

CIPANP 2006

Venue, Accommodations, Transportation

The conference will be held at the Westin Rio Mar Beach Resort and Country Club in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico, approximately 45 minutes from Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (depending on traffic). The meeting site is completely self-contained; all sessions will be held in the conference center on the property. The resort comprises nearly 500 acres (200 hectares) and features a 1-mile (1.6-km) secluded beach adjacent to the Caribbean National Forest "El Yunque."



The Westin Rio Mar provides a superb family environment and plenty of activities for spouses and children. Club Iguana offers supervised full- and half-day activities for children 4 to 12 years old. The resort includes two championship golf courses, a 13-court tennis complex, 12 dining and entertainment venues, a spa and fitness center, two swimming pools, a full variety of water sports, and a PADI five-star diving shop and dive trips.

Deeply discounted rates have been obtained for hotel rooms (\$143/night, plus taxes and modest daily resort fee). The hotel has agreed to provide rooms at the reduced CIPANP 2006 rate for participants who wish to extend their stays for up to three days before or after the meeting dates, depending on availability. Request extra days when you register online. After April 21, discounted room rates are subject to availability.

Transportation

Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (SJU), located about 9 mi (14 km) east of San Juan, is Puerto Rico's principal airport. It is served by Air Canada, American Airlines, BWIA, Continental, British Airways, Delta, Iberia, jetBlue Airways, KLM, Lufthansa, Northwest, United Airlines, US Airways, and Virgin Atlantic.

The Westin will provide airport concierge and shuttle transportation services to and from Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport, provided you make a reservation at least 48 hours prior to arriving in Puerto Rico. Cost is \$27.50 net per person, each way, and will be billed to your room. You can reserve your shuttle online (be sure to check "shuttle" and "\$27.50" when you fill out your registration form, and note that if you want round-trip transportation, you must fill out and submit two reservations, one for each trip). Taxis may also be taken to and from the airport, but the cost is considerably higher (up to \$80 one-way).

If you decide to rent a car (advisable if you want to explore outside the resort area), major U.S. firms as well as local companies are available. Be sure to carry written confirmation and a receipt if you book a car prior to your arrival. A car having air conditioning is advised.

Driving in Puerto Rico is on the right, as in the United States, and standard U.S. traffic laws apply, but road signs are in Spanish, distances are in kilometers, and gasoline is sold in liters. Visitors may operate motor vehicles in Puerto Rico, provided they hold a valid, unexpired driver's license issued by any of the states of the United States or a foreign country that has licensure requirements similar to Puerto Rico's. Roads are good, with some interstate highways connecting cities.

White taxis bearing the logo and TAXI TURISTICO are under the Puerto Rico Tourism Company and charge set rates by destination. Expect to pay about \$30 for a city tour, less for transport to local spots from the airport or piers. These cabs, as well as cabs in other locations throughout the island, are usually metered. Be sure to determine the fee before you go if you use an unmetered cab. If you're not in San Juan, it's possible to flag a cab down on the street, but you will find it easier to ask the hotel to call one for you. Taxis drivers should be tipped about 15 percent.

You can also explore the Westin by bike. Adult and children's bicycles and tandem bikes are available for rent from the Water Sports Hut.

The Language

Both English and Spanish are official languages of Puerto Rico, but Spanish is dominant. If you are planning to explore the island, a Spanish phrase book could be helpful. Most airport, hotel, and restaurant staff are bilingual.

Money

The local currency is the U.S. dollar, although Puerto Ricans may refer to it as the "peso." All major credit cards (American Express, Visa, Master Card, Discover, Diner's Club) are accepted at most businesses, and ATMs connected to major U.S. and international networks are widespread. Currency exchanges are widely available in San Juan. Local sales taxes are included in all purchases. Hotel taxes (11 percent) will be added to your account. Most major hotels and nightclubs include a service charge in the bill; many local restaurants do not. Tipping is much the same as the United States (15 to 20 percent).

The Weather and Clothing

Puerto Rico's tropical weather is a sunny 82oF (28oC) year-round. (Click [here](#) for today's five-day forecast.) The dry season is December to March; if you plan to make excursions outside the hotel and conference center, bring an umbrella for afternoon showers.

The volcanic island has three distinct topographies: the Cordillera Central (central mountains), the "karst" country, and the Llanos Costaneros (coastal plains). Around San Juan and Rio Grande (the coastal plains), the land is fairly flat and intersected by many

rivers that carry water from the interior mountains to the sea. The karst, located in the northern interior, is made up of limestone hills pocketed with sinkholes and caves, many of which have not been completely explored. Some rivers, like El Río de Camuy, pass through this area, disappear under the surface and reappear kilometers down hill. The Arecibo Observatory, the world's largest radio-telescope, and the Parque de las Cavernas del Río de Camuy are also located in this area. The Cordillera Central covers most of the island of Puerto Rico; its highest peaks are located between Villalba and Adjuntas. These are Cerro La Puntita (4,389 ft [1338 m]) and Los Tres Picachos (3615 ft [1102 m]). The northern side of the Cordillera Central is much steeper and receives more rain than the southern side.

Puerto Rico is a conservative and religious country; skimpy, revealing clothing is frowned upon. Cool, comfortable cotton clothing is best for warm afternoons; bring a sweater for cooler evenings or a visit to the mountains—temperatures in the mountains are significantly cooler than on the coasts. (And clothing is non-optional; Puerto Rico has no nudist camps or beaches, and appearing nude in public is illegal.)

Time

Puerto Rico is in the Atlantic time zone (UTC -4) but does not observe daylight savings time. Most commercial businesses operate from 8:30 or 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Government offices are open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays. Banking hours are 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. weekdays.

Telephones

Major U.S. cellular companies service Puerto Rico; check with your provider on applicable rates for use of your cell phone while on the island.

Internet Access

The Westin provides high-speed Internet access throughout the resort.

Electrical Appliances

Puerto Rico uses standard U.S. 110-V alternating current. If you have 220-V appliances, you will need a converter and a socket adapter.

Medications and Vaccinations

Bring enough prescription medication for your stay; as in the United States, pharmacists cannot dispense prescription medications without a doctor's written authorization. To avoid problems at customs, keep your medication in its original container or carry copies of your prescriptions.

No specific vaccinations are required for visitors to Puerto Rico. However, those arriving from or transiting through countries where a health epidemic has been formally declared may need proof of vaccination before they can enter the island.

Leaving Puerto Rico

Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (SJU) is very busy, particularly on Saturdays and Sundays. It is strongly recommended that you arrive at the airport at least two hours prior to your departure flight on weekdays; allow four hours on Saturdays and Sundays. When you have completed checking in, go directly to your gate, as you may encounter long lines at the security checkpoints.