

## Hurricane Maria Updates

I have been updating this page when I get more information. Please book mark this page and refer back to it. If you are a future guest with an existing reservation, we are relaxing our rules and we are allowing date changes to be made at No Charge. To see the progress scroll down and view the older posts. I am posting the pictures of our cleanup and repair efforts at [www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/mariapics.html](http://www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/mariapics.html) I get a LOT of Frequently Asked Questions, so I just added a FAQ page at [www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/downloads/FrequentlyAskedQuestions.pdf](http://www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/downloads/FrequentlyAskedQuestions.pdf) I also get a lot of questions wanting to know more about "What does Puerto Rico look like"? The best way I know how to answer this is by pictures. Joyce and I just returned from a firsthand look and our posted pictures are at [www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/prpics.html](http://www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/prpics.html) Overall it seems like the entire island is making tremendous strides towards full recovery. There are LOTS of people working on the recovery efforts. Everyone has the same goal: Get everything back to pre-hurricane conditions ASAP! The people of Puerto Rico count on and needs tourists to again visit their island.

Update 12/14/17:

We are still recovering/adjusting from time zone changes from our Puerto Rico trip, but I wanted to add some more updates. After 10 (or so) days, we got to know the FEMA workers better (that are staying with us). They are very dedicated, hard working people, working 7 days a week! They seem to have a lot of compassion and a real sense of caring. They are one of MANY relief/recovery groups on the island helping in the recovery efforts. Everyone is busy! Home Depot and most stores are busy and everyone is looking for workers to help fix/repair anything broken. Our waiter at Tamboo said "it has been tough, but we are standing". Many people are flying the PR flag on their homes and on their cars. You can feel a sense of pride and "comradery". They survived and will come back stronger and better. PRHTC (Puerto Rico Hotel and Tourism Association) are having specials meetings and making plans to make sure Puerto Rico returns as one of the world's favorite tourist destination. They are encouraging people to come to the island to visit and help the people of Puerto Rico. We are open for business!

Update 12/12/17:

We just got back from an exhausting long trip to see firsthand the progress of our renovations and to see what the conditions are like in Rincon and Puerto Rico overall. We have a great crew and overall things are progressing very nicely. I want to again state that the repairs are limited to almost 100% of the seawall and patios that connect the seawall and the homes. The inside of the homes are fine. I get a LOT of calls asking the same questions, so I just added a FAQ section and put a link to it on the front page of our web site. [www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/downloads/FrequentlyAskedQuestions.pdf](http://www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/downloads/FrequentlyAskedQuestions.pdf) Please read this FAQ section for additional updates. I also posted another photo gallery of pictures from our trip. It shows the country side with many photos of what the conditions are like in Puerto Rico. [www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/prpics.html](http://www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/prpics.html) I am hopeful that most repairs will be almost 100% done

around Christmas except for the seawall and the one small patio just outside Villa 3 lower. That is our last seawall patio repair.

Update 12/1/17:

**This update is being done from our Villas in Rincon, Puerto Rico!** Good News: We flew down in a completely full plane. I was surprised by the number of people flying into Puerto Rico. San Juan airport was very busy with people coming and going. Got our rental car and started the drive over to Rincon. We stopped at Costco (in Bayamon) and bought food and supplies for our Villas. Yes, the roads are all clear. Yes, there are gas stations open. Yes, most areas had lights on. No, we did not have any problems. The next day we drove around a bit and noticed all stores and restaurants were open for business. I have not found any closed yet. (but we have not been everywhere) The next day we went to Home Depot and Sam's club and bought more supplies. Again the stores lights and power, were busy and there were lots of selection and supplies available. We have had a crew of at least 5 people and on Monday several more are suppose to show up. We are ready for more concrete and have 2 more full cement trucks scheduled to pour.

Update 11/27/17:

**We have electrical power in all Villas!** It just came back on (villa 2, 3, 4) today! We had water, so we are now back up and running. We still have some oceanfront patio repairs and some painting to finish, but working on that as we speak. I also forgot to mention in my last update that we posted a bunch of new pictures. They seem to automatically go to the "bottom of the stack" or the last of the picture rotation, so hit the "+" to quickly scroll through the ones you have seen.

Update 11/22/17:

We have our second set of guests staying with us. They are from FEMA and are staying about 1 month. Since we have electrical we are trying to get the internet up and working for them. We called Liberty and were told they are repairing the lines "1 town at a time". Rincon is scheduled to be repaired within about 1 month. Same with Dish satellite they are working 1 town at a time. Rincon should be within the month. Right now everyone access's the internet with their cell phones and uses their data plan. Joyce and I are scheduled to go down right after Thanks giving.

Update 11/13/17:

Sorry I have not posted more updates, but (as you can imagine) I have been busy! No real updates except we have our FIRST guests staying with us right NOW! He flew down to "check it out" first hand. He is the father of the bride for a HUGE January wedding at our place and was sort of thrown in the role

to find out what is going on first hand. I am providing him a place to stay as a curtesy (non-paying) but open to doing this for anyone that has a larger event and wants to see "First Hand" After he checks out we have several more checking in to stay with us (paying guests)

FYI – Discounts are available! Call for more details! Yes, we are providing discounted rates since we are still painting and doing renovations. We still are waiting for the power to the rest of our villas, but Villa 1 is being rented!

Update 11/9/17:

Lights are on! We have electrical power in Villa 1! I figured as soon as we got the generators the power would come back. Still nothing for the rest of our Villas, since they are getting their power from the other side of the grid, but it should be any day! Nellie is checking everything and making sure everything is working, but so far so good. We are Back!

Update 11/6/17:

Generators are here! They FINALLY came. I shipped two of them "3 day express" and they came in about 30 days, but what the heck.. we got them! We also got the one working that our neighbor loaned us! So we now have three of them to use. I gave 1 generator to Nellie for her house and planning on using the other two so we can use power tools for our repairs/cleanup. I am again posting more pictures. More good news parts of Stella (neighborhood of Rincon where we are) is getting power! I am hopeful we get it shortly.

Update 11/3/17:

Painting continues and one by one the units are getting ready. I am posting more and more pictures every few days. Please check back often. [www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/mariapics.html](http://www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/mariapics.html) Most all of our seawall concrete pouring is done and most all doors and windows that needed work have been replaced/repared. The oceanfront patio for V3 upper (also is shade cover for the lower) needs to be rebuilt, but that is about the last "major" repair. Villa 2 upper is scheduled to receive our first guest in a few weeks (based the power is restored). Electrical is still the issue, but we now have power in more parts of Rincon. Parts of Calveche has power (an outside part of Rincon). It appears to have it down highway 115 and they now need to get to Stella (where we are). Our neighbor loaned us a generator but it would not start. It is getting fixed and hopefully we can start using it shortly.

Update 11/1/17:

We just did 2 more truck loads of concrete the other day. We had some cracks in our seawall and the sand and dirt got washed away causing a "void" or "cavity" behind the seawall. We are filling it up with solid concrete! We might need 1 more truck to finish the job. Door/window guy came and did some more door replacement. I think we are about done. No more replacement, but there might still be one or two left that needs "adjustments". Today we are doing some more painting. The strong winds with salt water seemed to strip a lot of the paint off our buildings. I posted more pictures again today showing the areas that still need painting.

Update 10/28/17:

More good news, we got the use of a generator! My good friend Steve (next door neighbor to our V1) had some workers over doing some work at his house and they have a generator! Being the nice guys they are, they are letting us use/borrow it! That means we can get started using power tools! Yeah! Our generator still has not come in yet. Unsure where it is, but the post office is a bit "busy" and "chaotic"! Maybe "someday" it will show up?

Update 10/27/17:

Big day today! The guys started at about 5 AM today and we poured concrete on the ocean front side. This was at Villa 1. Then on Monday we are getting another truck (or two?) to do V4 and V3 seawall repairs. Villa 2 seawall seems ok. FYI – I personally oversaw the construction of the seawall at V2 when it was destroyed by hurricane George back in 1998. I was staying at our villas when it struck. (What a nightmare!) After the concrete pour, the guys are finishing up their day painting and doing other misc. cleanup tasks. The window/door guy also came and installed the new doors and windows that needed to be replaced! That is great to get that task done! I added more pictures at [www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/mariapics.html](http://www.sunsetparadisevillas.com/mariapics.html) The pictures are not in any order. I try to post before/during/after but I am limited in the photos I get. I hope you see which is which and see what we are doing. I will try to keep posting pictures in addition to doing these updates. So check back often. More good News: more parts of Rincon got electrical service. Keep your fingers crossed we are close to getting power restored at the villas.

Update 10/26/17:

I get a lot of FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) so I decided to include them in this update. 1) Are the roads open? 2) Can you rent a car? 3) Can you get gas for the car? 4) Is there cell service? 5) Are the grocery stores open and can we buy food? 6) Are there restaurants open if not, when will they all be open?

Short Answer to all: "YES!" Most roads are all open, some minor roads in the hills maybe not. Yes, Most car rental companies are open, but there might be some that are not. Yes, Most cell service has been restored, but there are parts of Puerto Rico that still get spotty service, but that is an everyday thing no matter if there is a hurricane or not. Yes, Most grocery stores are open and there are "food on the shelves" Are they out of some products, yes, but that is an everyday thing no matter if there is a hurricane or not. Yes, there are restaurants that are open, but there are many that are still closed. I would guess more will quickly open when we start getting tourists visiting Rincon again. Most people think there is nothing left and Puerto Rico was "wiped off the map" and no longer exists! That is certainly not the case.

Update 10/24/17:

Rincon has electrical power in parts of the town! We still do not, but we are hopeful that it will not be too much longer (any day?) That is the major stumbling block to us working on repairing the damage and having guests stay with us again. We need to use power tools in our repairs. The generators that I shipped down still have not shown up yet (about 10 days past due), so one way or another we will have some electrical power shortly. I have been getting more pictures from Nellie and I will post some of us doing repairs in a few days.

Update 10/21/17:

No real updates except Nellie has been driving around a bit and noticed there seems to be more electrical service getting restored in Aguadilla (just to the North) and Mayaguez (just to the South). She sees workmen working on the lines, but still nothing in Rincon. The garbage trucks have been picking up debris. Most stores are open. We had the door and window guy over and he is fixing all damaged doors and windows. We are *TRYING* to fix the damage to our seawalls and ocean patios, but it is hard to work without power. I shipped down a couple of generators, but they have not arrived yet. We are trying to line up the concrete truck to pour concrete sometime next week. Nellie has been working on the inside of all the villas and is making a list of the items we need to replace, but it all seems to be somewhat minor. It is the outside that has us most concerned since we seem to be having heavy waves right now and is it hard to impossible to work right now. It is hopeful that we can start working again on Monday.

Update 10/15/17:

*Just got word the governor said there should be power to 95% of the people by December!* We already have water, so getting power will really help in getting Puerto Rico back on their feet! I just sent Nellie a couple of generators the other day. US post office says shipments should go through and the mail is being delivered along with packages. They said she will get them with 1 week?! I am not counting on that, but it was good to hear them say that! Cell phone communication is lots better, getting texts easy,

voice is good most times, but getting pictures seem to be a bit of a problem. Nellie drove to Aguadilla and sent me a bunch of pictures. No real surprises, but the seawall and ocean patios do need some work. Inside seems for the most part OK. Miguel (and 1 "helper") is working everyday doing what he can with what he has. Supplies continue to be easier to get

Update 10/11/17:

I got a call the other day from a future guest asking the question I get asked many times... "When will we get power" and "when will things be back to normal?" I told them what I have told many others, "My crystal ball is broken" and it is "above my pay grade". If you can "wait and see", I suggest you do that. If you cannot wait, feel free take us up on our offer and change the dates at No Charge. If your trip is coming up shortly and you are nervous, push it back and select new dates. But what I CAN say is there are MANY eyes on this, a lot of media attention, and a LOT of people and corporations working hard. I just found out Goggle, Tesla, and Walmart are involved in addition to the billions in federal aid. For more information about Walmart's involvement go to <https://news.walmart.com/2017/09/28/walmart-announces-5-million-commitment-for-hurricane-maria-relief>

Update 10/9/17:

Got a phone call from Nellie this AM and we spoke briefly! It was nice to hear her voice. Her phone has been dead for days and she finally got it charged. I can now regularly text her direct (voice and data is still spotty). She said the guys worked all weekend and removed most of the trees off her home. There is 1 (or two?) larger trees still along side her house that is leaning over her house yet, but we will need to get a backhoe or tractor to try to remove the tree. There are no generators available to purchase. We are using Roberto's generator and overall things are progressing nicely. We have water and the water pressure is increasing. We need electricity and we then we will be set to go. There is now power to 15% of all the people. All downed power poles are being replaced. Currently, there is power in parts of Mayaguez (larger city just south of us) but unsure the power grid. I think we get our power from the north (Aguadilla).

Update 10/7/17:

Got an email from Jennifer Lopez (no, not THE Jennifer Lopez, but the real estate agent in Rincon) She said: "Rincon was hit as all the island and many wood houses were lost. However, all of the properties we manage are well and good to be rented as soon as power/water are restored. Roads are clear so there is access. The beach is as beautiful as ever, same with the wonderful people that make Rincon such a great place."

Update 10/6/17:

Unsure why, but the news media seems to be exaggerating conditions and the relief efforts. Most of the people I speak with each day (not living in Puerto Rico) think there is "nothing left" in Puerto Rico and the entire island was "destroyed". Yes, there are still a lot of people (more in remote areas) that need help, but overall it seems like the entire island is making tremendous strides towards full recovery! In JUST 3 weeks! Supplies are coming in and the shelves are again filling up at all the stores. Yesterday Roberto drove to Mayaguez walked into Home Depot bought the supplies we needed and paid for them with our charge card!

Update 10/5/17:

Over half of the people of Puerto Rico now have water, but only just about 10% have electricity. Puerto Rico government developed a web site with the facts [www.status.pr](http://www.status.pr) and will post the latest information. Currently there is over 14,000 federal workers (not 1400, but 14 THOUSAND) on the ground all helping the people of Puerto Rico. All airports are open. US mail is again being delivered. All major roads seem to be cleared of debris and are open. All ports are open for ships. Over 70% of grocery stores are open. About 80% of all gas stations are open. Nearly 100% of hospitals. (Most?) schools are set to open within a few weeks.

Update 10/4/17:

We have water! That is huge! Now we just need electrical power and we are good. Another cell phone company is up and working. I think that is all of them? Service can be spotty at times, but that is "normal" 😊 My guys are working away doing cleanup and getting things back to the way it was. They plan on taking a break and going up to help Nellie repair her house this weekend. Robert is going to lend us his generator next week so we can run some power tools

Update 10/2/17:

Another cell phone company is back up working, but at times spotty. I try NOT to be political but I did want to share one person's opinion and the (edited) communication I got yesterday:

"Distribution: For those saying Trump / Fed Gov isn't doing anything for PR: You obviously aren't in PR. The airports are filled with AC-130's, gov'n't planes of troops and aid workers, ospreys, and commercial flights offloading Nat. Guard workers. The island is surrounded with the USCG ships, have rescue helicopters flying overhead all day, army (or reserves) cleaning all the streets to allow gas deliveries, and constant escorts of fuel trucks to gas stations. They paused the Jones Act to allow direct fuel and supply

deliveries. The Fed Gov committed to pay 100% of all debris removal on the island (and USVI). And just FYI, PR doesn't pay any federal income taxes and never has (you know, the stuff used to pay for these relief efforts).

If you were actually on the island, you would see the amazing working being done by everyone that lives there. I was stunned, without power, how quickly everyone was able to clean up after this disaster. Puerto Ricans aren't incompetent people. There's 3.4 mil people on the island filled with skilled laborers that are kicking ass getting things stabilized.

Yes, Puerto Rico needs help and aid, but if there's one thing I know without a doubt, is that it's citizens know how to handle hurricanes! No single person, or government can fix this level of disaster overnight. It's going to take some time. So be grateful that you're not there and that you have running water and a house to sleep in. Bashing a government for not doing what you think is best when in reality you have no idea what's going on and it is counterproductive to those that are actually helping. Unless you're in Puerto Rico, you have NO CLUE what it's like and what's happening. You're hearing about single events promoted by media for ratings in isolated areas."

Update 10/1/17:

Distribution of aid (and all supplies) is still a problem. Long lines to get limited water and I might have been a bit too optimistic about the gas supply. It still appears to be an issue, but overall it seems to be improving. Overall the stockpile of fuel supply has increased. I am unsure which cell phone carriers are working and which ones are not, but overall cell phone communication seems to be improving. The last call with Nellie the reception was crystal clear with no static. Everyone says electrical might be awhile before it is back. I do not want to get political, but the San Juan mayor is critical but the Puerto Rico governor has been supportive of Trump and the federal government's response efforts. Trump is set to visit on Tuesday and he has promised continued federal support. (Most) everyone is saying that the supply bottle neck is improving. They recently now have opened 11 regional staging areas and supplies are being funneled to them.

Update 9/30/17:

Distribution of the aid still seems to be a problem, but things seem to be getting better. There are lots of containers full of supplies still sitting at the ports in San Juan. More supplies need to make their way across the island to Rincon.

Good News: Gas arrived in Rincon! Most all gas stations are open again. That is huge! That means generators can again run and people can drive and get supplies. I am hoping the "supply line" is fixed and gas will be one less issue for the people. Most all stores are again open and supplies seem to be



finding their way to the shelves of the stores. Larger stores are again taking credit cards. One more cell phone carrier is back working (but still has spotty service). Clean up has begun. I have a full crew and we are digging into things quickly! Since our properties are safe/secure we are going to try to help Nellie (our manager) and her home. Last know there were several trees that fell on her house. Overall, we are trying to prioritize the work

Update 9/29/17:

Roberto spent over 20 hours in the gas line yesterday. Rincon currently has no gas for the public. One gas station is being used for emergency relief only (FEMA). I am glad to see FEMA in Rincon! Miguel is driving in from south of Mayaguez to work yesterday! Wow, thank you Miguel. I think gas is more available in Mayaguez. Nellie and Miguel worked at the villas all day and tomorrow Roberto is going to join them. I got some more pictures and the damage we received seems to be mostly on the exterior oceanfront patios. Based on supplies (and GAS for our cars) we should be able to get things back quickly. Inside the villas appears to be overall "OK"?

Update 9/28/17:

At least 1 cell phone carrier has their cell tower up and working. I have been in limited direct contact with our entire staff in Rincon. We have Nellie, Luis, Miguel, and Roberto. They are all safe, but all has had damage to their property and homes. They are postponing repairs to their own property and are focused on helping us with our Villas. They again reassured me that the buildings themselves are upright and appear to be ok. The damage came from the waves and is mostly limited to the oceanfront patios. Based on supplies, we should be back up "somewhat" quickly?

The stores are slowing opening, but are limited on the supplies they have on hand. Since there is no power (internet) no one can take charge cards, so it is all cash. Banks limit the cash withdrawals and their hours. The gas lines are terrible! It seems to be a major problem!

Relief aid is on the island, but most of it is all located in San Juan. "Distribution" seems to be a problem. Workers are not showing up and trucks do not have gas.

Trump just suspended "Jones Act" which should allow more cargo ships into PR with much needed supplies. FYI - The Jones Act, otherwise known as the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, requires goods shipped between American ports to be carried exclusively by ships built primarily in the United States, and to have U.S. citizens as its owners and crews.

So many people have asking how they can donate or help. This link has NBC news top rated charities helping in Puerto Rico relief efforts <https://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/video/devastation-in-puerto-rico-how-you-can-help-1053776451799>

Update 9/26/17:

Aid assistance is well underway and several cargo ships and planes are supplying much needed water and supplies. This event has gained major national attention and Federal Response Teams are assisting and FEMA funds are being used. Congressional leaders and the President has pledged to support all efforts. President is going to personally visit PR, Corp of Engineers working to rebuild the power grid, round the clock relief efforts with about 90 flights a day,

Bad News: Long gas lines, money limits at banks, limited stores are open and very limited supplies.

Update 9/25/17

Thank you for the MANY people reaching out with concern about the people of Puerto Rico. Unfortunately most all communication is still down and information has been very limited.

The town of Rincon (and most of the island) still does not have electrical power, water and no cell service. Even though cell service is gone, a local business does have a working land line phone. This business has opened their doors to the people of Rincon and allowed people to line up and one by one use their phone. Our Manager, Nellie did just that and I did get a chance to briefly speak with her.

Good News: Nellie, her family, and our workers are all "safe". Thank you for all your thoughts and prayers. To us that is the MOST important concern. Nellie did sustain damage to her personal home and car as did a lot of people in Puerto Rico. She did say our beachfront homes are upright and still standing, but received some damage, but it was unclear the exact amount of damage or the time frame necessary to get up and running again. We are hopeful we can be back up quickly. When power and cell service return, we will have a better understanding and will provide an additional update.