

## **Colonial City of Santo Domingo**

**Ciudad Colonial** (Spanish for Colonial City) is the first settlement made by Columbus and the Spanish explorers in the New World. It has been declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Ciudad Colonial, colloquially known as “Zona Colonial” (Colonial Zone), is part of the original Santo Domingo de Guzmán, Dominican Republic, and the origin of the district dates back to the 1500s. The District is located in the west corner of the Ozama River, which bisects the city. The district today covers less than 5 square kilometers. It is an important section of the city due to the high number of landmarks, including Alcazar de Colón, Fortaleza Ozama, Catedral Primada de America, and others. The city was surrounded by a defense wall extending from the Ozama River to "La Puerta del Conde" (The Gate of Conde in Spanish), which was the only entrance to the hinterland and the furthest boundary of the city until around the late 19th century.

The Spanish used this settlement as the first point of influence in the Americas and after that conquered much of the American mainland. Even though Spaniards focused their attention more on mainland cities after conquering Mexico, Cuba and other regions of Latin American, Ciudad Colonial remained an important historical site.

The cobblestone “Calle de las Damas” is the oldest street, dating from 1502. The pedestrian-only street is bordered by many of the zone's more prominent landmarks.

There are two important commercial districts in the “Zona Colonial”, these are “Calle del Conde” and “Avenida Duarte”. Both have many shops and cafes. Avenida Duarte is the local shopping center, and is currently undergoing a renovation plan which aims to make the area more appealing to tourists.

The recently restored and expansive Plaza de la Hispanidad is bordered by Las Atarazanas, characterized by small shops and restaurants. This area was one of the first commercial centers in the Americas, and is still a hub of activity today. The Alcazar de Colón, having once been the colonial palace of the Columbus family, is now a well-regarded museum displaying period furniture and decorations. The building was originally built in 1510.

A 700 Million(USD) Investment is currently going on in the Port of the Ozama river adjacent to the Ciudad Colonial aiming to turn Santo Domingo into a Port Of Call for cruise luxury ships and including a Private held marina. The Projects is under construction by Sans Souci Ports S.A. One of the most ambitious projects of its type, its expected to turn the Colonial District and the rest of Santo Domingo into an area attractive to tourists, something never successfully achieved before.

Source:- - Wikipedia [<http://www.wikipedia.org>]