

Taste the Flavour of Puerto Rico on an Old San Juan Food Tour

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A growing trend in tourism these days is food tours, especially in places with a unique culinary footprint like Puerto Rico. Exploring what people eat on a regular basis can give you a great window into their lives and culture. Food is one of the reasons I travel and one of the things I

remember most about a place when I get back home. So what better introduction could I have had to Puerto Rico than the Old San Juan Food Tour with [Flavors of San Juan?](#)

I met Victor, our guide, and the rest of our small group in front of the Banco Popular on a hot and sunny morning. As a frequent solo traveller, I love small group activities because it gives me a better chance to meet new people and there's no need for the guide to have a megaphone. They're more personal, which makes them special. This group was no different. After introductions, we were on our way.

Our three hour tour would take us around the narrow grid of streets in the old city with half a dozen food stops. In between stops we got history and architecture lessons from Victor, whose enthusiasm for the subject was contagious. These little knowledge stops would give us time to digest and reset our palettes between food stops. We learned about secret tunnels, drive-thru churches, tagging cats, and more.





Over the course of the tour we got to try many local favourite dishes. **Mallorcas** from Aromas Coffeehouse – a sweet, coiled up bun that was dusted with powdered sugar, named for the Spanish island where they originated. **Alcapurrias** from Café el Punto topped with a deceptively spicy hot sauce – a fritter made from green bananas and taro root, filled with meat. **White rice and saucy pink beans** from Rosa de Triana – this become one of my favourite side dishes of the week. **Cortaditos** from Quatros Sombres – espresso made from a single-origin Puerto Rican bean so smooth adding sugar would be a sin. Hot **drinking chocolate** from Chocolate Cortés – surprisingly paired with orange cheddar cheese to dip. Yes, I said chocolate and cheese. A **piña colada** from the birthplace of the

drink, Barrachina – their secret is to keep the pineapple/coconut mix slushy so that no ice is used, meaning your drink never gets watered down. And lastly, but certainly not least, **mofongo**.

Mofongo was the one classic Puerto Rican dish I knew I had to try during my trip. It's starchy fried plantains mashed with garlic and butter and then filled with various types of meat. Not only did I get to try it but I actually got to make my own. It was fun to mash the plantains with a mortar and pestle, like playing with your food, but even better to eat.





One of my favourite things about my tour with Flavors of San Juan was that each sample we had was a generous size. By the end of the tour I felt like I'd had a decent meal. There's no stinginess here so make sure you show up with your appetite.

The Old San Juan Food Tour got me acquainted with the narrow streets of the old city, gave me a glimpse into the history of the island, and of course, filled my tummy with delicious Puerto Rican food. The best advice I can give you is to make this tour the first thing you do in San Juan. It'll get your visit started off on the right foot. And seriously, try the mofongo.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE WAY TO
GET ACQUAINTED WITH A NEW CITY?