



Coe College Choir
Performance Tour of Puerto Rico
January 5 – 10, 2011
Proposed Itinerary

Your concerts will be the centerpiece of your tour. Sites chosen for performances will be based on good acoustics in venues with a concert-going tradition. Exchanges with local groups will be considered whenever possible, providing further opportunity for musical and cultural exchange.

January 5, Wednesday **Departure/Ponce**

Arrive at Chicago O'Hare for check in at least 2 hours in advance of your morning non-stop flight to Puerto Rico.

Bienvenidos a Puerto Rico! Welcome to **Puerto Rico!** Late afternoon arrival to *Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport* in San Juan. After collecting your bags, you'll be met by your bilingual Puerto Rican guide and transfer south to the city of **Ponce**. Puerto Rico's second largest city was founded in 1692. Thanks to its many beautiful neoclassical buildings and facades, Ponce is also known as the *Ciudad Señorial (Majestic City)*. The city center has been declared a national treasure. It consists of plazas, churches and highly decorative colonial homes, some glorious fountains and a unique fire station, the *Parque de Bombas*.



Check in to your centrally located hotel, with some time to stroll around the plaza. Group dinner and overnight.

January 6, Thursday **Ponce**

Epiphany - Feast of the Three Kings – National Holiday

This morning you may enjoy seeing some of the festive traditions associated with the Feast of the Three Kings. Since Epiphany is traditionally a day to celebrate with family and friends, museums and most attractions are closed. You'll have a guided tour of the historic center, perhaps on one of the city's trolleys.

Concert in Ponce.

January 7, Friday **San Juan**

Transfer to the capital city of **San Juan**. *La Ciudad Amurallada* (the *Walled City*) was founded in 1521 and is the oldest city under the US flag. In the early 16th century, San Juan was the point of departure for Spanish expeditions heading to unknown parts of the New World. Its fortifications repulsed the English navigator Sir Francis Drake in 1595, as well as later attacks. Today it's one of the major cities in the Caribbean and Puerto Rico's financial capital.



On your guided tour you'll see the *Isla Verde* and *Condado* areas in the *New San Juan*; *Fort San Geronimo* and *Old San Juan* surrounded by a massive wall and forts. Highlights include the San Juan Gate (*La Puerta de San Juan*), the official entrance for those who came to Puerto Rico during colonization; the small castle *La Fortaleza*, built as a defense fort but used for centuries as the governor's mansion; the beautiful Gothic-style *Cathedral* built in 1540; and *El Morro* castle, rising six levels above the Atlantic Ocean and San Juan Bay.

(Optional: Before you leave Ponce, visit the *Museo Castillo Serralles* on a hilltop overlooking the city. This beautiful mansion, with Moorish and Andalusian details, was once home to one of Puerto Rico's sugar barons. You can also see the *Botanical and Japanese Gardens*, and take an elevator to the top of *La Cruceta del Vigia*.)

Note: With this option, the San Juan tour will move to Sunday, replacing the free beach day.

January 8, Saturday

San Juan



Today you will have an excursion to *El Yunque*, Puerto Rico's *Caribbean National Forest* and the only rainforest in the entire US National Forest System. Thanks to receiving 100 billion gallons of rain per year, the rainforest is able to sustain some 250 species of trees, 50 types of ferns and as many as 20 varieties of wild orchids. In addition to the flora and fauna, El Yunque is home to an array of Puerto Rican wildlife. After hiking in the morning you may have lunch in one of the Puerto Rican style family restaurants located in the foothills of the forest.

Concert in San Juan.

January 9, Sunday

San Juan

This morning you may sing during Mass in a San Juan church. The rest of the day is free to relax and enjoy one of San Juan's beautiful beaches.

Tonight you'll enjoy a *festive farewell dinner* to celebrate your tour!

January 10, Monday

Return flight

Free time this morning for last-minute sightseeing (and shopping). This afternoon you'll transfer the brief distance to *Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport* for check in 2 hours in advance of your late afternoon return flight to the U.S. Evening arrival in Chicago.

Welcome home!

Tour inclusions:

- Arrangements and publicity for 2 or 3 performances, including joint concerts if possible.
- Roundtrip group airfare from Chicago to San Juan, departing January 5 and returning January 10, 2011.
- Hotel accommodations for 5 nights (Ponce – 2; San Juan - 3), all rooms with private facilities. Quad occupancy (2 people share a bed). Twins; singles available for a surcharge.
- Breakfast and one other meal daily.
- Deluxe air-conditioned coach transportation for all scheduled group transfers and activities.
- An English-speaking Puerto Rican tour escort as needed.
- Guided city tours of Ponce and San Juan.
- Group entrance fees: to be determined in consultation with the group leader.
- All group hotel, bus and meal taxes. Airline taxes and fuel surcharges are included at the current rate (\$71 /seat) and, per industry policy, are subject to change by the airline up until the date of ticketing. Please note that the current charge for the first checked bag is \$25 each way; not included in the airfare.