Puerto Rico. It is common to make direct eye contact when speaking to someone at a business meeting. When addressing someone at a meeting use their title and last name.

Avoid using the following gestures or habits, as they are deemed offensive or insulting:

- Showing someone a clenched fist.

Religions

● Unrated

Roman Catholic 85%, Protestant and other 15%

Ethnicities

● Unrated

White 75.8%, Black African 12.4%, and other 11.8%

Significant Dates

● Unrated

January 1 - New Year's Day

January 6 - Epiphany

January 16 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 20 - Presidents' Day

March 22 - Emancipation Day

April 7 - Good Friday

May 14 - Mother's Day

May 29 - Memorial Day

June 18 - Father's Day

July 4 - Independence Day

July 25 – Constitution Day

September 6 - Labor Day

October 9 - Columbus Day/Day of the Races

November 11 - Veterans Day

November 19 - Discovery Day

November 23 - Thanksgiving

December 25 - Christmas Day

Currency

● Unrated

Currency Name/Code

The official currency of Puerto Rico is the US dollar (USD). One USD is made up of 100 cents.

Currency Convertibility

Banks or legal money changers may offer the best exchange rates in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico allows foreigners to exit with local currency in any amount, but amounts exceeding USD 10,000 should be declared.

Credit Card

● Unrated

Major credit cards are widely accepted in shops, restaurants, and hotels.

Taxes and Tipping

● Unrated

It is customary to tip hotel personnel, wait staff in restaurants, and taxi drivers 10 to 15 percent; there may be a service charge on the bill.

Bank and ATM

● Unrated

ATM Availability

Automated teller machines are widely available in Puerto Rico. Always choose a machine located in a secure area, preferably within hotels or other populated, well-lit locations.

Bank Availability

Banking hours are generally Monday through Friday 0900-1730. Cash advances on major credit cards issued by foreign banks are permitted.

Active Alerts

No Alerts

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