

Nine of Cups – 45' Liberty Cutter – 7' draft – March 2002  
Subject area: Luperon, Dominican Republic

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We left Great Sand Cay in the Turks at 1800 headed for Luperon, Dominican Republic. Great sail, but shifting winds resulted in being too far west and we motor-sailed east the last couple of hours to arrive in a crowded Bahia Luperon by about 1100 on a Sunday morning. In addition to our charts, we found "The Turks & Caicos Guide" by Stephen Pavlidis and Bruce Van Sant's "Gentlemen's Guide" great references. The waypoint provided by Pavlidis for the entrance to the bay (19°55.50'N/70°56.50'W) is good, however some of the markers shown on the chartlets are missing so keep a sharp lookout.

Clearing customs was not as easy, nor as economical as advertised in our cruising guides. Instead of the \$20 charge we expected, the costs for clearing into the DR was about \$78.00 (\$43/boat; \$10/passport; \$5/Port fee; \$10/ Agriculture). Only the Department of Agriculture visited our boat and not until the third day we were there. We walked to the Customs/Immigracion offices (blue trailer on right at end of the dock) on Monday, paid them and then reported into the Commandancia's office with our Turks clearance papers(no charge) . Though our Spanish is minimal, we completed all forms without much hassle and all personnel were patient and pleasant. All receipts were given in pesos though we paid in dollars. The exchange rate at customs was terrible and we'd suggest stopping at Codetel to exchange dollars for pesos before visiting customs. At the time of this writing, the exchange rate at Codetel was RD\$17.20 to US\$1.

The Luperon cruising community is informative, warm, welcoming and very active. Channel 68 is the local hailing channel and there is a cruiser's net at 0800 on Wednesdays and Sundays. Make sure your radio is tuned to 68 on arrival and you'll receive all sorts of hints about where and how to anchor... including Bruce van Sant himself telling you to "Anchor to the trades...anchor to the trades!"

There's much to do in the DR and Luperon is a great base from which to operate. In addition to the many local tours and trips offered, van Sant has a booklet "Seafarer's Inland Guide to the Dominican Republic" for 25 pesos which is great. A monthly cruiser's newsletter "Lushes and Lovers" is great and free to cruisers and filled with all sorts of information and local happenings and can be picked up at the Puerto Blanco Marina.

Our stay in Luperon was delightful. The Dominican people are warm, friendly, and beautiful. We'd highly recommend Luperon as a cruising stop or destination.

Associates David (AA1ZL) and Marcie (AA1ZM) Lynn