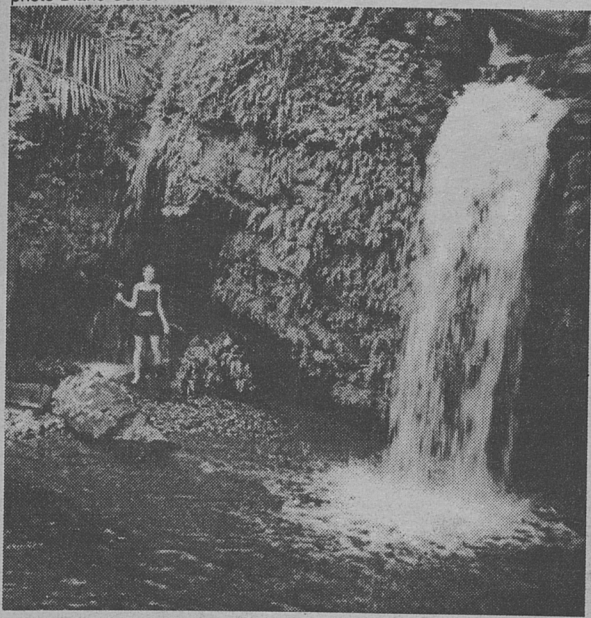


photo Diane Cutter



Waterfalls in El Yunque Rainforest

report. Sailing adventures range from charters to captained trips on genuine old-time, wooden fishing sailboats to sleek, modern catamarans. Prices range from \$55 and up, including lunch, beverages, and snorkeling gear for a full day's trip.

Nightlife includes tropical breezes and magnificent views at many fine restaurants and clubs with a wide range of prices, along with music, music, music. Puerto Ricans have a special affinity for music, and everywhere you go, you usually hear the live sounds of salsa, meringue, or reggae. For the GLBT crowd, the best place to go for nightlife is Old San Juan, where gay bars, drag shows, and evening cruises just for gays can easily be found, all for very reasonable prices. For you quieter folks, just sitting on a mountain hillside, swinging in a hammock, with a tropical breeze

wafting by, can be a wondrous experience. The local tree frog, coqui, can sing you to sleep with its famous lullaby.

Now that I have you dreaming, you should think about the kind of place in

a boulder nearby and contemplate the wonder of this tropical paradise.

For some truly unusual nightlife, don't miss the Bioluminescent Bay, part of the Las Cabras Nature Preserve. This lagoon provides one of our planet's only remaining

You will see philodendron leaves the size of houses, and Impatiens growing to the size of trees.

mango-lined bays, and it's filled with microscopic sea critters that light up so intensely that a school of fish swimming under your kayak will appear illuminated, as if Tinker Bell just waved her magic stardust wand under the water. It truly is an unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime marvel to experience the natural beauty of this bioluminescent bay; it costs about \$30 for a four-hour easy guided kayak trip. Guaranteed, your heart and soul will soar like Peter Pan and Wendy's!

Sailing, SCUBA diving, and snorkeling are fabulous here. The best snorkeling is off-shore, at one of the small, uninhabited islands an hour's sail off the coast. Waters are clear turquoise, usually calm, and you will see an abundance of every variety of tropical fish - without sharks, I am happy to

which you'd like to stay. You can find everything from inexpensive B&Bs starting at about \$60/night to very fancy hotel rooms at the Conquistador or Westin Resorts for \$250 and up. Villas, houses, condos, and apartments are also available for approximately \$100/night and up. ▼

Margarita Hutchison lived in Vermont for nearly half a century before deciding to move to Puerto Rico to enjoy its climate and Latin culture. She currently teaches part-time on Roosevelt Roads Navy Base at New Hampshire College and Columbia College. She and her daughter, Heather, moved to their tropical paradise (2.5 acres) in 1998 and have been operating Villas Margarita for less than a year.

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