



Tour Book

San Juan, Puerto Rico
March 7-15, 2020

OUR MISSION

Yale Alumni Service Corps (YASC) promotes mutual cross-cultural awareness and sustainable development in underserved communities. We do this by bringing Yale alumni, family and friends together to work with people in communities throughout the world – via the arts, education and sports, health, and economic development – to inspire hope and produce meaningful change in the lives of the people we serve.

YASC IN PUERTO RICO LEADERSHIP

Program Producer:

Elena Labrada MD '86

YAA Team:

João C. Aleixo, Director, Yale Alumni Service Programs

Johnson Flucker '80, Director, Yale Clubs

Instituto Nueva Escuela (INE):

Anelis Torres, Special Project Coordinator

Vamonos Tours:

Bernardo Benetti, Tour Manager

YASC AT A GLANCE

26 Programs

9 Countries

5 US States

1,896 Participants (alumni, family, and friends)

Total # YASC volunteers: 1,896

Avg # of prep hours: 16

Avg # project hours: 60

Total YASC person hours: 144,096

Our track record of global service



Dominican Republic – 2008, 2011, 2019
México – 2009, 2010
Brazil – 2009, 2016, 2017
China – 2011
Nicaragua – 2012, 2013, 2014
Ghana – 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016
West Virginia – 2013, 2014
California – 2014
New York – 2015
India – 2014, 2015
Cuba – 2017
Nevada – 2017
South Africa – 2018, 2019

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY - RESIDENCIAL LUIS LLORENS TORRES



In San Juan we will work with the community of Residencial Luis Llorens Torres, located in Isla Verde, 10 minutes from Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport. Opened in 1953, this is the largest housing project in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, with almost 3,000 people. Over half the population lives below the poverty line; the median income hovers around 20,000 USD. Like many housing projects in the US, Residencial Luis Llorens Torres is mired with psycho-social problems associated with chronic, multigenerational poverty.



Our service trip will focus on the two schools that children from the community attend. Both schools were affected by Hurricane Maria and are still in recovery mode. Escuela Luis Llorens Torres, founded in 1954 (and with INE since 2008) has 354 students, spanning ages 3-12 yo, in grades pre K to 6th. Escuela Republica de Peru has 247 students, ages 13-15yo, attending 7th-9th grade. Their students come from multiple housing projects in the San Juan metro area. INE has worked with them for 7 years. Both schools struggle with adequate funding, as most public schools in Puerto Rico. The decade-long recession in the Island resulted in multiple school closures in the last few years.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

[Instituto Nueva Escuela \(INE\)](#) is an independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization. It is dedicated to improving Puerto Rican students' academic and socio-emotional outcomes through the implementation of Montessori education in the public school setting. INE accomplishes its mission by partnering with public schools to train and certify classroom teachers in Montessori education and provides leadership, support and technical assistance to public schools and to community partners. INE practices and promotes the Montessori philosophy, curriculum and methodology. This education method's success has been proven for more than a century. It maintains its validity due to the practicality and beauty that lie in understanding and responding to the educational, emotional, and social needs of children and youth in a changing society. INE's work is aimed at transforming the soul and spirit of teachers and preparing them in the Montessori philosophy and methodology. The teachers participating in the project are committed to real education reform in Puerto Rico's public schools.

INE DRESS CODE AND APPEARANCE

The INE expects the volunteers to dress in a clean and neat, casual-professional manner, suitable for the responsibilities and the area where they collaborate. Remember, you are a role model for these students. Be prudent and judicious. (example: tight pants should not be worn, skirts no more than 3 inches above the knee, no deep necklines, no baseball caps, no sun glasses, no t-shirts, no flip flops).

[Vámonos Tours](#) was founded by Jorge Pardo in 2002 after years of taking his own students on cultural and Spanish immersion tours of Puerto Rico. They are committed to providing a close and personal support with offices in Delaware and Puerto Rico. Vámonos is an official A+ BBB accredited business and a member of prestigious student travel and tourism organizations.

HOTEL

Verdanza Hotel
8020 Tartak Street, Isla Verde
Puerto Rico 00979
Tel: 787-253-9000

We'll be staying at the [Verdanza Hotel](#) in the heart of Puerto Rico's Isla Verde district, just a block from one of the best urban beaches. The hotel features rooms with A/C, swimming pool, WIFI and exercise room.

NEAR HOTEL VERDANZA

CVS pharmacy: 2 minute walk
Pueblo Supermarket: 7 minute walk
Isla Verde Beach: 5 minute walk

ABOUT PUERTO RICO – COUNTRY PROFILE

Puerto Rico, officially known as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico), is an unincorporated territory of the United States, located in the northeastern Caribbean, east of the Dominican Republic and west of both the U.S. Virgin Islands and the British

Virgin Islands. Puerto Rico is only 100 miles long by 35 miles wide, making it the smallest island of the Greater Antilles. Puerto Rico (Spanish for "rich port") consists of an archipelago that includes the main island of Puerto Rico and several islands: Vieques, Culebra, Mona and numerous islets.

Capital: [San Juan](#)

Location: Caribbean, island between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, east of the Dominican Republic.

Climate: Tropical Marine, average temperatures year round between 80 °F (26.7 °C) and 70 °F (21.1 °C).

Time zone: Atlantic Standard (UTC - 4:00)

Currency: United States Dollar (USD) \$

Population: 3,294,626 (July 2018 est.)

Nationality: Puerto Rican

Primary ethnicity: Hispanic

Ethnic composition: white (mostly Spanish origin) 75.8%, black 12.4%, other 8.5% (includes American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander, and others), mixed 3.3%

National anthem: [La Borinqueña](#)

Language: Spanish and English are the official languages of Puerto Rico.

Government: Democracy, Republic

Total area: 9,104 sq km (3,515 sq mi)

HISTORY

Puerto Rico is a large Caribbean island of roughly 3,500 square miles located in the West Indies. It's the easternmost island of the Greater Antilles chain, which also includes Cuba, Jamaica and Hispaniola (divided into Haiti and the Dominican Republic). After centuries of Spanish rule, Puerto Rico became a territory of the United States in 1898 and has been largely self-governing since the mid-20th century. It has a population of some 3.4 million people and a vibrant culture shaped by a mix of Spanish, United States and Afro-Caribbean influences. Puerto Ricans are US citizens since 1917 (Jones Act).

GEOGRAPHY

San Juan is located along the north-eastern coast of Puerto Rico. It lies south of the Atlantic Ocean; north of Caguas and Trujillo Alto; east of and Guaynabo; and west of Carolina. The city occupies an area of 76.93 square miles (199.2 km²), of which, 29.11 square miles (75.4 km²) (37.83%) is water. San Juan's main water bodies are San Juan Bay and two natural lagoons, the Condado and San José.

ECONOMY

Several businesses have their headquarters or local Puerto Rican branches in Guaynabo. El Nuevo Día, Chrysler, Santander Securities, Puerto Rico Telephone, and many sales offices for large US and international firms (such as Total, Microsoft, Toshiba, Puma Energy and others) have their Puerto

Rican headquarters in Guaynabo. WAPA-TV (Televiscentro) and Univision Puerto Rico have their main studios in Guaynabo. Iberia's San Juan-area offices are in Guaynabo.

ECONOMIC CRISIS

In the first decade of the 21st century, Puerto Rico's economic growth slowed, even as its national debt rapidly expanded. In 2015, the worsening economic crisis led its governor to announce that the commonwealth could no longer meet its debt obligations. Two years later, under legislation passed by Congress to help Puerto Rico deal with its economic crisis, the commonwealth declared a form of bankruptcy, claiming debt of more than \$70 billion, mostly to U.S. investors. In September 2017, Puerto Rico's economic woes were compounded when Hurricane Maria, a Category 4 hurricane with some 150 mph winds, made direct landfall on the island. In Maria's aftermath, Puerto Rico's inhabitants—some 3.4 million American citizens—found themselves in a humanitarian crisis, facing debilitating shortages of water, food and fuel and a deeply uncertain future.

PEOPLE

The last full US census results, from 2010, showed 3,725,789 people that inhabit the island of Puerto Rico make it one of the most densely populated islands in the world. There are about 1,000 people per square mile, a ratio higher than within any of the 50 states in the United States. On August 2012, the number of Puerto Ricans on the U.S. mainland reached a record - 4.9 million. Had these people remained in Puerto Rico, the island would be so densely populated that there would be virtually no room for people to live. Because of the massive migration to the mainland, more Puerto Ricans are said to live in New York City than in San Juan. On March 27, 2014 the U.S. Census Bureau announced that the island's total population fell from about 3.7 million in 2010 to 3.6 million in 2013. The government stated that more than 450,000 people have left the island in the past decade. The majority are settling in U.S. states including New York and Florida.

On the island, one-third of the population is concentrated in the [San Juan-Carolina-Bayamón](#) metropolitan area. The largest city is San Juan, the island's capital. It has a population of 395,326 (2010), making it the 46th largest city in the USA. The second largest city is Bayamón, with 208,116 people and is the 103rd largest city in America. Other major cities include Carolina (176,762), Ponce (166,327) and Caguas (142,893).

Race and Ethnic Groups

The people of Puerto Rico represent a cultural and racial mix because of centuries of immigration and cultural assimilation. When the Spanish forced the Taíno people into slavery, the entire indigenous population was virtually decimated, except for a few Amerindians who escaped into the remote mountains. Eventually they inter-married with the poor Spanish farmers and became known as jíbaros. Because of industrialization and migration to the cities, few jíbaros remain.

Interesting Facts

Puerto Ricans are known for their warm hospitality, often considered very friendly and expressive to strangers. Greetings are often cordial and genuine. When people are first introduced, a handshake is usual, however, close friends and family members always greet you hello or goodbye with a kiss on the cheek or a combination hug and kiss. This happens between female friends and between men and women, but not between male friends. Puerto Ricans are best known by speaking using lively hand and facial gestures, as hand and body language are important forms of communication.

Besides the slaves imported from Africa (Sudan, Kongo, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leona, and the Gold, Ivory, and Grain coasts), other ethnic groups brought to work on the plantations joined the island's racial mix. Fleeing Simón Bolívar's independence movements in South America, Spanish loyalists fled to Puerto Rico - a fiercely conservative Spanish [colony](#) during the early 1800s. French families also flocked here from both Louisiana and Haiti. As changing governments or violent revolutions

depressed the economies of Scotland and Ireland, many farmers from those countries also journeyed to Puerto Rico in search of a better life.

When the United States acquired the island in 1898, American influence was added to culture.

During the mid-19th century, labor was needed to build roads, initially, Chinese workers were imported for this task, followed by workers from such countries as Italy, France, Germany, and even Lebanon. American expatriates came to the island after 1898. Long after Spain had lost control of Puerto Rico, Spanish immigrants continued to arrive on the island. The most significant new immigrant population arrived in the 1960s, when thousands of Cubans fled from Fidel Castro's Communist state. The latest arrivals to Puerto Rico have come from the economically depressed Dominican Republic.

The new and the old merged, where two worlds and many culture fused, creating an island of sharp contrasts. Today, this mix of culture can be perceived in the island's architecture, which mixes Spanish colonial with ultra-modern, shown on the abundance of North American-style malls and fast-food restaurants that compete with small, family-run stores and restaurants.

Criollo (creole) is a word used today by Puerto Ricans to describe things native to the island, such as: music, cuisine, language, arts, people, religion, and other aspects of the island culture.

It is known that Puerto Rican descendants call themselves Puerto Ricans. "I am Puerto Rican, but I wasn't born there."

The term "Nuyorican" is used to identify New Yorkers born in Puerto Rico or of Puerto Rican descent who live in or near New York City. The word Nuyorican derives from a combination of the words "New York" and "Puerto Rican."

Puerto Rico is a territory (Commonwealth) of the United States of America and Puerto Ricans have common citizenship, currency and defense. Although Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, residents of Puerto Rico pay no federal income tax, nor can they vote in presidential elections. As citizens, Puerto Ricans do not require a work visa (also known as green cards) to live and/or work in the United States.

Puerto Ricans consider themselves American but are fiercely proud of their island and their culture. They don't usually call themselves Americans or "Americanos", but "Puertorriqueños" or "Boricuas." To most Puerto Ricans, "my country" means "Puerto Rico", not the United States. Boricua, derived from the Taíno word Boriken is used to affirm Puerto Ricans devotion to the island's Taíno heritage. The word Boriken translates to "the great land of the valiant and noble Lord". Borikén was the original name used by the Taíno population before the arrival of the Spanish.

Vital Statistics

Population - 3,294,626 (July 2018 est.)

Population Density: 988 density per sq mi/382 persons per sq km (2015)

Puerto Rico's population density is among the world's highest - only Bangladesh, The Maldives, Barbados, Taiwan, South Korea and the city-states of Hong Kong and Singapore are more crowded. Puerto Rico population is equivalent to 0.05% of the total world population.

Ethnic Composition:

White 75.8%, black/African American 12.4%, other 8.5% (includes American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander, and others), mixed 3.3%
99% of the population is Latino (2010 est.)

Education

During the first three hundred years of Spanish rule education in the Island was limited to the teaching of Christian doctrine, arts, and grammar. The first text book published in the island was the "Catecismo de Doctrina Cristiana", which appeared during the 1850's written by Bishop Gil Esteve. Classes were held only in main cities (San Juan, Arecibo, San German and Coamo). Almost the entire population was illiterate. During the revolutionary period (1800-1840), the Spanish Government imposed a rigorous censorship on the colonies. Books were rare, importation was opposed by the authorities, who believed them to be instruments of sedition. This fact explains why, prior to 1840, there was very little printed matter in the Island.

After the American occupation in 1898 education was entirely provided in English with Spanish treated as a special subject. In 1915, under Commissioner of Education Dr. Paul G. Miller direction the method of teaching was changed, establishing Spanish as the medium of instruction in the four lower grades, English in the three higher grades, and both English and Spanish for the middle grades. This method was used until November 1934, when Commissioner José Padín ordered that instruction be given in Spanish in all elementary grades with English taught as a special subject from the first grade.

With the appointment of Dr. José M. Gallardo as Commissioner of Education in June 1937, a new school program was adopted with special stress placed on the teaching of English in accordance with the views of President Roosevelt, expressed in a letter addressed to Dr. Gallardo shortly after his appointment: "It is an indispensable part of American policy that the coming generation of American citizens in Puerto Rico grow up with complete facility in the English tongue. It is the language of our nation. Only through the acquisition of this language will Puerto Rican Americans secure a better understanding of American ideals and principles." Instruction is given in Spanish, with English as a subject.

In July 25, 1952 the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was approved indicting: 1) a public instruction system, free and no segregated and 2) instruction will be free and compulsory.

Today, education is a matter of high priority for Puerto Rico, it is evident in the island's overall literacy rate of 94 percent and its budget for education, approximately 40 percent. Puerto Rico also has one of the highest college education rates in the whole world.

Education is obligatory between 6 to 17 years old. Primary school consists of six grades; the secondary levels is divided into 2 cycles of 3 years each. The school term in public schools starts in August through mid-December and January through late May. As of 2013, there are 1,460 public schools and another 764 private schools throughout the island.

The school system is administered by the Department of Education and has several levels of learning. The language used in the schools is Spanish, however, English is taught from kindergarten to high school as part of the school curriculum. Some private schools provide English programs where all classes are conducted in English except for the Spanish class.

Puerto Rico has more than 50 institutions of higher education, including universities, colleges, community colleges and technical institutes. Puerto Rico has achieved one of the highest college education rates in the world (6th) with 56% of its college-age students attending institutions of higher learning, according to World Bank data.

High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2012-2016: 73.9%

Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2012-2016: 24.6%

Registered Students by Education Levels: (2007-08 academic year)

Elementary (pre-kindergarten grade 8) 355,115

Secondary (grades 9-12) 148,520

Schools: 1,460 public schools, 764 private school and 65 universities. (2013)

Literacy Rate:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 93.3%

male: 92.8%

female: 93.8% (2015 est.)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 14 years

male: 13 years

female: 15 years (2014)

Education expenditures: 6% of GDP (2014)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

total: 26.6%

male: 28.9%

female: 23.1% (2012)

Language

Spanish and English are the official languages of Puerto Rico, but Spanish is without a doubt the dominant language. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that, in 2010, 94.9% of people spoke a language other than English at home. The U.S. Census Bureau also reports that only around 30% can speak English very well. In general, English is spoken by about 1/4 of the population-with limited capabilities. English is required in all federal matters and is spoken in all major tourist areas (80% Spanish, 20% other).

Religion

Religious freedom for all faiths is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Churches of many denominations can be found throughout the island, with Christianity being the majority religion.

Religion plays a very important role in the lives of Puerto Ricans.

According to one of the most recent surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center (2010), the majority of Puerto Ricans identified as Christians (96.7%), with a religious breakdown of: Catholics (69.7%), Protestants (25.1%), non-religious (1.9%), and others (3.3%).

FOOD

Puerto Rican cuisine is flavorful and delicious. Traditional cuisine reflects Spanish, Caribbean and African influences. A staple dish is white rice and pink beans, served with meat or chicken. If you're lucky enough to live near these restaurants, go give them a try and see what Puerto Rican cuisine is all about.

CULTURE

Puerto Rican culture is somewhat complex - others will call it colorful. Culture is a series of visual manifestations and interactions with the environment that make a region and/or a group of people different from the rest of the world. Puerto Rico, without a doubt has several unique characteristics that distinguish our culture from any other.

Lets' consider that the people of Puerto Rico represent a cultural and racial mix. During the early 18-century, the Spaniard in order to populate the country took Taino Indian women as brides. Later on as labor was needed to maintain crops and build roads, African slaves were imported, followed by the importation of Chinese immigrants, then continued with the arrival of Italians, French, German, and even Lebanese people. Puerto Rico became a colony of the United States in 1898 and many American expatriates came to the island. Long after Spain had lost control of Puerto Rico, Spanish immigrants continued to arrive on the island. The most significant new immigrant population arrived in the 1960s, when thousands of Cubans fled from Fidel Castro's Communist state. The latest arrivals to Puerto Rico have come from the economically depressed Dominican Republic. This historic intermingling has resulted in a contemporary Puerto Rico practically without racial problems (very close to but not completely).

Additionally, Puerto Rico is full of contrasts. While Puerto Ricans love their country and accept the free association with the United States, they also like to emphasize their loyalty to their culture, folklore, hospitality and way of life.

[Additional information on Puerto Rico](#) – Puerto Rico Data USA

USDA: Get informed about the items you can bring

All the baggage of passengers traveling from Puerto Rico to the United States must go through the inspection process. This inspection will be performed by officials of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), located at the entrance of all the terminals thru the airport.

Some permitted articles (after inspection)	Non-permitted articles
Avocado	Crafts made from palm leaf
Cacao	Sugar cane with knots and shell
Sugar Cane (no shell, no knots)	Fresh fruits
Fresh/Dry flowers	Plants with soil
Citrus (Oranges, Lemons, Grapefruit)	Live insects
Strawberries	Pigeon Peas
Beans (shelled / pod)	Fresh Citrus Leaves
Mint	Earth Snails

Banana (Fruit / Damp Leaf)	Pulpy seeds and / or nuts
Plantains (fruit / leaf cushioned)	Cotton Seeds
Carrot	
Quenepas	
Pineapple	
Watermelon	
Plants without soil	

PACKING LIST

Hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol)

Disinfecting wipes

Sunscreen – for the sake of our oceans, please consider reef sensitive sunscreen

Sun-glasses

Hat/baseball cap (for outdoor leisure activities)

Bathing suit

Flip flops (not for school)

Comfortable closed toe shoes and/or sandals

Light weight cotton/linen clothes

Travel first aid kit <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/pack-smart>