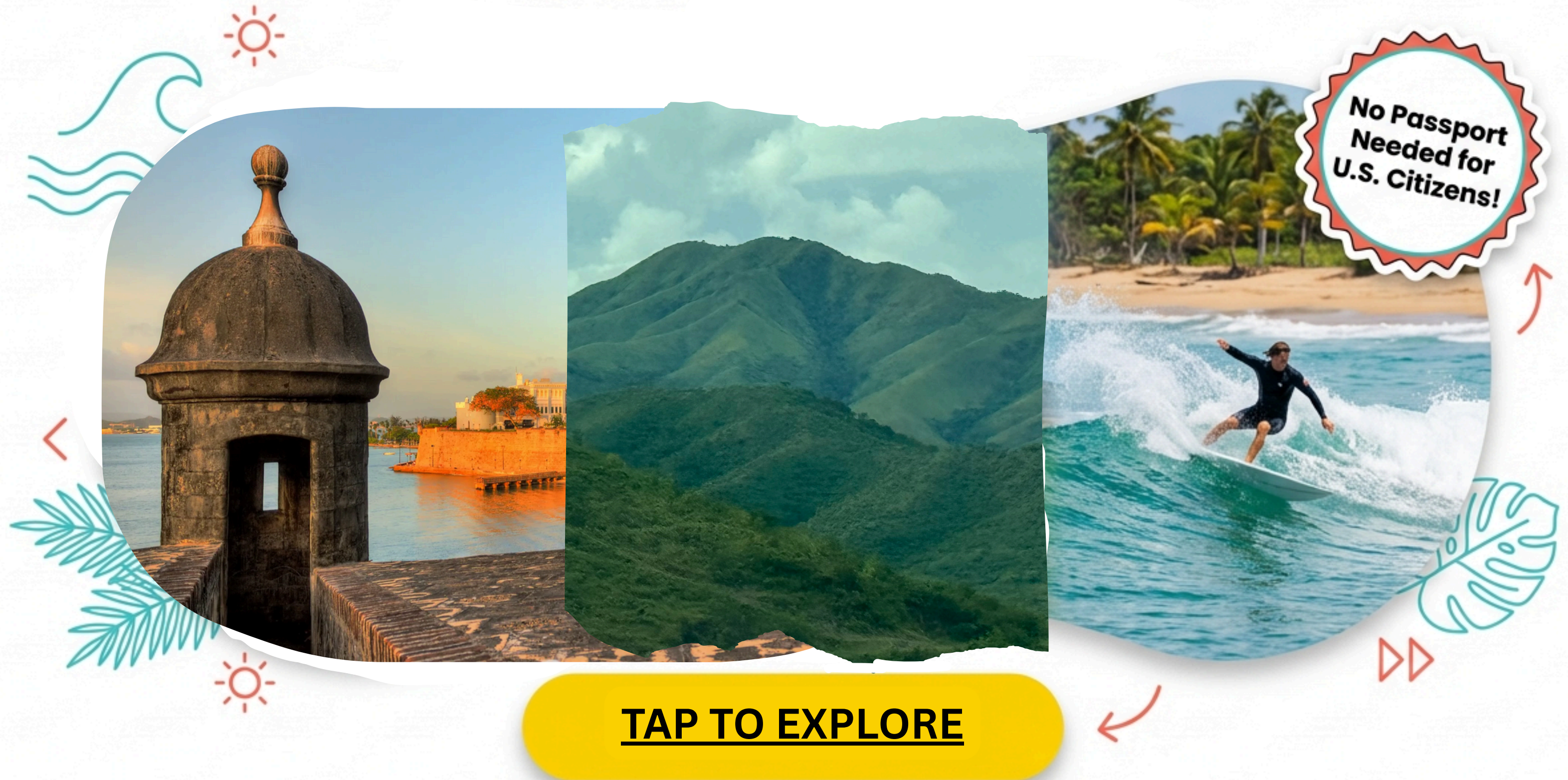


# PUERTO RICO 2026

The Beginner's Guide to the Island of Enchantment





# LEVEL 1: WHERE IN THE WORLD IS PUERTO RICO?



## What is it?

Puerto Rico is a tropical island in the Caribbean, located between the Dominican Republic and the Virgin Islands.

**The Big Twist:** Even though it is in the Caribbean, it is a U.S. Territory. This means Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens.



## Currency: U.S. Dollar (\$)

No math needed!



## Language: Spanish & English

About 20% of locals speak fluent English, but tourism areas are bilingual.



## Weather: Eternal Summer

Average 70°F–85°F year-round.



## Did You Know?

We call ourselves 'Boricua'—a unique name honoring our Island heritage and vibrant spirit.





# THE 2026 TRAVEL CHECKLIST: BORING STUFF MADE EASY



## GREEN LIGHT: GOOD TO GO



**Passports:** U.S. citizens and permanent residents do NOT need a passport.



**Cell Phones:** Your U.S. phone plan works here (AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon) with no roaming charges.



**Water:** Tap water is safe to drink (federal standards apply).



## RED LIGHT: WATCH OUT



**Real ID Alert:** As of May 7, 2025, you need a REAL ID-compliant driver's license (look for the star!) to fly domestically. If you don't have one, you WILL need a passport.



**The USDA Inspection:** When flying home, your bags must be scanned at the airport. You cannot bring back pork products, fresh fruits, or certain plants.



**Customs:** No customs arrival process for domestic flights. Just grab your bag and go!



# MISSION 1: TIME TRAVEL IN OLD SAN JUAN



## Activity 1: The Blue Streets



Wander the colorful streets of Old San Juan. The ground is paved with unique blue cobblestones originally used as weight on Spanish ships!

### Look for:

- Pastel houses, balconies with flowers, and the famous cats of the cobblestones.



## Activity 2: The Giant Forts



Explore Castillo San Felipe del Morro (El Morro), a 6-level fortress built in 1539 to stop pirates and invaders.

**Fun Fact:** The grassy field in front is the best place on the island to fly a kite!



**Pro Tip:** Admission is about \$10 and covers both El Morro and San Cristóbal.





# MISSION 2: INTO THE JUNGLE AT EL YUNQUE

## The Basics:

El Yunque is the **ONLY** tropical rainforest in the U.S. National Forest System. Just 45 minutes from San Juan.

## What to See:



1. **Waterfalls:** Visit La Mina Falls (a swimming hole) or La Coca Falls.



2. **The View:** Climb Yokahú Tower for a panoramic look over the green canopy to the ocean.

## Listen Closely:



If you hear a "Ko-Kee" sound, that is the Coquí frog, a tiny native tree frog and the symbol of Puerto Rico.

## 2026 Update!



The reservation system has ended. Entry is first-come, first-served.

**Insider Tip:** Arrive before 10:00 AM to get a parking spot!





# MISSION 3: THE MAGIC GLOWING WATER



## The Science (Simplified):

Puerto Rico has three “Bioluminescent Bays.” The water is full of microscopic organisms (dinoflagellates) that light up like neon blue glow-sticks when the water is disturbed.

### Mosquito Bay (Vieques Island)



Officially the brightest in the world. Requires a ferry or flight to get there.

### Laguna Grande (Fajardo)



The easiest to visit from San Juan. You kayak through a mangrove channel to see the glow.



**Pro Tip:** Check the Lunar Calendar. The glow is best seen during a New Moon (darkest sky). Avoid Full Moon nights!



# MISSION 4: BEACH BUMMING (CITY VS. ISLAND)



## The City Choice: Isla Verde



Located right in the metro area near the airport. Great for people-watching, water sports, and grabbing lunch at a nearby kiosk.



## The Paradise Choice: Flamenco Beach (Culebra)



Requires a ferry or small plane to reach. Ranked one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. Famous for the 'Painted Tank' on the sand.



**Insider Tip:** The sun is strong! Apply reef-safe sunscreen every 2 hours.

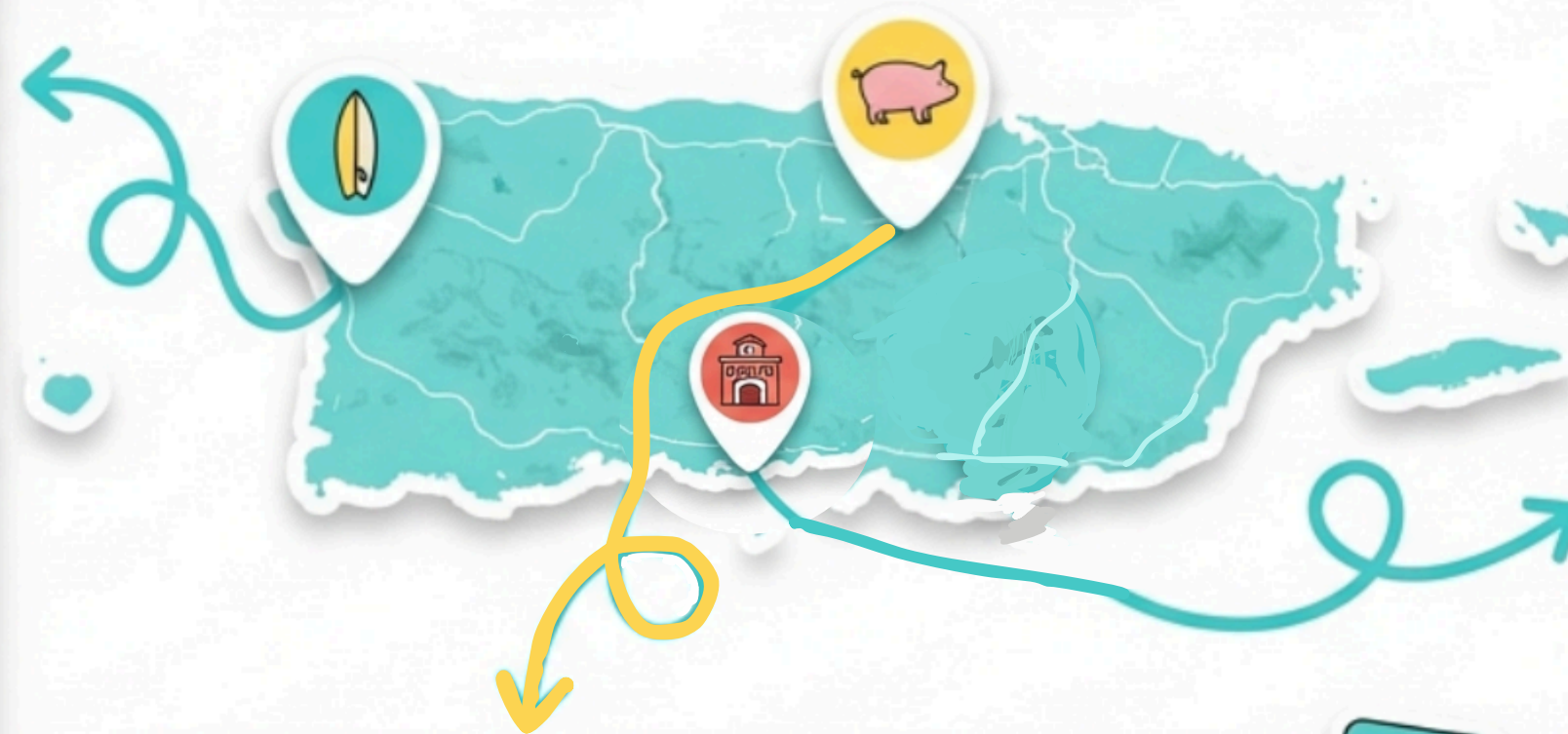


# MISSION 5: ROAD TRIP! WEST, SOUTH, AND CENTRAL



## The West: Rincón

The 'Surf Capital.' Known for laid-back vibes, stunning sunsets, and the 'Road to Happiness.'



## The Mountains: Guavate

'The Pork Highway.' A winding mountain road lined with lechoneras serving slow-roasted pork. A weekend tradition!



## The South: Ponce

"The Pearl of the South." Visit the Parque de Bombas, a famous red-and-black firehouse in the town square.



# TASTE TEST: EAT LIKE A LOCAL



## Must-Eat #1: Mofongo (The Superstar)

**What is it?** Green plantains fried and mashed with garlic, olive oil, and pork cracklings. Usually topped with shrimp, steak, or chicken.

### Snack Attack (Fritters):

**Empanadillas:** Turnovers filled with beef/chicken.

**Alcapurrias:** Fried root vegetables stuffed with meat.



## Must-Eat #2: Lechón Asado

**What is it?** Whole pig, seasoned and slow-roasted over wood coals. The skin (cuerito) is crispy like a chip!



### Did You Know?

The **Piña Colada** was invented in San Juan! Try one at Barrachina or the Caribe Hilton.



# RHYTHM OF THE NIGHT: SALSA & STREET PARTIES



## **The Spot:** La Placita de Santurce

**Daytime:** A historic market selling fruits and vegetables.

**Nighttime:** Transforms into the island's biggest street party! Restaurants and bars open up, and people dance salsa in the street.

Mark Your Calendar:



## **The 30th Annual World Salsa Congress**

July 31 – August 1, 2026

Watch the world's best dancers compete!



## **The Music:**

Puerto Rico is famous for Salsa and Reggaetón.



# WHY VISIT IN 2026? THE BIG EVENTS EVENTS

## JANUARY



### Jan 15–18: San Sebastián Street Festival

The massive end-of-holiday party in Old San Juan. Parades, music, and artisans.

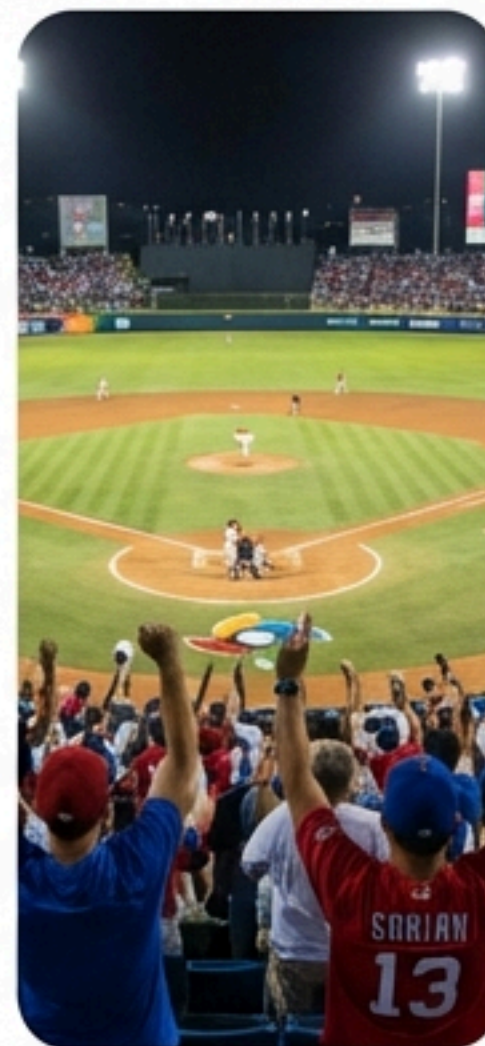


## MARCH



### March 5–17: World Baseball Classic

San Juan hosts "Pool A" at Hiram Bithorn Stadium. Watch teams from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Canada, and more. The energy is electric!



## JULY



### July 2026: ArteYUNQUE

A special art exhibition called "RÍO" inside the El Yunque rainforest visitor center.



**New Hotels:** Look for the new Hilton Dual-Brand in the Convention District opening in 2026.



# INSIDER TOOLKIT: GETTING AROUND

## TRANSPORT MODE



### Uber vs. Rental Car

- **Stay in San Juan?**  
Use Uber (\$8-\$15 for most trips).
- **Leaving the City?**  
Rent a car. Essential for the Rainforest, Pork Highway, or West Coast.



### Book a Ride

Compare Prices,  
Book Instantly, No  
Parking Hassles.

## THE SIGN GAME



PUERTO RICAN

55  
MPH

San Juan  
100 Km



### The 'Spanglish' Road Signs

This is a unique quirk!



Speed Limits = Miles  
Per Hour (MPH)



Distance Signs =  
Kilometers (Km)

Don't Panic: Just follow  
the numbers on your  
speedometer.

See Sign Guide

## PUBLIC TRANSIT



**Public Transit:** The bus  
(AMA) and train are limited.  
Not recommended for short  
tourist trips.

View Map (Limited)



# INSIDER TOOLKIT: HOW TO ACT LIKE A LOCAL



## The Magic Phrase: 'Buen Provecho'

(Bwen Pro-Veh-Cho)

**Meaning:** "Enjoy your meal."

**When to use:** When you walk into a restaurant or pass someone eating. Locals say it constantly!



### Island Time:

Things move slower here. Relax. Don't rush the waiter. You are on vacation!



### Tipping:

Same as the U.S. mainland. Standard is 15%–20% for servers.



### Greetings:

A friendly 'Buenos Días' (Good Morning) goes a long way.



# THE PERFECT 3-DAY BEGINNER ITINERARY

## DAY 1



### Day 1: The History Walk

- Morning: El Morro Fortress & Old San Juan streets.
- Lunch: Try a 'Mallorca' sandwich.
- Sunset: Paseo de la Princesa promenade.

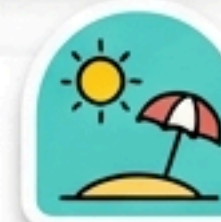


## DAY 2



### Day 2: Beach & City

- Morning: Relax at Isla Verde Beach.
- Afternoon: Explore Santurce art murals.
- Dinner: Mofongo at a local spot like 'Bebo's Cafe'.



## DAY 3



### Day 3: The Jungle

- Morning: Guided tour to El Yunque Rainforest (Waterfalls & Tower).
- Evening: Relax or try the Bio Bay (if you have energy!).





# READY FOR TAKEOFF?

## Final Checklist:

- ☒ ID Packed? (Real ID or Passport)
- ☒ Sunscreen? (Reef Safe)
- ☒ Appetite? (Ready for Mofongo)



**Safety Note:** Puerto Rico is generally safe for tourists. Use common sense, stay in lit areas at night, and keep valuables secure.

*"When you visit, you'll find the Boricua spirit in yourself, too." – Discover Puerto Rico*

**START PLANNING YOUR 2026  
ADVENTURE TODAY!**







# ¡NOS VEMOS EN LA ISLA DEL ENCANTO!



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