

Women, Children and Pregnancy

- If the hammock of the boy is rocked without him in it, this will cause the boy to become crazy.
- If you pass over top of your husband when you are pregnant he will get all the morning sickness.
- If you are pregnant and you hold a girl, and the baby kicks you will have a girl, and vice versa.
- The "Ásabache" is a black hand or fist, sometimes a red and black bean that is used to ward off the mal ojo/ evil eye. Usually worn around the neck, even on a gold chain. Always a good baby shower gift. (more about the [asabache](#))
- Mal de ojo/ The evil eye is especially thought to cause illness in babies. It happens when somebody looks at a child with envy and makes compliments without saying "God bless you". If children become sick suddenly and without any physical reason and a doctor has no explanation is for sure caused by mal de ojo
- Never remove the 'asabache' until someone says it's nonsense
- New mother can not have citrus fruits
- When a baby is just born you say "God Bless You" to prevent the child from getting the evil eye
- If you let a child see his or her reflection before they're two years old they won't talk.
- Put a small bracelet of beads on the child's ankle or wrist to ward off evil and to bring prosperity.
- You must never say no if a pregnant woman asks you for something that you are eating, if you do you'll get a sty. To be on the safe side ALWAYS ask pregnant women if they would like some want of what you're eating.
- Be aware of brujas/ witches who try and eat babies ([the legend of the bruja](#))
- The name is an important part of the person and can be used to bring evil to the person if it is known. Because of this a person's real name is usually kept secret. If your real name is known then you could be bewitched or sold to the devil by a Vendegete, or cursed by a brujo/ witch. This is why nick names, known here as Apodo, are given to children by their parents. These names usually are nothing like their given name but usually has something to do with their appearance. This way, by using the fake name it conceals their true identities from anyone trying to curse them
- If you drop a spoon and the bowl of the spoon is up (it looks like a pregnant woman) a new family member will be arriving soon.
- Some parents in Dominican Republic hang a baseball glove on the crib of a newborn baby boy as a good luck charm because they wish him to become a great baseball player.
- When a child bends over and looks at you from between their legs, it is said that they want another little brother or sister.
- A pregnant woman should not walk underneath a guanabana tree or eat guanabana as she may lose her child.
- Pregnant women cannot eat piña / pineapple.
- If a baby is getting sick or congested take a hair off a menstruating woman's head and tie it around the baby's wrist for 24 hours and the child will not get sick.
- When a baby has hiccups, put a hair from the mother's head on the baby's head until the hiccups go away.
- To prevent hiccups when feeding a baby place a string from its blanket on the forehead.
- Do not look at anyone that is deformed while pregnant of the baby will come out looking that way.
- Do not get your baby's haircut before he is one. If you do he won't talk!
- Pregnant women should not go into the ocean
- Having as many babies as you can since they are all born with a loaf of bread under their arms.
- A small bag worn around the neck of little children is filled with garlic to ward off evil spirits, evil eyes and sickness.
- Whenever you say something nice about a newborn you must say que "Dios lo bendiga". Not doing so may cause the baby to become ill or cause some other catastrophe.
- If you see a dead lizard in your house a woman will come out pregnant.

- Permitting a dog or cat, depending on who is telling the tale, to sleep on a child's bed will make them not be able to have children
- A woman after having a child cannot wash her hair for 41 days or remove her socks for 41 days after giving birth.
- You must give a woman who just had birth *sopa de gallina vieja* / old hen soup.
- A woman having her menstruation cannot enter a freshly seeded field because it will damage the crop
- pregnant women are prohibited from eat cherries, lemons, codfish, and herring with fried eggs (typical breakfast)
- A small piece of black fabric must be tied around the right arm of a new born This fabric draws in and collects negative energy keeping it from the baby.
- In some areas of Dominican Republic prior to baptism they are given a *baño*/ bath to ward of the evil eye. This bath contains a mashed clove of garlic and three grains of salt added to the *Agua Bendita*/ Holy Water This mix is sprinkled on the child
- Do not eat guineos/ bananas if you are menstruating
- Do not squeeze lemons / lemons when you are having mensuration.
- Girls during the time of their development cannot eat green fruit or *fruta agria*/ sour fruit.
- Throwing a child's milk or baby tooth on the rooftop when they lose it will make the new tooth come in strong and straight. (more information on this and the [Ratoncito Pérez](#) here)

Marriage and no marriage

- It is a catastrophe if one gets married on Tuesday, Friday or in the month of November.
- If a woman opens an umbrella in the house she will never get married
- DO not go to a wedding dressed in black this gives bad luck to the couple.
- If a single woman in serving something on a tray and the tray is left empty she should hold it upside down or she won't get married.
- If a young girl walks under a ladder, she will never marry.
- You can't sweep a single person's feet or they will stay single.
- If you cross a set of hands already in a handshake with another handshake, someone will be getting married
- Getting married on Tuesday or Friday in November is very bad luck.

Death and death causes

- If you have two lights turned on in a room. This causes death.
- If a dog howls with persistence somebody in the neighborhood will die.
- If a dog barks at night without reason then he is seeing a ghost.
- If all the hens cluck at the same time there will be a death in the family.
- If a person goes to the cemetery while ill they will die of that disease.
- Do Not sleep with your feet towards the street. Since this is the way the dead are put to rest this will bring bad luck or even worse death
- Every time a bottle of alcohol is opened some of the alcohol must be poured onto the floor *por los muertos*/ for the dead.
- When seeing a funeral procession on the highway make sure to cross yourself or you could be possessed by the dead.
- If your windows are open and a funeral is going by you have to close the windows and wake any sleeping babies. Throw a bucket of water down the steps for good measure.
- Every time you pass a graveyard don't forget to cross yourself for protection and respect, at both the beginning and end of the graveyard.

Food and In the Home Superstitions

- Do not ask a neighbor to lend you salt in the morning. This will bring bad luck.
- If a farmer chews tobacco while he plants yucca, the yucca will be bitter.
- Young women just entering puberty may never eat citrus fruits
- A new straw broom, before the first use, must be set outside for a day for luck
- Never hand a salt shaker directly to someone, you should always place it on the table first.
- You cannot eat avocado and drink milk right before bed or you will get bad stomach cramps
- You should never drink coffee standing up or any plans that you have made will not happen (se te barajan los planes).
- If you drop a fork and the tines of the fork point to the roof (up) an angry sibling will arrive. If the tines of the fork point to the floor the siblings will arrive looking for food or lodgings, a celebration.
- If you drop a knife in the kitchen, a male visitor will be stopping by. If you drop a spoon, it will be a female.
- If you eat the seeds of a watermelon (Pastilla) you will get stomach pains and die.
- Don't eat piña/ pineapple too soon after eating eggs.
- Placing a broom behind the door one will receive visitors
- To get rid of a guest who has overstayed their welcome place a broom behind the entry door with the bristle end up.
- If you come across a set of crossed branches on your doorstep, watch out. Someone had done a "job" on you.
- Cover all your mirrors during thunderstorms
- The first time you enter your new house (residence) bring with you oil, salt, bread, a candle and a picture of Jesus or whatever saint you choose. The candle and picture is to bless the house and the oil, salt and bread will always make sure you have food in the house.
- If a wasp comes into the house it's bad luck.
- Never sweep out the front door of a business. "There go your profits".
- Don't put money under your mattress or you will never get a good nights sleep.
- Bells placed in the doorway ward off evil and are placed there as an advanced warning should spirits enter the home.
- Never open the fridge after you iron
- A glass of water placed on a shelf with the image of Santa Clara placed behind it to "they clarify all the ways"
- Place above the front door some sábila/ aloe. This collects all negative energy of people coming and going
- Standing in a doorway during a thunderstorm could cause the home to be struck with lightning
- Place a sprig of Perejil/ parsley in your home and it will bring you money.
- Turning a chair on one leg will bring misfortune.

Rain and Water

- If things are going bad, a dip in the ocean will wash away the bad spirits.
- Don't bathe in the morning – again, you will get gripe (the flu or a cold)
- You must place a cubo de auga/ bucket of water at the furthest corner of your house the week of New Year's. Exactly at midnight you dump the water out the backdoor. The belief is you gather all the bad spirits and feelings of the previous year and you dump them out never to return.(more [New Year traditions](#))
- If you go into a rain shower when the sun is shining you will get sick.
- Taking a bath with rose petals is said to bring Quitar la mala suerte/ good luck. Usually done by people who have not won the lottery.

- To make it not rain make a circle of pebbles in your yard. Cover these stones with ashes and say the anti-rain chant "San Isidro Labrador, quita el agua y pon el sol !"
- To protect your crops during a storm with strong winds mount your machete, upside down, on the wall in the farthest corner of the home
- If you are caught in a thunder and lightening storm its best to stop talking and close the mouth. Also remove and teeth that are removable because they, the metal in them, are said to be lightning conductors and they can be blown right out of your mouth.
- When the first rain in May falls catch the water with your hands and wash your face. This will get rid of wrinkles, and purify. Save some in a jar to use later for whatever ails you.

Miscellaneous Superstitions, Beliefs and Omens

- If a fighting rooster, early in the morning when his head is still under his wing, sees himself. He should not fight that day because he will lose.
- If one has an itch in the right hand they will receive money, but if it is in the left hand they will lose money.
- Tuesday the 13th is the equivalent to Friday the 13th it is bad luck.
- If you lose something burn a velon/ candle in offering to San Antonio and you will find what you lost.
- Never work with wet cement after 4 PM or you will get the infamous "gripe"
- Don't cross your eyes while a rooster is crowing.
- There are ciguapas who live in caves, often near a river, who have backward feet. When pursued, their tracks lead the hunters to where they have been.(more on [Ciguapas](#))
- There are duendes, once children who died without being baptized. They pass the time playing tricks on humans. For example, when you can't find your eyeglasses or sewing scissors, even though sure you left them in a particular spot, it is probably because they were hidden by the duendes.(more on [Duendes](#))
- There are the speedy zanganos, who are able to travel amazing distances in a very short time.(more on [zanganos](#))
- There are the resguardos/ amulets that are worn for protection against enemies that are purchased from suppliers. The most effective, they say (and you know who THEY are) , is a bag with a small cross attached that contains a special prayer. Others include the tooth of a cow, a fragment of burro bone, and a black coral cross.
- And there are the ceremonies for expelling evil spirits that have taken possession of someone. Witches and exorcists expel them with rituals and procedures in which they employ various tools, techniques and materials such as trying to persuade them to leave; drawing crosses with garlic on the hands, forehead and back of the possessed person; striking the victim with whips of brooms made of the leaves and branches of certain plants and bushes (e.g. guandule, anamú). The churches also have ceremonies for expelling evil spirits that are led by the minister or an important member qualified to do this ceremony.
- Beware of Coats or also known as Bilín. He can become a burro or other animals as he desires. People here have a lot of respect for Bilín."
- During the 30 years that [Trujillo](#) ruled the Dominican Republic, many countrymen were arrested for violating various laws. For example, if you weren't farming at least 10 tareas (about 1.5 acres), the soldiers marched you off to jail. Some of these men were able to avoid arrest by making themselves invisible whenever soldiers were in the area; others turned themselves into stumps or rocks, or at least that is what you saw when you looked at them. A few men could escape from the soldiers by changing into eels and disappearing under the water when they crossed a river or stream on the way to jail."
- You are never to work or do anything of great effort on Corpus Christi Day. That is a "cosa mala"/ "bad thing" (which, for Dominicans, is one of those things that nobody really knows why is offensive to God, just that it is offensive).

- Having sex on a Good Friday (Easter Friday) is a bad thing. People who do, supposedly, will be stuck the rest of the day in whatever position they were in.
- When a woman has her menstruation she can not touch any cleaning products because she will get very sick.
- You must always say God willing ("Si Dios quiere ", "si dios lo permite", "con dios delante"), if you are talking about seeing someone tomorrow or if you are going into town(A guy told his family that he was going to town and left out the important phrase. Well he walked, and walked and walked but he never ever got there!!)
- I've heard if someone has placed an evil voodoo spell on you. The only way for you to brake that spell is to throw a stone and hit the witch right on the forehead and it must bleed. If it doesn't bleed, then the spell won't go away.
- Never pick up coins from the ground. They might have evil spells, and if you pick them up, that spell will fall on you.
- If someone is calling your name don't turn around on the first call, one has to wait for the third time because it might be a zombie calling you to steal you soul.
- If the first transaction of the day for a salesman is on credit the salesman will have problems with the clients for the entire day.
- To mention Christopher Columbus's name is very unlucky. Instead of using his name, Dominicans call him "The Admiral."

Higa or Figa Amulets (Ásabache as it is known in Dominican Republic)

Spanish seamen, being very superstitious, thought it brought bad luck to pass by some of the "cursed islands". To deflect this bad luck some thought that by passing a cursed islands on the north side would bring better luck while others thought that passing by on the south side was better. It was the perception that the devil brought storms and that many places were cursed. This is why the crew had to use something to protect themselves against this evil. Especially the evil eye. The higa or figa, it is thought, was first used as a good luck charm, worn around the neck for protection. It seems that some were also quite large and it is believed these were used to protect the animals such as horses or dogs. There have been many found in shipwrecks and along the beaches. Many of which are on display the [Museo de las Cases Reales](#) de Santo Domingo.

"Figa," the small hand shaped amulets that has the thumb placed between the index finger and the middle finger. The lucky figa is an amulet made in the shape of a hand. This hand is clenched into a fist with the thumb sticking up between the index and second fingers. These have been found to be made from many different substances. Among them is coral, wood, ivory, natural crystal, jet and gold. Almost any material that could be formed into this fist shape was used. There have been other items, such as spoons and boxes, embellished with the figa.

In some countries the figa is considered to be obscene because of the hand gesture it represents.

Witchcraft, Misterosos, Possession and Cures

- Witchcraft is said to cause many illnesses here in Dominican Republic, especially if an illness or disease comes on swiftly or lasts a long time.
- Many illnesses are said to occur when a person hires a brujo/ sorcerer (male witch) or a bruja/ sorceress (female witch) to call upon the spirit of a diseased person to gain vengeance or because they are envious of someone. The end result is the person that used this means of getting even can become sick themselves. This because they became possessed themselves unknowingly. Because of this possession they become physically or mentally sick.
- This spirit that causes sickness to the unsuspecting human is called the Bacá. This spirit is brought into existence to protect the owner of some property or to make another sick. Any person that the owner of this spirit comes in contact with will become sick or crazy.

- Diseases can be caused by not giving enough attention to the misterios/ spirits and making them angry. If you make fun of them, don't take them seriously, do not believe in them or do not give them the sacrifices they feel are their due. If you cause the wrath of a misterioso they could possess the offending human and cause illness, both physical and mental. If there is no visible cause for these illnesses it is then advisable to get in touch with a brujo so they can tell you how to deal with this problem or to aide in get rid of this trouble causing misterioso. Also, it is recommended, if you have an angry misterioso possessing you to go on a pilgrimage. Many times this pilgrimage will include, among other things, repenting of the sins and sleeping on the floor in front of an altar.
- Sometimes the healer or Brujo will get possessed by this misterioso himself so he can be spoken through thus knowing by feeling and seeing the illness himself. In this way he can best know how to deal with and cure the problem. These possessions can be complete body and mind possessions where the misterioso enters the Brujo or Bruja. Some just prefer to use Vista Clara/Clairvoyant where they do not have to be possessed, only inspired, by going into a trance. Some say God inspires them others say the misterioso does. After this visions they can see how best to cure a person or disease. Sometimes by only asking the possessor to go away rids the person, others times it is necessary to prescribe a traditional folk remedy of herbs and natural ingredients or by some specific action. They can use card reading , reading of coffee grounds or read water in a glass with a candle behind.
- Many times, after a person who has experienced and cleansed themselves of this possession, they themselves have become spiritual healers. After a person has overcome a disease or illness caused by these misteriosos, it seems they have, in many cases, gained the special powers to aid others in how to overcome the misteriosos. It is said that the only way a misterioso would permit them to be healed is for them to become Curanderos/ Healers themselves. The Curanderos are usually Brujos, both at the same time. They are considered to be quite powerful.
- Some cures are just the traditional Ensalmar/ praying for health. Others are to write their wish on a piece of paper then place it inside or under a magical object, maybe a statue, a candle, or a special stone or trinket. Some cures can include an exorcism, especially when the person is possessed by a bad spirit called an Envío. The bad spirit can be sent into some living animal or creature. There is a bottle that can be used as a trap to put the evil spirit in. There is a trap inside the bottle in which the person spits several times and trap's the evil spirit in this form. There is also a grave yard caretaker or Barón del Cementerio/ Baron of the cemetery that can send the evil spirit away. A bath, in a tub, spring or river, can be used with herbs or medicines in the water that one must wash in on the designated days and hours. This bath can wash away evil and also bring good luck as well, all depending on the ingredients and procedures used for this cleansing. There are many different amulets, among them animal teeth. Sometimes an item is burned and the ashes are taken internally or rubbed on the body
- Many of these healers have learned their trade passed down from their ancestors. Their knowledge of herbs and the mental states of the people make many of their cures really work. The herbal remedies are many of which modern medicines have been derived. I am not sure about some of these healing medicines but many times a sickness can be just in the head and maybe a little superstition to make the sickness go away is all that is needed. If you believe it is gone , it is gone. Also the herbal healing methods have been used since the beginning of time and many really do work. Some seem to come from Indian traditions and African traditions as well. Many are believed the world over only in slightly varied forms.
- More information about [brujas in the myths and legends section](#)
- **Some Marriage/ Matrimoniales Traditions in Dominican Republic**
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- Usually the man proposes. If the couple decides to have a church wedding/ boda and reception then the preparations are mostly done by the bride's family. Weddings can be expensive and so some people choose to have smaller gatherings or just marry in civil court.
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- Many people will marry in a Civil Court of Judges Chamber before the large ceremony so they can have all the legal documents. Then have a church wedding.The couple would marry in civil

court or in a judge's chamber the morning of the wedding or even the day before the actual church wedding. Especially if they choose not to marry in a Catholic ceremony.

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- Bridesmaids and large wedding parties are not the norm here. Having a cute little ring bearer and flower girl is. Many times they dress the same as the bride and groom, in smaller scale.
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- Having "padrinos and madrinas" (godparents of the wedding) is very traditional. The godparents are usually the mother of the groom and the father of the bride and their role is to serve as witnesses. Along with the couple, the godparents also sign the marriage certificate.
- Another tradition is to have a child (usually a boy) carry the "arras" or coins on a silver tray. The boy would have 13 coins (they are usually 10 cents coins) that at some point during the ceremony will be passed to the priest. The priest will pass them to the groom and he in turn will pass them to the bride. This exchange signifies that the couple pledges to provide for each other and that material goods are to be shared equally. The whole thing is very symbolic and is quite romantic.
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- In addition to the flower girl, the ring bearer and the coins bearer, we also have a child that carries a fancy white bible.
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- The mother of the groom with the groom escorting her enter the church first. The mother of the bride then enters escorted by the father of the groom. The wedding party enters next including the children, usually entering in pairs.
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- Another Dominican tradition is to have what is called a "ceremonia cantada" meaning that every piece of music was actually sung, instead of being just instrumental.
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- It used to be that Dominican wedding receptions consisted mostly of cake and champagne, along with light appetizers at best. Today, sit down dinners are the style.
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- Usually, there's a bachelor party/ despedida de soltero and what you call a bachelorette party/ despedida de soltera. There is also the usual bridal showers.
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- The vast majority of Dominicans deliver their gifts to the bride's home before the wedding day. **Never** take a gift with you to the wedding ceremony or reception.
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- The church is usually not divided into "bride's" and "groom's" sides. So you can sit where you would like.
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- At the end of the liturgy, a large number of people go to the altar. These are witnesses, and there could be dozens. Asking someone to be a witness is a way of honoring them as a special guest. Many family members and friends will be included.
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- The newly married couple will be the first to exit the church. Do not try to greet them outside. Instead, proceed directly to the reception.
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- The bride and her father have the first dance. They are joined by the groom and the bride's mother. Then the entire wedding party and family enter the dance floor. After this then the guests can start dancing.
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- Most newlywed couples will stay until the end of their party, which could last til 3 AM or later. They are never the first to leave. So if you want to leave do not hesitate to leave before the bride and groom. Any time after the meal is socially acceptable, although you are likely to miss quite a party.
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- There is no tradition about the Groom not seeing the Bride before the wedding. This is when most of the wedding party photographs are taken.

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- **Funeral Traditions/ Tradiciones funerarias**

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- The wake continues until 12 noon the next day, followed by burial at the cemetery. It is the family's choice to retire at midnight and return the next day around 7 am.

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- Many families follow on with a series of memorial masses held for nine (9) consecutive days. This is known as los nueves dias, novenario, or la vela. When and where they will be held will be announced. It is not necessary to go to these masses unless you were a close friend of the person or family, especially if you attended the funeral. One is never expected to attend all the masses unless you want to do so. If you were not able to attend the funeral you should go to one of the masses. You might choose to go to the last one that usually will be announced in the press. This marks the end of the mourning period ceremonies.

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- The nine days of mourning usually consist of three days of grieving (crying and reminiscing). 3 days of silence (thinking and reverence). The last 3 days are for release (accepting and separating).

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- To "cumplir" is to act in accordance with the standard social procedures. A person will go to a funeral whether or not it is his desire; it is his duty. To "cumplir" is important in this society. It signifies respect and caring.

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- Many of the poorer people are only laid out for 1 day in the home. This is because of the heat and fast decomposition of the body. Also, the caskets usually have a window for viewing. Maybe this is to keep the smell in and bugs out.

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- Flowers are not expected.

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- Only good friends and family are expected at the burial.

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- Dominicans show much respect for their dead. A funeral is an event that will gather people together, including family members, who may not have seen each other for a number of years. Inside the chapel it is sedated but outside, there will be a lot more liveliness almost reminiscent of a normal social occasion.

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- **New Years/ Año Nuevo**

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- The traditional Christmas dinner is also served on New Years.

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- One should clear out the old and start the new year fresh and clean. The house needs to be scrubbed from top to bottom All drawers need to be cleaned out. All this cleaning brings good luck.

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- Different colors mean different things. Wear the color that brings the wish for the coming year you want to come true. Green/ Verde helps out with the money situation, Red/ Rojo brings a bright future, Yellow/ Amarillo makes work better, White/ Blanco is for good health.

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- When the clock strikes 12 make sure the doors and windows are open wide so the last years spirit can get out freely and the new one can enter.

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- At the end of the year you have to throw out your old brooms. Any broom you happen to have in the home needs to be placed in a corner of the house. Remember to leave the new broom outside overnight before bringing it into the house. I'm not sure why, just to be safe you best do it.
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- Never sweep the house on New Year's Day. You may end up sweeping your luck away with the dirt.
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- Make sure to have 12 grapes/ uvos per person. For each toll of the clock or each month of the year, you need to eat a grape and make a wish for the coming year.
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- You may notice that many of the homes get a new coat of paint for the holidays. This is part of the cleaning everything and making way for the new.
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- You need to burn some incense to purifying the home (this goes way back to the native Taino Indians that lived on the island)
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- If your a catholic you need to have a priest come and bless the house or at least give it a good dousing of holy water.
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- **Traditions and Beliefs/ Tradiciones y las creencias**

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- The wake continues until 12 noon the next day, followed by burial at the cemetery. It is the family's choice to retire at midnight and return the next day around 7 am.
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- Many families follow on with a series of memorial masses held for nine (9) consecutive days. This is known as los nueve dias, novenario, or la vela. When and where they will be held will be announced. It is not necessary to go to these masses unless you were a close friend of the person or family, especially if you attended the funeral. One is never expected to attend all the masses unless you want to do so. If you were not able to attend the funeral you should go to one of the masses. You might choose to go to the last one that usually will be announced in the press. This marks the end of the mourning period ceremonies.
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- The nine days of mourning usually consist of three days of grieving (crying and reminiscing). 3 days of silence (thinking and reverence). The last 3 days are for release (accepting and separating).
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- To "cumplir" is to act in accordance with the standard social procedures. A person will go to a funeral whether or not it is his desire; it is his duty. To "cumplir" is important in this society. It signifies respect and caring.

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- Many of the poorer people are only laid out for 1 day in the home. This is because of the heat and fast decomposition of the body. Also, the caskets usually have a window for viewing. Maybe this is to keep the smell in and bugs out.
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- Flowers are not expected.
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- Only good friends and family are expected at the burial.
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- Dominicans show much respect for their dead. A funeral is an event that will gather people together, including family members, who may not have seen each other for a number of years. Inside the chapel it is sedated but outside, there will be a lot more liveliness almost reminiscent of a normal social occasion.

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- [Getting married in Dominican Republic?](#)

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- [Dominican Wedding Services](#)

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- [Culture, Traditions and More](#)

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- about the [Cemeteria Independencia](#)

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- **Two Last Names / Apellidos.**
- I'm not very sure about this myself so I decided to write it for myself and others that are confused with this matter.
- Hispanic culture uses two last names or apellidos. So lets see if I can get this straight. Felix Billini Duarte (I just made that up). Felix is the first name and sometimes there is a middle name also but this made up person does not have one. Billini would be the first last name of the father (apellido paterno) and Duarte would be the first last name of the mother (apellido materno). The fathers names: the first last name would be the fathers name and the second last name would be the mothers first last name which would also be called the mothers maiden name. Thus Felix mother was Anna Duarte Sanchez and the father was Antony Billini Cabral.
- Anna Duarte Sanchez married Antony Billini Cabral. In the old days if Anna wanted to she could add her husbands last name to hers using "de" thus her married name would be Anna Duarte de Billini. But this is not tradition in modern times. Some also put a little hyphen between their last names as Felix Billini-Duarte if they so desire.

- So this is why Felix has the name Billini Duarte. Dads first last name/ apellido paterno first. Moms first last name/ apellido materno last.
- One more time:
- Antony Billini Cabral and Anna Duarte Sanchez get married. Now their names are...
- Antony Billini Cabral and Anna Duarte de Billini (or she just keeps her own name). They have a bouncing baby boy..
- Felix is born...his name is now Felix Billini Duarte.
- And the line continues. Do you understand now? Use the 2 first last names for the kid. The kid drops the 2 last last names. Married. The women doesn't change the last name.
- **Looking up a name in the phone book ?** In the white pages a persons Father's last name is listed first and the Mother's surname is listed next. As usual, the persons first name is listed last.
- ABC order? The same as looking up a neam in the phone book. The first last name first, second last name second and their given name is last.Billini Duarte, Felix.
- There. Easy is it not?
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- **Chupacabra/ Goat Sucker** or Evil thing.
- The chupacabra is (supposedly) alien in origin and was brought here by a UFO. It is a living creature that looks like a hunched alien with a line of sharp spikes down the middle of it's back exactly where the spine is located. It has grey skin that is part fur and part feather. It's short arms have long nasty claws and it's legs are like a kangaroos. It is said to be about 4 feet tall when standing erect. This grey being has huge red elongated glowing eyes, the better to see you with. They are said to be very powerful and people have reported seeing the chupacabra fly.
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- Creatures fitting this description were said to first be spotted in Puerto Rico in the mid-1990s. Also a few years later the chupacabra started showing up in Mexico, South Florida, Central America, and South America including Dominican Republic. Although few people have actually clamed to seeing a real chupacabra many claim to have seen the works of this blood sucking alien being. Many domestic animals (cattle, goats, etc) that have been found dead with two holes on their neck. Their their blood drained and their organs sucked out as well.
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- *Interesting articles about the [Chupacabra](#) .*
- **Los Biembiens**
- The legend of the Biembiens started in the XVIII century. It is said these beings are located in the mountains of Bahoruco. An African slave and some Indians ran from their Spanish enslavers. They transformed into wild beings after a time and became legendary.
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- The Biembiens only language are grunt-like sounds. Their short, deformed and ugly bodies are unclothed and they are not very friendly beings. These creatures are very agile climbers of both trees and mountains. They can attack alone of in groups. After dark they come out of their hiding places to search for food. Like the Ciguapa they also leave backwards tracks to protect themselves from being discovered. They do eat humans, mainly the entrails and also use humans as sacrifices.
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- So, if you are walking in the mountains and you hear unusual growls and gurgling knowing it is not your stomach. Run, don't walk. Remember, here in Dominican Republic we have no wild animals. If you hear this it can only be a roaming Biembien, looking for it's next victim.....
- **Bruja/ Witch**
- The legend of the Brujas in the Dominican Republic comes from Europe, that even conserves the echoes of the medieval beliefs as an older person dies. Our witches are old deformed women, perverse and night dwellers. They do fly on brooms but they prefer changing into large birds. In this form they can fly closer to houses and yell with loud squawking sounds. It is said that the

witches removes its skin before flying and keep it in soaking in a tintature. When they take to flight they are said to say "Without God nor Santa Maria!". People say they have heard the Bruja during flight laughing and singing in a hideous voice.

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- When the witches rest they do so under the branches of the platano tree. The witches will suck the blood of the children either from the navel or the big toe. It is said that a Bruja will not attack the children of its own friends or if they are twins.
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- The only way one can catch a bruja is to knock her down. The "tumbadores" are said to be the only ones that are able to fall a witch because only they know the special orations and rituals. After a witch is caught one must wait for dawn. Only when the sun rises and the witches enchantment is broken can their true identity be discovered.
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- So be careful, when it rains or when the day is cloudy. There could be a Bruja hiding in some dark corner or maybe even sleeping under your platano tree...
- **El Galipote-El Gualipote/ dog-like creature & El Lugaru-El Zangano/ flying creatures**
- These legendary magical creatures are said to be men who can become animals. Galipote can also become inanimate objects, like tree trunks and stones. He can transfer his desires to animals and in this way can make the animal do his wishes. According to the belief galipototes are cruel and violent They are very strong and bullets do not hurt them. It is said they like to cause havoc by frightening people traveling in the night. They do not permit the person to pass and helping helping people to get lost.
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- It is difficult not to find a Galipote when traveling in the country so it is good to carry a protective amulet and to cross yourself often to protect yourself from these beings. Galipote can become a dog. A Galipote that becomes dog is called a lugaru from the French word that means Man-Wolf. It can also fly like a bird. This high flying, nocturnal bird is called zangano or zancu. It is said that this being sucks the blood of the children during the nights and will also have sexual activities with infants. It can also become invisible. The only way to kill one of these beings is to get a branch and make a palo de cruz/ wooden cross. This wood can only be cut on Good Friday. Some say you must use a knife or machete that has been blessed with water and salt.
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- There still are Galipototes (also spelt Gualipototes) in existence according to some of the residents of San Juan de la Maguana located in the southern part of the country. Families tell stories of how relatives were known Galipototes. To become a Galipote one must make a pact with the devil himself, selling their soul for the ability to change ones self into another form. There are recent stories coming from the Palma Sola Massacres of 1962 that says the survivors of this massacre were Galipototes. They were able to change themselves into elements of the environment such as rocks, trees, or animals. In this way the soldiers were not able to see them to eradicate them and thus came about their survival.
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- Parents to this day scare their children with tales of these people that can change their shape at will. "If you be bad and don't listen a Galipote will get you!"
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- So, when you are roaming in the campo at night, be sure to carry your wooden cross. Better yet, just don't be traveling in the campo after dark. You may never find your way home.....
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- **Los Indios De Las Augas/ The Indians of the Waters**
- These Indians are the fabulous beings who inhabit caves. Be they the submerged caves of rivers and lakes or inside the mountain caves. It is said that these were groups of escaped Taino Indians who kept up their old traditions and ways. In order to do this they had to stay hidden. These Indians are said to be very beautiful, especially the woman, because of her dark eyes,

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- **LA JUPIA**
- Jupio or Hupio is an Indian work for dead men come to life. The Jupia is the feminine version of the same. She was a spirit or ghost of the air who only appeared in the night and in the form of a human. This spirit resembled a human in all ways with one exception, it did not have a navel. The Jupia did not have a navel because it was not born of a woman.
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- Today this indigenous legend is still said to be seen by farmers and people who live away from civilization. Jupia is a ghost woman who visits, riding on a dark horse. Quietly. In the darkest night. Roaming through the open fields....
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- **EL CUCO**
- El cuco is a mythical monster whose origins can be traced to Spain. The legend of El Cuco is used through out Spain and Latin America as a fright tool to make children go to sleep. It is very similar to the Boogy Man in USA. There is no real description of this mythical being. It is as if he has no form or shape. It is just a being that is more felt than seen. Parents and grandparents alike tell the children if they do not go to sleep and fast that El Cuco will come and take them.
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- So be careful if you can't sleep and you see a shadow passing near your bed. It could be El Cuco....
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- **A few artists have used the name. Cuco Valoy, a Dominican salsa and merengue singer makes many references to El Cuco. Tonio Rosario has an album named "La Magia de El Cuco". There is a trip music festival in Puerto Rico that uses the name of this nocturnal faceless creature.*
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- - It is said that the goat sucker will also pray on sleeping humans. So, try not to sleep too soundly. You never know what type of alien being may be lurking, waiting. Waiting to take your life's blood....
 - *Gualipots comes from the Taino language Quali which means sons or children of.. Pote which means Devil.*
 - Whether such a creature exists is a great topic of debate. Some of the happenings are probably pranks, yet there is a possibility of such a creature living with no humans ever encountering it. Some people think it could be a bat-like creature.
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- **The Nimitas/ Fireflies**

- Nimitas are a very common sight in the country around the open fields in Dominican Republic. Their bright tail light is used to attract their mate. Superstition here says that the Nimitas are the souls of the dead who are watching out for their loved ones still living. they shine their light reminding all who see that they are there always there....watching.
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- **Folclore de la República Dominicana/ Folklore of the Dominican Republic**
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- **Duendes or Los Menos**

- These mythical beings are very similar to elves. They are very mischievous creatures that like to play jokes on people. They can be both good and bad creatures all depending on their moods.

Small but noisy, they can be very bothersome. They are many times blamed for strange noises in a home. Duendes are known to drop stones on porches just to annoy. They can be heard running in the night and like to giggle and laugh loudly. Duendes like to make things disappear, move things around or change them completely. If a fire in the hearth goes out, gets too high or sparks it is always the fault of a duende. They are just a big nuisance.

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- Los Menos seem to prefer nature and freedom more than being inside but they can live in many places. They like caves, old tree trunks and hidden places under stones. They like hidden corners of a home, in the attic, or in warehouses. They are known to play with crickets and torture butterflies. Always they enjoy dancing by the light of the moon.
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- Duendes are not tall. They are said to be the size of a small boy. It may have the height of the boy but its face is wrinkled like an old man. They usually wear some type of red clothing and usually can be found in groups of no more than five. Even though they travel in groups they are almost impossible to be seen. They are invisible to humans only unless they want to be seen. They make themselves visible usually only when there is no sun or at dawn. It is said that only children and simple minded people can see them and when they do it usually makes them cry.
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- Los Menos are known to take children that are not baptized. If they do take a child, usually it is a boy. They will take the child deep into the mountains or countryside and turn this child into one of them. If the child has been baptized and they took it by accident, they will set it free in the mountains where there are no people. Here the child will roam and get lost.
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- So, if you feel that there is someone watching you from the darkness. Maybe you see a quick flicker of eyes in the dark. You could be being watched by an unseen Duende, waiting to see what trouble he can cause you....
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- **Sirens** (Sirenia in Latin means mermaid)
- The Sirens have been around since man started exploring the world by sea. Ancient maps have drawings of sea serpents and mermaids. Cristóbal (Christopher) Columbus men saw Sirens. In recent times a mermaid is portrayed as being beautiful but in this time they were said to be ugly. Columbus wrote in one of his journals "[A crewman] saw three mermaids, who rose very high from the sea, but they are not so beautiful as they are painted, though to some extent they have a human appearance about the face."
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- Sirens are said to lead sea men astray with their singing and womanly shapes. This was done by enchanting the mortal if they stopped to listen to the song. If a man listens to the song of a siren they will never return to their family again. It has been said that entire ships crews were enchanted and this is why they were lost at sea forever. Ships run ashore and sometimes entire crews are said to have been suffocated by these mythical creatures of the sea. Even spotting a siren is very bad luck.
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- It is thought that these sirens or mermaids were really Manatees. The tails of mermaids in the drawings are the same as a manatees. Maybe the long hair is attributed to the way manatees rise from the water and have sea weeds hanging off them. They could look like they are trying to embrace a man as they embrace their young in the same way a woman might embrace a man. Yet, for a man to see a woman in a 2000 pound manatee is way out there for sure. Could it be that being at sea too long he wanted a woman so bad that he was hallucinating? Men long ago did like a more voluptuous woman, but for them to think a manatee was a woman is pushing it a bit.
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- So, if your a man at sea and yearning for a woman beware when one rises out of the sea and starts singing to you. Don't fall prey. Get to a doctor and fast to be treated for hallucinations. Because if you succumb you may never return to life as you know it....
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- Did you know....
- *Sirenomelia or mermaid syndrome is a rare birth defect where one is born with their legs joined together.
- *It is said the American Indian tribe Penobscot is said to be descended from a mermaid.
- *The Selkies of Scottish and Irish legend are more seal and mated with man.



Ciguapa

- The ciguapa is a magical being, beautiful in appearance to some, horrendous to others. All say they are wild creatures and are compared to a mermaid. Beautiful and cruel, not quite human yet innocent. They are said to have brown skin and black eyes. With smooth, glossy hair flowing the length of their naked bodies, covering them as if it a long beautiful gown. they are very deceitful and are always waiting in ready to capture the wayward traveler.
- She is said to be such a spectacular beauty that men followed her into the forest even though following her tracks were very difficult as her footprints pointed in the opposite direction (the backward feet are found in ancient traditions to signify death, entry into the land of no return). Even though it was difficult she was followed because of the promise that a beautiful woman was waiting.
- Children are told if they stand by the shore facing the sea and yell "María la O, María la O, tu madre es puta y la mía no!", a big wave will break and take you to drown in the sea.
- So remember, if you do come across a Ciguapa do not look into its eyes. She will bewitch you and you forever will be under her power.....
- **The 'cigua' is the national bird (cigua palmera) It is a Taino word. 'Ciguatera' is something we get from eating contaminated ('red tide' algae) fish?*
- See a [picture of the Cigua Palmera/ Palm Chat](#) (opens in new window)
- If the hammock of the boy is rocked without him in it, this will cause the boy to become crazy.
- A women after having a child cannot wash her hair hair for 41 days
- Pregnant women should not go into the ocean
- The name is an important part of the person and can be used to bring evil to the person if it is known. Because of this a persons real name is usually kept secret. If your real name is known then you could be bewitched or sold to the devil by a Vendegete, or cursed by a brujo/ witch. This is why nick names, known here as Apodo, are given to children by their parents. These names usually are nothing like their given name but usually has something to do with their appearance.
- Do not get your baby's haircut before he is one. If you do he won't talk!
- A pregnant woman should not walk underneath a guanabana tree or eat guanabana as she may lose her child.
- Pregnant women cannot eat piña / pineapple.

- If a baby is getting sick or congested take a hair off a menstruating woman's head and tie it around the babies wrist for 24 hours and the child will not get sick.
- When a baby has hiccups, put a hair from the mother's head on the baby's head until the hiccups go away.
- To prevent hiccups when feeding a baby place a string from it's blanket on the forehead.
-