Caribbean Experience: Puerto Rico Itinerary

(INT 290: History and Literature of Puerto Rico in the 20th Century)

January 16, 2015 - Arrival
Arrival at San Juan International Airport where we will be met by the local representative. Transfer to the hotel in the San Juan area. Overnight in San Juan.

January 17, 2015 – Tour of San Juan
The narrow streets of Old San Juan make a private walking tour an excellent way to discover 500 years of fascinating history. We will begin the tour with a driver and a certified guide. Our first stop will be at San Cristobal Fortress; which in colonial times protected the island from enemy attacks. Walk through of the impressive fortress along with a guide for 30-45 minutes. From that point the walking narrated tour begins along with a professional & knowledgeable guide down the promontory of the Old City. Walk the blue, grayish cobblestone streets and feel the magic of the San Jose Church, Plaza del Quinto Centenario, Plaza San José, Casa Blanca, La Rogativa, La Fortaleza, San Juan Gate, and The San Juan Cathedral among other fascinating monuments. The tour guide will remain at a strategic point to answer any questions & provide assistance. Once you are ready, the driver will meet you at Plaza de Armas and transport you back to the 21st century. Overnight in San Juan.

January 18, 2015 – El Yunque Rain Forest
The Caribbean National Rain Forest, known as El Yunque, is the only tropical forest in the United States National Forest System. Its rugged land climbs from almost sea level to about 3,500 feet above sea level and is doused with up to 200 inches of rain every year. Nowhere in the world will your eyes observe a greater wealth of beauty than what is waiting for you in the rain forest. According to ancient Indian legend, the good spirit "Yuquiyu" reigned on his mighty mountain top throne, protecting Puerto Rico and its people. Many of the sights you will see today are the same as those that dazzled the first Spanish Explorers more than 500 years ago. You'll see 1,000 year-old trees, strange plants with exotic rainbow colored flowers, and thick vines with great masses of lush red blossoms waving in the cool breeze. From the heart of this breathtaking beauty you'll hear the incessant, yet delightful two-note chanting of the "Coqui," the chattering of unseen tropical birds and, if you’re lucky, the squawk of the endangered Puerto Rican Parrot. Includes a small trail visit as well as several stops to El Portal del Yunque Visitor’s Center, La Coca Fall, and a visit to the Yokahu Tower. Overnight in San Juan.

January 19, 2015 – Transfer to Luquillo and Ponce
Today we will be transferred to the Luquillo area of the island and then on to Ponce. Overnight in Ponce.
January 20, 2015 – Colonial Ponce
The city of Ponce unveils an enchanting portrait of colonial history, art and culture. The architectural splendor and detailed neoclassic and art deco style of the city makes Ponce an essential part in your itinerary. The city's buildings such as the 19th century Fire Station and La Perla Theatre demonstrate more than 300 years of an elegant tradition that has made Ponce the center of Puerto Rico's southern economy. The visit includes a stop at the Tibes Indian Ceremonial center. Discover major sites like El Vigía Cross and the Serrallés Castle, former home of the Island's oldest rum-producing family. Don't miss the opportunity to visit Ponce, "The Pearl of the South", Puerto Rico's second oldest and largest city. Overnight in Ponce.

January 21, 2015 – Las Piedras, La Cueva del Indio
This morning we leave Ponce and drive to Las Piedras. "La Cueva del Indio" in Las Piedras was discovered during the excavations in 1982. The place was protected barely noticed findings, and the site is part of the historical national monuments since 2003. Continue to San Juan for overnight.

January 22, 2015 – Old and New San Juan
Beyond the cobblestone streets and colonial buildings is a bustling Caribbean city. San Juan is rich with culture, and has a vibrant economy. The tour describes the sports, art, culture, and business of Puerto Rico and all that makes this an exceptional island today. Start your guided tour in New San Juan where guests will see important sites such as the Capitolio, Convention Center, Plaza Las Americas, Roberto Clemente Stadium, Hiram Bithorn Stadium, Coliseo de Puerto Rico, the Mile of Gold Banking District and the Museum of Art. The tour then visits Old San Juan. Stop at San Cristobal Fortress. See many important historic buildings such as the Museo de Ateneo, Antiguo Casino, Casa Olimpica, and their cultural significance before returning. Overnight in San Juan.

January 23, 2015 – At Leisure
A day at leisure in San Juan, where you can enjoy the sights and attractions this city has to offer on your own. Overnight in San Juan.

January 24, 2015 – Departure
Transfer to San Juan International Airport for our departure flight home.

*Stay tuned for more details to come!*