

Local Tourism Benefits from Federal Support

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Guaynabo, PUERTO RICO - Summer in Puerto Rico offers plenty of opportunities for family recreation, with water parks, museums and multiple places to learn or practice a sport. Among the projects that were restored with the support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), many offer family entertainment and recreation.

The town of Arroyo, for example, has beaches with excellent waves for surfers, such as Chiquita Beach and Punta Guilarte. But for those who enjoy surfing and are also attracted to swimming pools and water parks, the Arroyo Surfing Park offers the best of both worlds.

FEMA allocated nearly \$40,000 to repair damages to the park after Hurricane María. The Arroyo Surfing Park has a slide for youth and children, a pool for adults, an accessible area for people with disabilities, concession stands with food and beverages, and gazebos for rent.

Aside from these experiences, the park is currently repairing a wave simulator called the WaveOz Flowrider that provides surfers with an experience similar to riding a real wave.

“FEMA funds contribute to essential infrastructure such as that which provides us with water and energy, but they also contribute to a variety of recreation for all ages. Our island has green, recreational, educational and cultural tourism, and the agency keeps its commitment to the projects that continue their reconstruction so that we can enjoy these spaces throughout the year,” said Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator José G. Baquero.

Since Rincón hosted a surfing championship in 1968, the municipality has established itself as the surfing capital of Puerto Rico. But Rincón also has a strong skateboarder culture. This movement is driven by professional athletes and local groups such as Patinetero Puerto Rico, an organization that holds many of



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its events at the Rincón Skatepark, the only indoor skateboard park in Puerto Rico.

Access to the municipal Rincón Skatepark is free and young people participate on equal terms, regardless of whether they are experts or apprentices, said Mirta Carrero, project engineer for the municipality of Rincón. The Rincón Skatepark is open Monday through Friday and holds skateboard competitions, classes, summer camps and educational workshops taught by sports professionals.

The advantage of this park over traditional outdoor parks is that young people can practice the sport without being limited by rain and extreme summer heat. FEMA allocated over \$812,000 to repair parts of the spectator area, the wooden ramp and the air conditioning system.

The skatepark is located in an area of high tourist concentration within walking distance of other recreational facilities, such as the downtown plaza, the beach and a wide variety of restaurants and entertainment venues.

In the north central part of the island, the Barceloneta Bowling Center provides various entertainment options. In addition to 10 bowling lanes—with capacity for six players per lane—the Barceloneta Bowling Center offers air hockey table games, two car racing simulators, two action simulation machines, as well as rooms for private events with food and beverage service, bar and private lounges.

FEMA awarded over \$193,500 for the repairs, mainly the roof, walls and windows, which were the areas most affected by Hurricane María.

The Barceloneta Bowling Center is primarily a family entertainment venue, but it also has service options for private or corporate events, and it holds bowling tournaments. In addition to the bowling center, downtown Barceloneta has an accessible skating rink, a natatorium and, for the peace of mind of tourists and residents, all these venues are near the Municipal Police headquarters.

For those who like culture, tradition and places that highlight Puerto Ricans and our history, the Hammock Museum in San Sebastián should be on your list of places to visit. It is no coincidence that San Sebastián is the home of the Hammock Festival. This rural town prides itself on its tradition as the birthplace of the country's best *hamaqueros* (hammock artisans.)



Admission to the Hammock Museum is free and is open to the public Thursday through Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm. Inside, you can find exhibits that explain the origin of this art, the parts of the San Sebastián hammock, the tools used to make it, the history of the most outstanding *hamaqueras* and other important information about this pre-Columbian art.

For his part, the executive director of the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency, Manuel Laboy Rivera, said that “recreational facilities make up a significant segment of the reconstruction projects and have a positive effect on both small and mid-sized businesses. These facilities also add value to the tourism offer, which is enriched by the diversity of attractions ranging from coastal to mountain activities. To date, there are 1,095 projects under construction in recreational and sports facilities across the island with an approximate value of \$420.4 million.”

To date, FEMA has obligated about \$33.9 billion for nearly 11,000 recovery projects in Puerto Rico following hurricane María.

For more information about Puerto Rico’s recovery, visit fema.gov/disaster/4339, fema.gov/disaster/4473 and recovery.pr. Follow us on our social media at Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and [Twitter @COR3pr](https://Twitter.com/COR3pr).



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Rincón, Puerto Rico (December 13, 2023) – FEMA allocated over \$812,000 to repair parts of the spectator area, the wooden ramp and the air conditioning system of the Rincón Skatepark. Photo FEMA/Zorymar Quiñones



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San Sebastián, Puerto Rico (June 10, 2024) – Among the projects restored with the support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) after Hurricane María, many offer family entertainment and recreation, such as the Hammock Museum. Inside, you can find exhibits that explain the origin of this art, the parts of the San Sebastián hammock, the tools used to make it, the history of the most outstanding *hamaqueras* and other important information about this pre-Columbian art. Photo FEMA/Zorymar Quiñones



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