

## Why You Should Visit The Iconic El San Juan Hotel In Puerto Rico



[Carrie Coolidge](#) Contributor



Isla Verde beach has been voted the "Best Urban Beach in the world by USA Today's Readers' Choice Awards. COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL PUERTO RICO

Following the destruction caused by Hurricane Maria, a Category 4 hurricane that all but devastated much of Puerto Rico in September 2017, more than \$65 million was invested in extensive renovations at the the [El San Juan Hotel](#), and the property is even more glamorous, sophisticated and luxurious than ever before.

One of the island's most iconic properties since it opened its doors in 1958, [the El San Juan Hotel, which reopened in mid-December](#) to great fanfare, is situated on two miles of the pristine Isla Verde Beach. Isla Verde beach has been voted the "Best Urban Beach in the world by USA Today's Readers' Choice Awards.

Located in Carolina, a cultural arts and entertainment district that is a short distance from the Old City of San Juan, the hotel is an expansive property with over 40,000-square feet of flexible meeting space including an 11,000-square foot newly redesigned grand ballroom that can accommodate up to 1,000 guests.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/carriecoolidge/2019/01/16/why-you-should-visit-the-iconic-el-san-juan-hotel-in-puerto-rico/#20cfe0485722>

The [El San Juan Hotel](#) is where you want to stay in San Juan if you're looking for a vibrant night life, a wide variety of dining options, spa and lots of daytime activities. The hotel is a member of the



The renovated hotel's interiors were designed by celebrated interior designer, Jeffrey Beers, founder and CEO of Jeffrey Beers International. An Ocean Villa is seen here. COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL PUERTO RICO

"The majority of our guests are from the Northeastern region of the U.S. because the flights to get here are so easy," says Martin Smith, Managing Director of the [El San Juan Hotel](#). "You can get an early bird flight and be here for lunch. Even from Boston. And there is no passport required."

The renovated hotel was designed by celebrated architect, [Jeffrey Beers, founder and CEO of Jeffrey Beers International](#). "This hotel was the epicenter of San Juan for a long time, and we wanted to add a new chapter to its glorious history in an artistic way," explains Beers. "Local artists and craftsmen were key to this new look."



The resort features 388 well-appointed rooms, suites and oceanfront villas. A Tower Room is seen here. COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL PUERTO RICO

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## Luxurious Accommodations

The resort features 388 well-appointed rooms, suites and oceanfront villas, many of which connect to an adjoining guest room. Guests can choose to stay in the [Grand Tower](#), which has impressive views of the ocean or city (rates start at \$369 per night), or stay in a more private accommodation such as a [Pool](#), [Banyan](#) or [Ocean](#) villa, all of which feature spectacular views. The rate for a Banyan Villa room starts at \$559 a night. Rates are subject to availability and may vary by arrival date and length of stay.

There are also [junior](#), [one-bedroom](#) and [two-bedroom suites](#). Each guest room and suite celebrates Puerto Rico as everything in the mini bar that is edible is made on the island.



The hotel also offers tennis courts, a full range of water sports (from jet ski rentals to parasailing), and four swimming pools. COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL PUERTO RICO

[Pool](#), [Banyan](#) and [Ocean Villas](#) focus on the outdoors, with large sliding doors that open up to terraces and have direct access to a swimming pool. And soon, guests staying in these villas will not check in at the front desk, such as the other guests, as they will receive a more exclusive, specialized experience.

"Effectively, there will not be a front desk for these rooms," explains Smith. "Someone from the hotel will pick you up at the airport and then introduce you to your 21st century butler. You will be greeted at the hotel with a glass of champagne and walked directly to your suite. Whatever you want and when you want it will be provided by your butler."

The hotel's largest suites are the [Presidential](#) and [the Casa del Mar](#), which also receive the exclusive service, as well. [The Presidential Suite is a palatial 2,051 square feet](#) in size, with one bedroom, living area, dining area, and a kitchenette while the [Casa del Mar, is a beachside two-level 1,590 square foot suite](#) with one bedroom, living room, dining room, Steinway piano, a large terrace with a private whirlpool that is adjacent to the beach. The rate for the Casa del Mar suite starts at \$2,699 per night.

## Dining Options That Offer A Wide Variety of Choices

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The [El San Juan](#) offers [sixteen restaurants, bars and lounges](#). Its dining options offer a wide variety of cuisines from Italian to Asian, local dishes, and fresh seafood. Restaurants include steakhouse [Meat Market Miami](#), [Caña by Juliana Gonzalez](#), [El Bistro](#) and [Trattoria Napoles](#).

At the pool, [Aquarelle is an open-air restaurant and bar](#) that specializes in Caribbean seafood with a focus cooking on its 16 foot long open flame grill. Brunch is served here every weekend. Unlike most other beachside bars, all of [Aquarelle's seats face the ocean](#). Here, guests can also participate in ceviche and cocktail-making classes as part of the hotel's programming. In addition to Aquarelle, there are two other [outdoor bars](#), including the Swim-Up Pool Bar and Caña Pool Lounge.

## One of Puerto Rico's Most Iconic Hotels

The [renovated El San Juan Hotel](#) has brought back the elegance that epitomizes the era in which it was first opened, beginning with the lobby, which is a dramatic space and a centerpiece of the hotel. The original stone flooring and ornate mill work ceilings were preserved. The lobby's original hand-carved ceiling, made of cherry mahogany, was also meticulously restored. After hurricane, the ceiling was carefully disassembled to make sure there was no water damage. It was painstakingly put back together and brought back to its original state. "The lobby tells the story of the hotel," says Smith. "It is historic and it is unique."



In the hotel lobby, the Chandelier Bar is located beneath the hotel's iconic and spectacular crystal chandelier---the third largest chandelier in the world. COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL  
PUERTO RICO

The [El San Juan Hotel](#) has long been famous for its large capacity and its music scene. Such crooners as Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., Liza Minnelli, Eddie Fisher, Carol Channing and Nat King Cole used to perform here. Indeed, walk into the lobby and you will be immediately transported to the past. From the decor to the staff, the libations and the food served, it all harkens back to the days when Sinatra and Davis roamed the grand hotel.



The Rum Bar, staffed by award-winning mixologists, serves classic rum drinks. COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL PUERTO RICO

"We are bringing back the late fifties Havana-style when everyone dressed up elegantly," Smith explains, adding that in the lobby bars, all of the bartenders wear white tuxedos with black piping while the waitresses wear long flowing skirts with white blouses.

There are [three elegant bars located in lobby](#) of the hotel that are not to be missed. The [best known of the three bars is the Chandelier Bar](#), which is a sophisticated and dramatic bar that features classic cocktails located beneath the hotel's iconic and spectacular crystal chandelier. The third largest chandelier in the world, it features more than seven thousand individual pieces of crystal.

The [hotel's Wine Bar](#) offers wines from all over the world offered by the glass while [the Rum Bar](#), staffed by award-winning mixologists, serves classic rum drinks that feature a wide variety of rums, many of which are made in Puerto Rico.

"Here, guests can order rums that are from all over the Caribbean," says Smith. "There are rums that cost hundreds of dollars by the glass all the way down to \$20." Single malt Scotch, small cask bourbon, armagnac, and cognac is also offered here. "Here there are no soda guns as everything is made by hand, including the ginger ale. It is artisanal."

The hotel also offers several entertainment options each evening. [Brava features live music and late-night dancing](#) and is considered by many to be the island's top nightclub. The hotel's [Chico Cabaret is reminiscent of an intimate speakeasy](#). It offers live music and hand-crafted cocktails.

## **The El San Juan Offers Activities For All Ages**

When each guest arrives, they are given a weekly agenda that describes each day and evening's activities, from fitness classes to live music. It is impossible to run out of things to do as there are activities from which to choose for all ages.



The hotel has tennis courts, spa, fitness center, four swimming pools and a full range of water sports.  
COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL PUERTO RICO

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At the pool, it is possible to reserve a Luxury Cabana for \$200 per day, which provides shaded seating for up to four people and comes with butler service, bottled water, a mini refrigerator, digital safe, TV, WiFi, and more.

A Grand Cabana offers the same features but can accommodate up to six guests and has a day bed \$300/a day on Monday through Thursday and \$500/day on Fridays and weekends. Seaside Cabanas for two guests are also available (\$75/day) and Pool Beds for two on the Sun Deck can be rented for \$50/day.

The hotel's famous 200-year old Banyan tree is located adjacent to the Caña Pool Lounge and the Wellness Pool, only now it is adorned with LED lighting which is spectacular at night. "We focus on tradition here," Smith says. "So, we now have a tree lighting ceremony every night at the Banyan tree. The kids love it and it gives the tree some recognition."

The [El San Juan's Well & Being Spa](#) is brand new and offers a full menu of treatments, from massages, facials and skincare to body scrubs and wraps.

The [hotel's tri-level 24-hour Fitness Center](#) offers personal fitness training and assessments. The fitness center offers state-of-the-art Cross-Fit and TRX, cardio and weight training equipment, vertical wall yoga, and a full range of group classes from standup paddle board yoga to spin and Boot Camp. Adjacent to the fitness center is a juice bar called Live It Well that specializes in made-to-order heart smart and nutritious juices and smoothies.

## **Easy To Get To From The U.S.**

As a U.S. territory, Puerto Rico is an easy destination to visit. Leave your passport at home as there is no customs or immigration requirements for U.S. citizens. Best of all, it is possible to take a morning direct flight from many cities on the eastern seaboard, such as New York or Miami, and be at the resort in time to eat lunch.



The El San Juan is only two miles from Puerto Rico's Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport. It is a 10 minute drive from the San Juan Cruise Port and 15 minutes by car from historic Old San Juan. For [more information on El San Juan Hotel, visit its website.](#)



The hotel's largest suites are the Presidential and the Casa Del Mar. Seen here is the Presidential Suite, which is a palatial 2,051 square feet in size, with one bedroom, living area, dining area, and a kitchenette. COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL PUERTO RICO



The Casa del Mar suite is a beachside two-level 1,590 square foot suite with one bedroom, living room, dining room and a Steinway piano. Its terrace, which is partially covered, has a private whirlpool and stunning ocean views. COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL PUERTO RICO

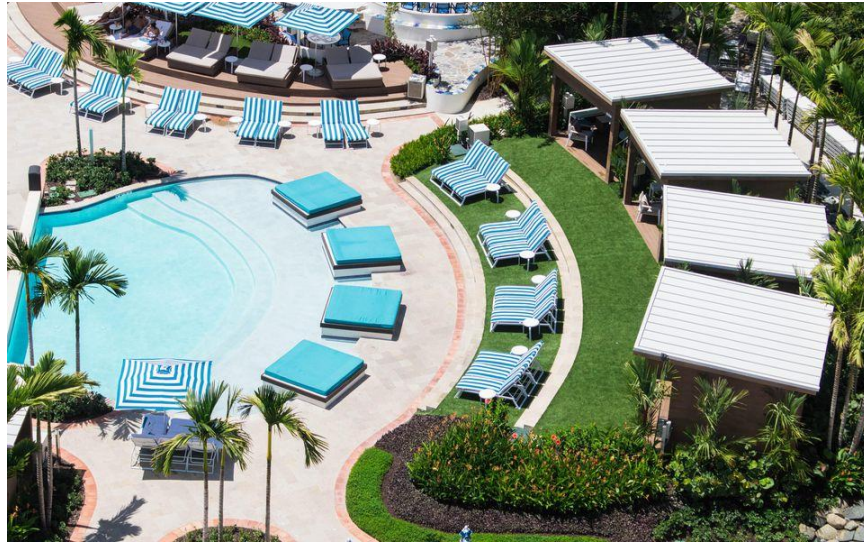


Unlike most other beachside bars, all of Aquarelle's seats face the ocean. COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL PUERTO RICO



The hotel's Chico Cabaret is reminiscent of an intimate speakeasy. It offers live music and hand-crafted cocktails. COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL PUERTO RICO





Other amenities at the hotel include tennis courts, a full range of water sports (from jet ski rentals to parasailing), and four swimming pools. COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL PUERTO RICO



A Grand Cabana provides seating for up to six people and comes with butler service, a day bed, bottled water, a mini refrigerator, digital safe, TV, WiFi, and more. COURTESY OF EL SAN JUAN HOTEL PUERTO RICO



The hotel's tri-level Fitness Center offers personal fitness training and assessments. The fitness center offers state-of-the-art Cross-Fit and TRX, cardio and weight training equipment, vertical wall yoga, and a full range of group classes from stand up paddle board yoga to spin and Boot Camp.  
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The El San Juan offers sixteen restaurants, bars and lounges. Its dining options offer a wide variety of cuisines from Italian to Asian, local dishes, and fresh seafood which is caught locally and delivered daily. PHOTO BY CARRIE COOLIDGE