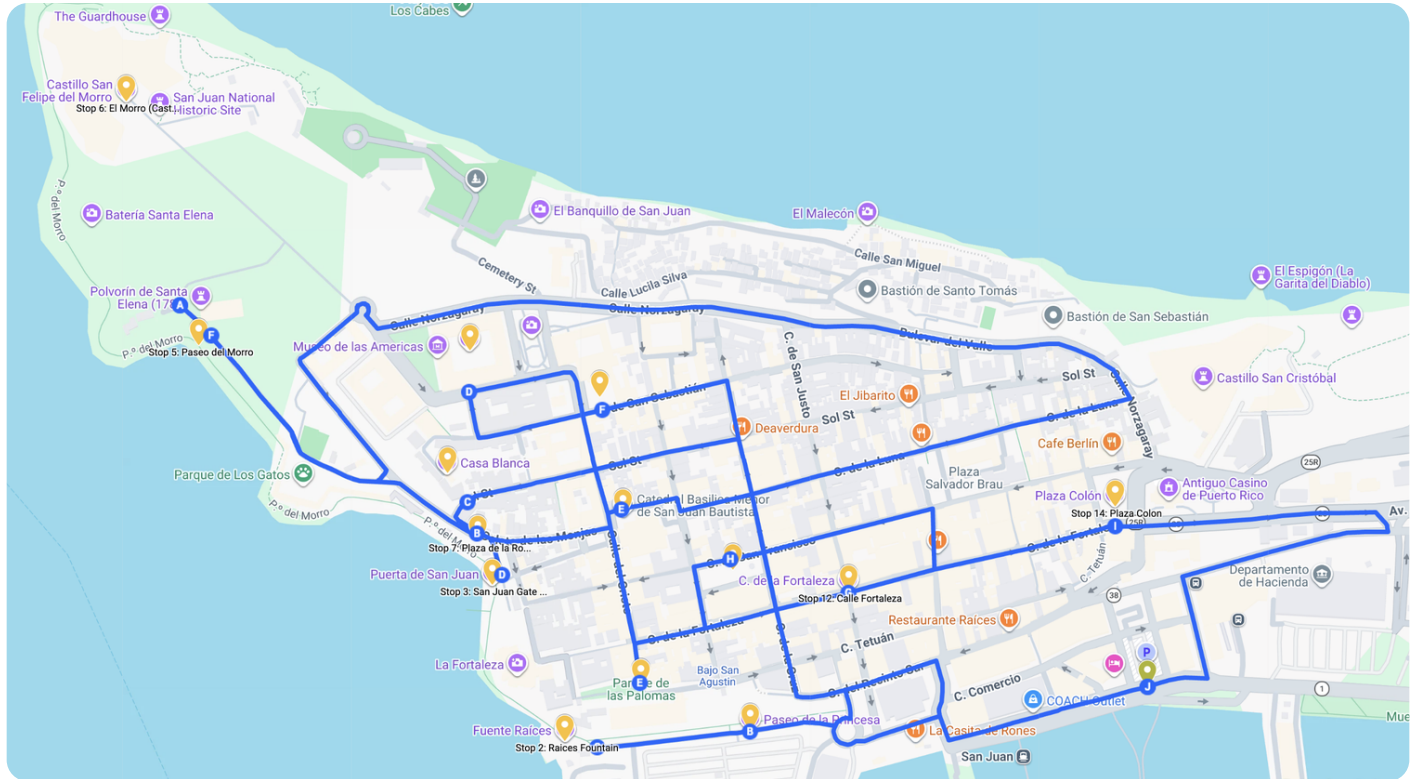




Most cruisers book a bus tour in San Juan and get dropped off for ten minutes. This loop does it better: a waterfront promenade, a centuries old fort, blue cobblestone streets, a 500 year old cathedral and plazas made for a cold drink, with no excursion ticket required. Plan on a lot of walking, some hills and very little shade, so wear real shoes.



1 Paseo de la Princesa | 2 Raices Fountain | 3 San Juan Gate | 4 Parque de las Palomas | 5 Paseo del Morro | 6 El Morro | 7 Plaza de la Rogativa | 8 Museo Casa Blanca | 9 Museo de las Americas | 10 Catedral de San Juan Bautista | 11 Plaza San Jose | 12 Calle Fortaleza | 13 Plaza de Armas | 14 Plaza Colon

Route map built in Google Maps. Pins are numbered to match the stops. Scan the QR code below for the live version.

Sample Schedule

9:00 AM	Off the ship and heading left along the waterfront.
9:15 AM	Stops 1 to 4: Paseo de la Princesa, fountain, San Juan Gate, Palomas
10:15 AM	Stop 5: Paseo del Morro
10:45 AM	Stop 6: El Morro, while it's still relatively cool
12:30 PM	Stop 7: Plaza de la Rogativa
12:45 PM	Stop 8: Museo Casa Blanca
1:30 PM	Stop 9: Museo de las Americas
2:15 PM	Stop 10: Catedral de San Juan Bautista
2:45 PM	Stop 11: Plaza San Jose, with lunch or a cold drink
3:45 PM	Stops 12 and 13: Calle Fortaleza and Plaza de Armas
4:15 PM	Stop 14: Plaza Colon, then stroll back to the port



Scan for the live walking map on your phone

Assumes you're off the ship around 9:00 AM. Adjust everything to your own all aboard time.

The Stops

1 Paseo de la Princesa

WHERE Waterfront promenade just outside the cruise port	FROM THE PORT About 5 to 10 minutes on foot
COST Free	TIME 20 to 30 minutes



The easy warm up. This restored waterfront promenade is lined with trees, benches and old fashioned street lamps, and it makes a great first photo stop. Food trucks and stalls nearby are handy if you want a snack before heading inland.

2 Raices Fountain

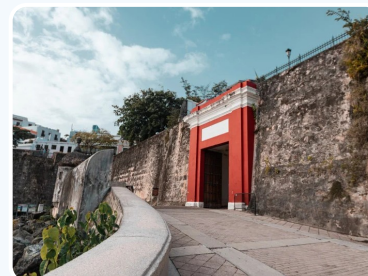
WHERE Far end of Paseo de la Princesa	FROM STOP 1 A few minutes along the promenade
COST Free	TIME 10 to 15 minutes



At the end of the promenade, the fountain honors Puerto Rico's Taino, African and Spanish roots. It's one of the best known photo spots on the waterfront, and a quick stop.

3 San Juan Gate (Puerta de San Juan)

WHERE Edge of the old city, near the end of the promenade	FROM STOP 2 A couple of minutes on foot
COST Free	TIME 10 minutes



The red gate that once served as the formal entrance to the walled city. Walk through and you're looking straight down a colorful street, which makes for a great photo. It's also a nice way to see where the waterfront ends and the old city begins.

4 Parque de las Palomas

WHERE Hill overlooking Paseo de la Princesa and the fountain	FROM STOP 3 A short walk uphill
COST Free; vendors sell birdseed	TIME 15 to 30 minutes

A hilltop park that began as an 18th century cannon wall and is now packed with pigeons. Vendors sell birdseed, and some visitors let the birds land on them. The birds can get pushy over food, and yes, they can poop on you. Quirky and fun, but skip it without guilt if it's not your thing.



5 Paseo del Morro

WHERE Bayfront walkway leading to El Morro	FROM STOP 4 Back down to the water, then follow the path
COST Free	TIME 15 to 25 minutes

A restored walkway along the bay with great views and a few shady spots. It gets you from the city to the fort, and El Morro comes into view as you go. Take your time, it's one of the nicest walks of the day.

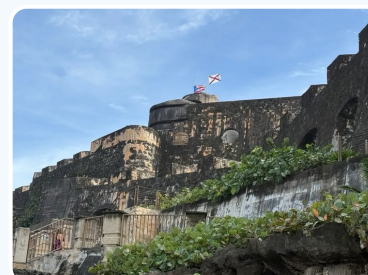


6 El Morro (Castillo San Felipe del Morro)

WHERE Northwest tip of Old San Juan	FROM STOP 5 The walkway leads straight to the fort
COST National Park Service entry fee	TIME 1 to 2 hours

The massive fort you saw from the ship, begun in 1540 to defend San Juan from pirates and rivals. Even a quick walk through the main sections shows how big and old it is, and the grassy field out front is great for photos. This is the biggest time commitment on the route, so shorten it if you're running behind. There's very little shade, so bring water.

Optional add on: Castillo San Cristobal, the other big fort, is on the east side of the old city, a short walk from Plaza Colon. Your El Morro ticket covers both.



7 Plaza de la Rogativa

WHERE Back toward the city from El Morro	FROM STOP 6 About 15 minutes on foot
COST Free	TIME 10 to 15 minutes

A small plaza with a bronze sculpture of a bishop and women in procession, recalling the legend of a 1625 British attack, when the prayers of the city's women are said to have saved San Juan. A quick stop with good photos and nice waterfront views.



8 Museo Casa Blanca

WHERE Calle de San Sebastian	FROM STOP 7 A short walk through the historic district
COST \$5	TIME 30 to 45 minutes

The home of Ponce de Leon's descendants, built in 1521 and one of the oldest continuously occupied European structures in the Americas. Colonial furnishings, artifacts and a tropical courtyard make it a cool break from the sun.



Photo credit: Wikimedia Ligocsicnarf89

9 Museo de las Americas (Quartel Ballaja)

WHERE Quartel Ballaja, a former military barracks	FROM STOP 8 A short walk
COST \$5 to \$7	TIME 30 to 45 minutes

Housed in an 18th century Spanish military barracks, this museum focuses on pre Columbian and folk art of the Americas, including Indigenous Taino artifacts and pottery. It pairs nicely with Casa Blanca if you have the time.



10 Catedral de San Juan Bautista

WHERE Corner of Calle del Cristo and Calle de la Luna	FROM STOP 9 A short walk into the heart of the historic district
COST Free, donations accepted	TIME 20 to 30 minutes

One of the oldest churches in the Americas, begun in 1521. It's free to enter and a great place to cool off. There's a rumor that Ponce de Leon is buried here, though that's debated.



11 Plaza San Jose

WHERE Calle del Cristo and Calle de San Sebastian	FROM STOP 10 A short walk from the cathedral
COST Free	TIME 30 to 60 minutes with lunch

A small plaza ringed by colorful buildings, restaurants and shops, and a good place to sit and people watch. Time to refuel: empanadillas, mofongo, Puerto Rican coffee or a piña colada are easy, inexpensive local choices.



12 Calle Fortaleza

WHERE Heart of the historic district	FROM STOP 11 A few blocks on foot
COST Free	TIME 20 to 30 minutes

One of the most photographed streets in Old San Juan, with pastel buildings, wrought iron balconies and Puerto Rican flags. Shops, bars and restaurants line the way, so duck into a few and peek down the side streets.



13 Plaza de Armas

WHERE The historic town square	FROM STOP 12 A short walk
COST Free	TIME 15 to 30 minutes

The historic town square, with a fountain, plenty of benches and some of the best people watching in town. It's bigger and more open than Plaza San Jose, so it's a good place to rest your feet.



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons Thief12

14 Plaza Colon

WHERE A few blocks in from the port, at the I Love San Juan sign	FROM STOP 13 A short walk
COST Free	TIME As long as you've got

The largest of the plazas, with a Columbus monument, cafes, shops and vendors. It's the closest to the cruise port, so it makes the perfect last stop. Grab a coffee, pick up a souvenir and enjoy a last bit of people watching before the few blocks back to the ship.



Before You Go

- **Check which pier you're at** and know your all aboard time. It's usually 30 minutes before departure, so leave a buffer. If you're at the Pan American Pier, take a short taxi or rideshare into Old San Juan first.
- **Go early.** The fort and the waterfront are much more pleasant before the midday heat sets in.
- **Wear real walking shoes.** The streets are steep and paved with blue cobblestones that get slippery when wet.
- **Bring water and sunscreen.** There's very little shade, especially at El Morro. There's a Walgreens directly across from the port.
- **Pick your pace.** Fourteen stops can fill most of a port day, or you can hit the highlights in 4 to 5 hours. Skip whatever doesn't sound fun.
- **Pay in U.S. dollars.** Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory, so there's no currency exchange.
- **This isn't a beach port.** It's a day for history, architecture and wandering, and it's a great one if that's your style.

The Verdict

You don't need an excursion in San Juan. Old San Juan is genuinely walkable, full of character and steps from the ship, and this loop costs almost nothing beyond shoe leather, a couple of museum tickets and whatever you order at lunch. Stop for a coffee. Climb the fortress. Feed the pigeons. Get a little lost in the side streets. Just remember that Old San Juan isn't going anywhere, but your ship is, so keep an eye on the clock.

Pocket checklist

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Ship ID and all aboard time | ☐ A little cash for museums and snacks |
| ☐ Water and sunscreen | ☐ Camera and a fully charged phone |
| ☐ Comfortable walking shoes | ☐ Phone charged, map saved offline |



Take the live map with you

Scan the code to open the interactive walking route on your phone, then save it offline in Google Maps before you leave the ship. Cell service in port can be spotty and roaming charges add up fast.