



Excursion Guide

Puerto Rico

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Read Aloud Folktale, Legend or Myth:

The Golden Flower: A Taíno Myth from Puerto Rico by Nina Jaffe (Simon and Schuster Books for Young People, 1996). This Taíno creation myth tells the story of how the island of Puerto Rico came to be. A young child plants some seeds and soon a beautiful forest begins to grow. Two men fight over a pumpkin that has grown in the forest; it splits, and the oceans of the world tumble out. The forested island stays above water, and now the people have enough water to drink and grow crops. This story is told mainly through narration, with some dialogue. It unfolds in an engaging way, drawing readers in as the forest grows. The afterword includes information on the history and culture of the Taíno people.

A shorter version of this story is found on pages 4-5 of *Puerto Rico: The People and Culture* by Erinn Banting (Crabtree Publishing, 2003).

Remember to:

- Greet each person individually
- Use a globe or large map to show each person the starting point and destination
- Engage people in informal conversation
- Include supplemental materials such as music, souvenirs, coloring pages, or food to enhance the program



Five Facts About Puerto Rico

1. Puerto Rico is a commonwealth of the United States. Puerto Ricans are American citizens, but they do not vote in presidential elections or pay federal taxes.
2. The earliest people arrived in Puerto Rico from North and South America over 2000 years ago.
3. Famous Puerto Ricans and Americans of Puerto Rican descent include actress Rita Moreno, musician Tito Puente, baseball player Roberto Clemente, astronaut Joseph M. Acaba, and Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.
4. The ocean around Puerto Rico is full of microscopic creatures that glow in the dark. At night, you can see their lights in the water.
5. Sixteen varieties of coquí, a tiny tree frog, live in Puerto Rico. The frog gets its name from the sound it makes: co-KEE, co-KEE.



Annotated Bibliography

Unless otherwise specified, the non-fiction books listed here have many color photographs and images (but not cartoon-style illustrations) and they do not have an intimidating or distracting amount of text on the page. Although many of the selections are children's books, they are not obviously juvenile in their layout and illustrations.

Top Selections

Insight Guides: Puerto Rico by Sarah Cameron (Ingram Publishing, current edition is 2012, but for the purposes of this program, the 2009 or 2007 editions are suitable): This book is full of colorful, unique photographs, including single- and double-page spreads. There are sections on cuisine, art, and music, and "Photo Features" covering folk art, festivals, rum, and the diverse plant life of Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico by Holly Saari (Child's World, 2011): The simple format of this book (a few sentences in a large font facing a full-page photograph) may encourage less-confident readers to spend additional time with the text. More advanced readers and browsers will likely move quickly through this selection. Most of the large photographs are made up of an engaging combination of close-up details and distant vistas. Subjects include San Juan, a waterfall, a farmer with his cows, and salsa dancers.

Puerto Rico by Sarah Tieck (ABDO Publishing Company, 2013): With its large font, colorful captions, and photographs in a variety of sizes, this selection feels inviting to readers and browsers of all levels. Some of the unique features of this book include a timeline and a photographic "Tour Book" section featuring pictures of Puerto Rican landmarks. "Important Cities," "Across the Land," "Earning a Living," and "Sports Page" are among the eleven chapters.

Puerto Rico: Isle of Enchantment by Steve Goldsworthy (AV2 by Weigl, 2012): The large amount of photographs, colored borders, and large font make the pages of this book inviting to readers and browsers. Each two-page section



includes a selection of photographs (at least two, usually three or four) and a side bar on a related topic. There are also two maps. Topics include “Natural Resources,” “Tourism,” “Notable People,” “Cultural Groups,” and “Arts and Entertainment.” This book includes an online access code for related educational materials.

Puerto Rico: The Land and *Puerto Rico: The People and The Culture* by Erinn Banting (Crabtree Publishing, 2003): These books include more text than other juvenile selections listed here, but the large size and layout of the pages makes them inviting to browsers and readers alike. Most pages include two colorful photographs. The books are also longer than other selections listed here, and cover a wider variety of topics. Each book has eleven chapters including “Natural Wonders,” “Puerto Ricans,” “Exciting Towns and Cities,” and “Farming and Fishing” in *The Land*, and “Early History,” “The Road to Self-Government,” “Sing and Dance,” and “Sports and Pastimes” in *The People and The Culture*.

We Visit Puerto Rico by John A. Torres (Mitchell Lane Publishers, 2011): Compared to other selections, this book has a very unique selection of photographs. Some of the more interesting subjects include Puerto Rican architecture, tropical landscapes, and close-ups of Puerto Rican wildlife. There are also images of Puerto Rican people, including some very familiar faces. Although there is more text in this book than in other selections, the photographic subjects complement it well and provide readers with a broader perspective on life in Puerto Rico. The ten chapters include “Rain Forest Chatter,” “Culture and Lifestyle,” “Famous People,” and “We Visit Old San Juan.”

Alternate Selections

Puerto Rico by Erin Foley (Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2011): This is listed as an alternate selection because the text takes up a good deal of space on the pages, which might result in less-confident readers feeling bored or intimidated. Each page includes one or two brightly colored photographs, usually of people wearing traditional dress or festival costumes. The book covers the music, dress, food, and traditions of Puerto Rico’s religious and cultural holidays. There are six chapters, including “Calle San Sebastián,” “Santiago Apostol,” and “Las Navidades.”



Supplemental Materials



Souvenirs: small bags of pumpkin seeds to go along with the folktale; plastic toy frogs

Food: Bestitos de Coco (available from Puerto Rican bakeries, or make your own with the recipe on page 14 of *Puerto Rico* by Erin Foley or on page 58 of *We Visit Puerto Rico* by John A. Torres); empanadas; coffee

Music Suggestions (to search on <http://www.youtube.com> or in your own library's collection): Plena or décima styles of Puerto Rican folk music; bomba drumming; salsa music and dance. Familiar Puerto Rican musicians include Tito Puente (salsa), Pablo Casals (cello), and José Feliciano (guitar).

Free coloring pages are available on the Internet from helpful resources such as <http://www.coloring.ws> and <http://www.supercoloring.com>. All coloring pages are subject to their own terms of use, separate from the Tales & Travel Creative Commons License. The following links are suggested for this Excursion: "Coquí Coloring Sheet" (<http://www.elboricua.com/BKcolorcoqui.html>)

