

## *Travel information for Villa Altamira, Vieques*

updated 1/21/20

It won't be long until you're on your way! Karen and I thought to make this helpful set of tips for you to make your trip easier. We want your arrival to Vieques to be as smooth as possible.

The most important thing is make sure that you reconfirm your date and time of arrival with Annette as well as whether you arrive by ferry or charter flight. Please text/phone 787-467-5368 or e-mail Annette Desmond.



and either speak directly with them or leave a message.

Annette: [sunrealtyannette@gmail.com](mailto:sunrealtyannette@gmail.com)

Our team on Vieques Melyssa and Hector 787-378-7261, [melissahector7@gmail.com](mailto:melissahector7@gmail.com)

It's not a bad idea to CC: Karen and I so that we are aware as well. Remember, if you change your arrival plans or are delayed by either airline or other travel delays your check-in may be compromised. If no one is there to meet you on arrival in Vieques your vacation will not be off to a good start! Most of the rental car companies will arrange to meet you at either the ferry station or airport and transport you to pick up your car. Large groups may need to take a taxi from the airport of ferry station to the house. Either way our team in Vieques, Melyssa and Hector Mulero will be there to meet you.

Just in case you need to tell someone how to get to Altamira here are some directions. Altamira is located on a hilltop in Bravos de Boston, a small neighborhood just outside Isabella Segunda. Physical addresses are kind of sketchy on the island. Describing how to get to the house usually will suffice. As you pass the ferry station on your left heading towards the lighthouse in Isabella take the right hand turn just after the ferry station. It is

a hilly road that climbs. Take the second left (you can follow the yellow signs for beach doggies or “perro playas”) . When you get to the T take a left (the sign will say take a right for beach doggies but don't) then a right up the hill. Towards the top of the hill the house is on the left side. There is a plaque on the gate post “Villa Altamira”. Remember Villa Altamira is on the new map you will receive upon arrival. It is the Yellow villa.

If you have reserved a flight with Vieques Airlink (VAL), it wouldn't hurt to call them a couple of days before departure and reconfirm your flight as well as number of seats you need. Also phone a couple of days before leaving Vieques reconfirm your return flight back to the mainland.

Once you get to San Juan and if you're using Vieques Airlink collect your bags and go to the main checking floor at the main terminal (not the American Airlines terminal). BAL has a little checking booth inside. If you come in on American Airlines, walked the 2 min. to the main terminal next door. (American has their own terminal).

On your way to the Altamira Melyssa and Hector will show you where one of the grocery stores is located so that you can return that day to get your needed supplies. The larger supermarkets close around 6 PM most days and earlier on Sundays. Small corner stores have basic necessities such as beverages and bread but limited grocery items. They definitely have enough supplies for a night!

Upon check-in they will show you around Villa Altamira and provide the keys to the gates as well as the house. The villa has wireless Internet. The code to access the Wi-Fi is written on top of the wireless modem which is located in the main bedroom. If you bring your laptop and want to watch Netflix or Amazon instant you can enjoy movies by the pool or patio. Some websites are blocked from PR but if you are technically savvy you can bypass this by using a free virtual private network. You can Google for more information.

At least once a week our pool person will likely visit to clean up and maintain the pool. They will try not to disturb guests so you might not meet them. Feel free to use the pool skimmer as needed to skim leaves or other debris that may fall into the pool. If the pool is in non-satisfactory condition please alert Melyssa so that this may be corrected. At the pool water level is low or below the skimmer please let Melyssa know. You may also meet Quiro the garden keeper. He will be at the house daily to water and care for the plantings and fruit trees.

We appreciate knowing if there are any non-working items in the home or if there is anything that is not up to satisfactory condition. We will do our best to correct this and/or repair in a timely manner. Melyssa our house manager is very diligent and

appreciates knowing of any problems with the house, grounds work. Need a new toaster? Broken patio chair? Leaky toilet? Blender fried? If we are not aware of these things they may not get the attention they need promptly. Karen and I don't get to Vieques as often as we like so rely on our guests for feedback.

There are two outside showers as well as hoses to rinse off sand from the beach when you return. We have had problems with guests rinsing sand off inside the Villa or jumping in the pool straight from the beach. Please rinse off prior to doing so. This helps keep the pool cleaner and prevents drainage problems from the bathrooms. This will also help keep the pool clean and tidy.

The Villa will be clean when you arrive. Melyssa and the cleaning team do their best to make sure the house is in tip top condition before you check in. Caribbean Trade winds and strong breezes often blow outside dust into the home and leaves on the pool deck. If you notice any issues please inform Dennis.

Inside the house, you will find a guest journal. We encourage you to write in the journal and share your thoughts and helpful hints with regards to restaurants, beaches and other things you enjoyed. If something is not to your liking we would prefer that you contact Melyssa or contact Karen and I directly rather than write it in the guestbook. If this is something that we can improve on or correct is more important for us to know. We don't get to read the comments until we returned to Vieques and as such we may not be able to get your feedback until it's much too late.

One of our favorite things to do is an early-morning walk to the bakery in Isabella Segunda for coffee and a breakfast treat. Local pastries as well as sandwiches are wonderful. The coffee is more like espresso and cappuccino. Panaderia Viequense or the window on Main Street in Isabella (just watch for the line) have great breakfast sandwiches like grilled ham and cheese.

Feel free to use the phone, but any long distance calls will need a calling card. Local calls are free. Cellular service on the island is quite good. Please check your specific calling plan for additional charges. The villa's telephone number is 787 – 741 – 1761. Skype also works well.

With regard to medical emergencies there is no longer a hospital emergency room on the island. There are several pharmacies as well as medical offices that accept walk ins.

With regard to security we recommend that you bring minimal valuables to the beach. The villa should be locked and the gate secured when you leave. Please lock all doors, top floor especially. Crime is an unfortunate reality and can be easily prevented with some care and foresight. Don't leave valuable items such as laptops or Ipads in full view.

Credit cards, cash, jewelry, cameras and other easily stolen items should be kept in a secure location within the Villa. Wallets and snorkel gear left in an open car on a deserted beach parking are good targets for petty thieves. Violent crime is rare and with reasonable, commonsense precautions your vacation will be safe.

Exploring Vieques' beaches is one of the most wonderful experiences. A rental car is vital in order to access some of the more remote beaches on the wildlife preserve. The U.S. Navy wildlife preserve is expansive but is clearly marked and maps are available online for free or at the tourism office in Isabella. Each beach has its own particular character. Everyone has their own favorite. Our kids like Navio beach because of the surf, some families like Media Luna because it's calm and protected. Pack drinks and food although some beaches have met with vendors of local Puerto Rican cuisine. Please do not bring the zero gravity chairs from the Villa to the beaches as they are rapidly degraded by the salt water and sand.

The local bank is located in Isabella Segunda. Banco Popular is the largest bank in Puerto Rico. The bank has an ATM machine and can accept travelers checks. Most restaurants today take credit cards but most small stores only accept cash.

OK food. If you like to cook grilling is great! Fresh seafood, chicken, what have you. There are many restaurants in Vieques...see Vieques Events link on our site for more information. Another tip...you can buy dinner early and put it in the fridge then just heat it up for dinner in the evening. Shauna's is a local hangout...fresh local PR food cooked each morning 6-7 dollars per take out order (rice, beans, entree sides x tra). Great easy dinner and economical.

Upon checkout we ask that our guests leave the Villa in a swept clean condition. In other words the house should be tidy and dishes and pots as well as utensils should be clean and put away. Leftover groceries may be left in the fridge or cupboards prefer not to take them with you but please toss unusable items from the refrigerator or cupboards and the garbage. We thank you in advance for your consideration and respect for the Villa as well as the responsibility of the cleaning team and bring the home for the next guest.

Please make sure that the barbecue propane tank is been turned off both at the tank as well as the control knobs. We would really appreciate it if you would give it a bit of the cleaning after you have used it.

One of the most charming aspects of yet this is the wandering horses. However, they may often wonder onto the villas property and can do extensive damage to vegetation and landscaping. Please close the gate at all times. The horses really love to eat flowers and drink from the pool. One or two horses can do extensive damage to vegetation in a relatively small amount of time. They are extremely cute and extremely sneaky. They

are very good at pushing the main gate open from the road with their noses if it is not latched and warped locked. Unfortunately, we can't keep the iguanas from visiting the property. You may see fairly large iguanas sunning by the pool. If startled they may defecate. They can usually be shooed away quite easily. A spray from the garden hose off get them to move.

If you are like us, we are usually a bit frazzled when we arrived. It takes a day or two to adjust to "island time" and to begin to relax. I think that you'll find that the small annoyances like an early morning rooster or someone stopping their horse on the road in front of the Villa to chat with a friend will eventually fade into the background. This is part of the charm and beauty of Vieques. There are no franchise chains on Vieques, little noise and no traffic lights. Enjoy Vieques for what it is a chance to enjoy life in the slow lane.

Karen and I hope that when it's time to go home you will wish that you had a few more days on the island. We always do. We wish you sunny skies, colorful sun sets and soft tropical evenings. Have a great time. We hope that you will come back and visit soon.

John and Karen Guernelli

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Thank you for your interest in our vacation property!

To see our other properties please visit our web site  
[www.cottagelvacationrentals.me](http://www.cottagelvacationrentals.me)

Harpswell, Maine, USA <http://www.vrbo.com/138154> "Cozy Oceanfront Cottage"

Vieques, Puerto Rico <http://www.vrbo.com/84964> "Villa Altamira"

Harpswell, Maine, USA <http://www.vrbo.com/139207> "Camp Card Cove"

Harpswell, Maine, USA <http://www.vrbo.com/153919> "Schooner Landing Cottage"

Harpswell, Maine, USA <http://www.vrbo.com/165589> "Lofty Waterfront Camp"

Thank You

John and Karen Guernelli

[guernelli@comcast.net](mailto:guernelli@comcast.net)

1-60-COTTAGE1 or 1 (602) 688-2431

**•Can you describe the floor plan for Altamira?**

Ground floor- offers 2 twin beds(can be configured as a queen), another queen bed, full bathroom and efficiency kitchen.

Main floor-Kitchen, living room, bedroom with queen bed, queen futon, full shower/bath, full patio.

Top Floor-Master bedroom with queen bed, private bathroom, private balcony.

The upper two levels offer spectacular ocean views. The ground level is separate from the upper two levels with its own entrance and can only be accessed from the outside.

**•Is the house luxurious?**

Villa Altamira is a comfortable, well maintained, fully equipped Caribbean style home perfect for families or couples. It is a very nice home, not luxurious by any means but very comfy!

**•Does the Villa have Air conditioning?**

Great question! OK for years we resisted A/C. The ceiling fans and breezes were more than enough, but, not for everyone. This year we have installed A/C in every bedroom for you cool sleeping comfort.

**•Where in Vieques is the house located?**

Altamira is located on a hilltop in Bravos de Boston a small neighborhood just outside Isabella Segunda. Click on link to see Bravos on the Vieques map <http://www.vieques-island.com/vqsmap.shtml> . Villa Altamira is also featured on the new Vieques tourism map.

Additional map of Vieques: [http://www.viequestourism.com/map\\_page.htm](http://www.viequestourism.com/map_page.htm)

**•What is the address for the house?**

Physical addresses are kind of sketchy on the island. Describing how to get to the house usually will suffice. As you pass the ferry station on your left heading towards the lighthouse in Isabella take the right hand turn just after the ferry station. It is a hilly road that climbs. Take the second left (you can follow the yellow signs for beach doggies or “perro playas”) . When you get to the T take a left (the sign will say take a right for beach doggies but don’t) then a right up the hill. Towards the top of the hill the house is on the left side. There is a plaque on the gate post “Villa Altamira”. Remember Villa Altamira is on the new map you will receive upon arrival.

**•How far is the house from town? Can I walk to town?**

The closest town is Isabella Segunda. It is about a 15 minute walk from Altamira. We walk this frequently in the evening after dinner or early morning for a bakery run. If you would like to see a map of Vieques or Isabella go to <http://www.vieques-island.com/vqsmap.shtml> .

**•Are there any restaurants nearby? Can I walk?**

The closest restaurant is the Bravos Beach

Hotel <http://www.bravobeachhotel.com>. It is a 5 minute walk from Altamira. The town of Isabella also has many restaurants and is very close as well. For a full

listing of Vieques eateries and links to their sites go to <http://www.vieques-island.com/rest.shtml> .

•**What else is there to do in Vieques?**

Lots more to do! See what the New York Times travel section had to say [click here](#)

•**How far is the beach from Altamira?**

There are lots of beaches in Vieques. Altamira is a 5 minute walk to a very nice snorkeling/swimming cove "La Lanchita" (pictured on our website [www.villaaltamira.com](http://www.villaaltamira.com) ) . It is just a short walk down the hill to the ocean. For a full list of island beaches go to <http://www.vieques-island.com/beaches.shtml> .

•**Is Altamira private?**

Yes. The house is very privately situated on a hillside facing north. Additionally it is privately landscaped. There is a vacant field next door where a horse usually grazes. The surrounding homes are residential and sufficiently far away so they do not lessen its private feeling. The property is fenced and gated as well.

•**How large is the lot that Altamira is on?**

It is on about a 1.5 acre lot. There is a vacant field next door where a horse usually grazes. There is a producing lemon tree on the property, bananas and plantains (feel free to pick some for cooking or drinks!)

•**Can you describe the view from Altamira?**

The house faces North toward the Sonda de Vieques or Straits of Vieques. There is about a 180 degree panorama that includes the Faro or Lighthouse, the ferry station and the main island of Puerto Rico in the distance. On clear days you can see Culebra in the distance. On clear nights the mainland lights twinkle in the distance. You can enjoy watching the arriving/departing ferries from one of the balconies. There are lots of pictures on our website that feature the view!

•**How far is the nearest supermarket?**

There are two nice-sized supermarkets on the island and many smaller grocery stores. The closest supermarket is in Isabella which is a 15 minute walk or 5 minute car ride.

•**Is there a TV in the house? VCR/DVD?**

OK we compromised! There is now TV and DVD in the Villa. VCR went the way of the horse and buggy. What we enjoy most about Altamira is the escape from TV. However, we realize that our guests may feel otherwise and at times enjoy a movie on a rainy evening. We recommend you skip the movie and take time to chat quietly and enjoy your company. Lots of books. Lots of time to sit by the pool or on the patio and enjoy the beauty and serenity of the island. But if you must indulge, the TV is there.

•**Is there a CD player/stereo at Altamira?**

There are two CD players/radios. Both with MP3/aux input on it so that you can

plug in your MP3 player if needed. IPOD compatible docks and a patio/pool stereo system was added in 2014.

**•Are there wine glasses? Martini glasses?**

Great question! Yes and yes again!

**•Does the kitchen pantry have basic necessities?**

Yes. There is usually a nice selection of spices. We encourage the cleaning staff to leave all non perishables for other guests. That means salt, sugar, oil and vinegar and lots more are usually there.

**•Is the water safe to drink?**

The water is municipally supplied, tested and safe to drink.

**•Do we have to worry about Malaria or other mosquito borne illnesses?**

No. We are not aware of any infectious diseases to worry about on Vieques.

**•Do I need to bring linens or towels?**

No need to bring either. Both are available at the house.

**•Is there a washer and dryer? How about a hairdryer?**

Yes all of the above are on site for your convenience.

**•How large is the pool?**

The pool is 30 by 15 free-form style. No diving is allowed. There is a neat waterfall that kids and adults love to sit under. The views from the pool are spectacular. There is a patio set as well as lounge chairs for sunning. The pool deck was expanded in 2012 and the pool resurfaced.

**•Who maintains the pool and how often?**

The pool is cleaned on Saturdays. Guests are asked to skim leaves/debris as needed. The filter/waterfall is automatic and runs 10 am- 8pm. The house manager is available if there are any issues with the pool including urgent cleaning.

**•Do I need to worry about bugs/mosquitoes?**

Altamira is full screened so you can enjoy the evening breezes indoors and not worry about the bugs. Sunset does bring some mosquitoes outdoors at some times of the year (summer mostly) but not too bad. Much better than here in Maine where we live!

**•Do I need a car in Vieques?**

Yes. To really get the most out of your island vacation a car is recommended. I guess scooters would work. You want to be able to explore secluded beaches and feel free to roam.

**•Is there a BBQ grill?**

Yes. There is a propane gas grill as well as a Weber Smoky Joe kettle (the small one) for hard core bbqers or smokers. How best to cook your mahi mahi, well that's up to you.

**•What's the weather like in Vieques?**

The weather is warm and sunny most days of the year. The summer months can sometimes bring showers, but not usually a long rainy streak.



**•What is the best way to get to Vieques?**

Three choices, well four, but you need your own boat for the fourth. Small plane, ferry from Fajardo or fast ferry from San Juan. See the links below for more information:>

<http://www.vieques-island.com/geninfo.shtml#get%20there>

<http://www.viequestravelguide.com/vieques-ferry-airlines.html>

**•How many times will the cleaning person come by?**

Just once before you check in. Additional cleanings may be arranged but must be done so in advance and there will be an additional charge to the guest.

**•What do I need to pack?**

Not much. The island is very informal. A bathing suit, toothbrush and sunglasses are a good start. We have some basic snorkeling gear at the house that guests are welcome to use. We also have beach chairs and a cooler.

**•Who takes me to Altamira?**

You will be greeted by either our house manager who will make sure you arrive at Altamira safely. Pickup arrangements are made in advance and you can be taken to Altamira directly or to your rental car first then Altamira.

**•Is it safe in Vieques? Do I need to worry about crime?**

Vieques is very safe when compared with most other Caribbean islands. Petty crime is a problem everywhere though. Common sense rules apply. Lock the house and gate when you leave. Lock the house and gate when you go to bed. Don't leave valuables unattended on the beach or in your car. Violent crime is almost unheard of on Vieques.

**•Is there someone to help answer any questions while I'm there?**

Yes, of course. Our house manager Dennis is available by phone.

**•We are coming with small children is that OK?**

Absolutely, children are welcome! We have four of our own. Caution and adult supervision of the children around the pool is our main concern.

**•Do you have a cradle or porta-crib? What about a highchair?**

We have a porta-crib for guest use. Sorry, no high chair (we used the car seat).

**•Are pets allowed?**

Based on individual circumstances.

**•Is smoking permitted in Altamira?**

Sorry, no smoking.

**•Is there internet access at the house?**

OK we are keeping up with the times. DSL and WIFI are in!!!! There are some café's/sites in town that have wireless access as well. Please e mail to confirm that we are all set up. The island had 3G access as well on my AT&T phone.

**•Where can I find more information about things to do in Vieques such as sightseeing or restaurants?**

There are several Vieques sites that have a wealth of information. I've included the links for you here:

<http://www.vieques-island.com/>

<http://www.viequestravelguide.com/index.html>

<http://www.enchanted-isle.com/>

<http://www.isla-vieques.com/>

**•How can I find out about special events occurring in Vieques during my vacation stay?**

There is a monthly bi-lingual community newsletter distributed free in Vieques called "Vieques Events". It lists current and special events as well as advertisements and classifieds. You can also download it free via the internet:

<http://www.viequesevents.net/>

**•Can I see some guest satisfaction information or surveys?**

Our web site has some spontaneous guest remarks. We have started collecting guest satisfaction surveys after each stay and will have some information posted on our web site soon. We will use the feedback to improve in the future.

**•Is the rental calendar accurate, we want to check on availability?**

Yes. The calendar is usually up to date and accurate. Occasional errors do occur so please don't make definite plans until your travel dates are confirmed and reserved.

**•What is the 7% PR rental tax?**

This is a standard PR tax on home rentals. Hotel rental tax is 9% and casino/hotel rental tax is even more. This goes to the local government not the homeowners.

**•Why is the maximum occupancy 8-10? Can I bring additional guests.?**

Six adults work well at Altamira and can stay comfortable and private, each on their own level. 8-10 will work with children and adults willing to share rooms. The ground level has two queens or can be arranged as a queen and two twins. There is one additional fold out bed for a seventh guest. Additional occupancy can sometimes be arranged on an individual basis but additional fees would apply

**•Who handles our deposit and rental fees?**

Karen and I do! We will e mail you our rental agreement and handle payments via e check or credit card.

**• May I see a copy of your rental agreement in advance?**

[Absolutely just click HERE](#)

**•What are the rental and cancellation policies?**

CANCELLATION POLICY: A 50% refund of deposit will be returned if reservation canceled 30 days or more prior to start date and the unit is re-rented. Within 30 days, cancellation will be refunded 50% of total rental and ONLY if unit is re-rented! Any other extenuating circumstances will still require a non-refundable minimum payment of \$250 for administrative costs. IA Credit Card

number (Visa or MC only) must be given and will be held as a security deposit. Your signature below is authorization for charges of any damages resulting from misuse, neglect, or by accident. Payment must be made for replacement/repairs/labor/fees as necessary. Any phone charges for long distance calls will be charged to the card. A charge of \$25 for lost keys and/or lock out "rescue". Also a \$50 fee may be charged for excessive cleaning beyond normal expectations. A 5% service charge will be added in addition to any of the above that must be charged to the credit card PLUS a \$25 fee!! You will be notified first of any potential charges, followed by a detailed summary and actual charges. Your card may be charged for the initial deposit if not rec'd by mail within 7 days!! There is a \$50 fee for holiday arrival/check-in. Also if you arrive in Vieques late (after 6:30 p.m.) there will a charge of \$50 to meet you and do check-in.

\*\*Guests agree to inform owners of EXACT time of arrival and means thereof at least 1 week prior to arrival; and to call in the event of ANY change even if 1/2 hour prior from San Juan! If our staff is there to meet you at the designated time and you are not there and have not called us of your delay, THERE WILL BE A \$50-\$100 CHARGE for this inconvenience. You must also inform owners of EXACT departure time... Thank You!

**•Are there any discounts available for guests?**

We do offer discounts for longer term rentals as well as for returning guests. Please mention this to us at the time you reserve.

**•Is Altamira handicapped accessible?**

Not really. The ground floor level can be accessed without stairs/steps. There is a downhill walk to the ground floor. The surrounding neighborhood in Bravos is situated on a steep hill so walks down to the beach can be a bit of a workout.

**•I'm confused about your rates...what is high and low season? Holidays?**

High season usually runs November to May

Low Season June thru October

Peak/Holiday weeks include Christmas, New Years, Easter, Thanksgiving, and President's Week.

**•Are there any advantages to reserving Altamira early?**

Absolutely! Your choice of weeks! Winter months tend to book 6-8 months in advance. Holiday weeks book 8-12 months in advance.

**•I would like to travel in the summer what do you think?**

Great idea! Not only is it less expensive to stay at Altamira, but flights are usually cheaper and the island beaches are even less populated. You will definitely feel like you are on your own island paradise.

**•When is check in time? Check out time?**

Check in 3 pm. Check out 10 am. You will be greeted with a basket of local products to welcome you!

**•Is there a telephone at Altamira?**

Yes there is a regular landline. Local calls are free. Long distance calls require a calling card or other method of payment. The telephone number at the house is 787-741-1761.

**•Do cell phones work on the island?**

Yes they do. I have both AT&T and US Cellular and haven't had a problem. Even LTE is good. Please check your individual providers website for more information on coverage and rates.

**•Is in home catering or food delivery available?**

You can try to arrange this in advance via a personal caterer or restaurant if desired. A suggested link: <http://www.yourpersonalcuisine.com/>

**•Where is Altamira advertised for rent?**

It is currently advertised on several web sites including Cyber rentals, VRBO, Rentalo, Vacation Rental Direct as well as Vieques specific web sites such as Vieques island.com, Enchanted-isle.com, Isla-Vieques.com and Vieques travel guide.com as well as our personal web page [www.cottage1vacationrentals.me](http://www.cottage1vacationrentals.me) .

**• How do I log on to the Wifi at Altamira?**

The security code for the private network is in the modem located in the main floor bedroom.

**• I would like to have a printed copy of the check in procedures and other helpful tips for when I arrive in Vieques?**

Funny you should ask. Karen and I have created a helpful set of notes and tips in PDF format that you can print and bring with you. We recommend you bring it with you.