

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- THE HISTORY OF PUERTO RICO USING AN INTERACTIVE TIMELINE
- CULTURAL TRADITIONS THAT SHAPE THE PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES OF LOIZA
- THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE & HOW RACISM AND POWER HAS CONTRIBUTED TO LOIZA'S INSTABILITY



### DID YOU KNOW?



**LOÍZA HAS THE LARGEST BLACK POPULATION IN PUERTO RICO!**



**THE TOWN WAS FIRST SETTLED BY MEMBERS OF THE YORUBA TRIBE FROM WEST AFRICA IN THE 16TH CENTURY!**

**"ENCAPSULATE YOURSELF INTO THE TOWN OF LOÍZA . A HARMONY OF CULTURES PRESERVED & WOVEN INTO THE ESSENCE OF IT'S PEOPLE."**

### AN ODE TO LOÍZA

**THANK YOU FOR CELEBRATING & HONORING THE MULTIFACETED NATURE OF BEING BLACK & PUERTO RICAN!**

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**WELCOME TO LOÍZA**

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Let's dive deep into a town that prides itself on their rich African roots & incorporates ancestral memory throughout the framework of their community.

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## BUILDING A BETTER LOÍZA : EXPLORING POLITICS, GOVERNMENTS & RACISM:

Politics & racism are often coincided, and in Loíza it is no different. In this section we'll dive deep into how power & discrimination has affected Loíza and it's citizens.

## A LOOK THROUGH PUERTO RICO'S HISTORY

An interactive timeline that takes you on a journey of Puerto Rico. Do you really know your history?



## THE BEST OF LOÍZA

### LA PLAYA



### SITIOS HISTORICOS



### FESTIVALES



### MUSEO



## WHERE TO TRAVEL?

LOÍZA IS FILLED WITH MANY INVITING PEOPLE & ATTRACTIONS. WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR DELICIOUS CUISINES, SPARKLING BLUE WATERS, OR ANCIENT RUINS, YOU'LL FIND IT ALL IN THIS BEAUTIFUL TOWN.

### LA PLAYA

Enter into a plethora of blue crystallized waters that absolutely take your breath away. Enjoy the beautiful reefs at **Playa Pinones** or **Playa Aviones**, and bask in the oasis of it all.

### SITIOS

### HISTORICAS

Visit historical sites like **Parque Historico Cueva Maria de la Cruz** or **Monumento Historico Cueva Maria de La Cruz**, and see the beauty of untouched landscapes.

### FESTIVALES

**Fiesta de Santiago Apostol** is notably one of the most anticipated festivals in Loíza. A culmination of cultures within the Afro-Puerto Rican community expressed in the colorful masks & rhythm-full dances.

### MUSEO

**Estudio de Arte Samuel Lind** is a museum dedicated to illustrating the people of Loiza. Despite always being seen as second-class citizen due to the color of their skin, Samuel Lind created paintings and sculptures that depicts the **beauty of blackness**.

# **YOUR GUIDE TO FIESTA DE SANTIAGO APOSTOL**



- **THIS FESTIVAL TAKES PLACE IN JULY & SPANS OVER A WEEK**
- **THERE ARE THREE IMAGES OF SANTIAGO THAT ARE CELEBRATED: SANTIAGO DE LOS NIÑOS, SANTIAGO DE LOS HOMBRES, AND SANTIAGO DE LAS MUJERES**
- **EACH SANTIAGO IS CARED FOR BY A DIFFERENT FAMILY, KNOWN AS MANTENEDORES.**
- **THE PEOPLE OF LOIZA AND THE KEEPERS OF SANTIAGO RETRACE THE STEPS OF THEIR ANCESTORS THROUGHOUT LOIZA UNTIL THEY REACH THE SITE OF AN OLD CORK TREE.**
- **THIS CORK TREE REPRESENTS THE LAST PLACE THE APPARITION OF SANTIAGO APOSTOL IN LOÍZA.**



## **THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE**


### **F IS FOR FIESTA!**

FIESTA DE SANTIAGO APOSTOL IS A MULTI-DAY CELEBRATION OF SAINT JAMES, ONE OF THE 12 APOSTLES. WITH YEAR ROUND PREPERATION, MANY PEOPLE TRAVEL FAR TO EXPERIENCE THIS FESTIVAL & ALL OF ITS GLAMOUR. FROM THE MASKED VEJIGANTES MASKS, TO THE RYTHMIC BOMBA, EVEN THE FLAVORFUL FOODS, IT'S THE EVENT OF THE YEAR!



### **"COMMUNITY IS STRENGTH"**

HOWEVER, FEISTA DE SANTIAGO APOSTOL IS MORE THAN JUST A CELEBRATION, IT IS MEDIUM FOR THE PEOPLE OF LOIZA. BEING A PREDOMINANTLY BLACK-IDENTIFYING TOWN, MANY OF THE STRUGGLES THAT BLACK PEOPLE FACE WORLDWIDE ARE ILLUSTRATED IN THIS SMALL TOWN. FROM COLORISM TO GENTRIFICATION, AND EVEN DISPLACEMENT. CITIZENS OF LOIZA USE THIS FESTIVAL AS A WAY OF REBELLING-- UTILIZING THEIR SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION TO RESIST OVERALL OPPRESSION.



**ESPIRITISMO IS DEFINED AS A BELIEF THAT SPIRITS CAN AFFECT OUR HEALTH, PROSPERITY AND OVERALL HUMAN LIFE. AS A PRACTICE THAT HAS EVOLVED FROM AFRICANIZED TRADITIONS, MANY PEOPLE OF LOIZA USE IT TO PROTEST AGAINST SPANISH HEGEMONY AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.**

**SANTIAGO'S ORIGINS PREDATE THE 16TH CENTURY. RUMORS SUGGEST THAT AFTER CONSTANTLY RUNNING AWAY FROM SLAVERY TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, SANTIAGO FOUND A HOME WITH THE PEOPLE IN LOIZA, AND IN EXCHANGE FOR THE PROTECTION AND LOVE THEY GAVE HIM, HE WATCHES OVER THEM.**

**MANY OF THE CHALLENGES CITIZENS OF LOIZA FACE IS LARGELY DUE TO THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN. THEY HAVE BEEN VICTIMS TO DISPLACEMENT, EXPLOITATIVE TOURISM, GENTRIFICATION, ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM, AND ECONOMIC OPPRESSION. HOWEVER, THE FIESTA OF SANTIAGO APOSTOL HAS BEEN A WAY FOR AFRO-PUERTO RICANS TO FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS. DURING THEIR WALK TO THE SITE SANTIAGO'S SPIRIT WAS LAST SEEN, THE PEOPLE OF LOIZA ARE SOBRE LA MARCHAS, ON THE MOVE. BY RETRACING THE SAINT'S CIMARRONAJE(RUNNING AWAY FROM SLAVERY), THEY ILLUSTRATE THEIR OWN FIGHT FOR FREEDOM AND JUSTICE.**



# "BUILDING A BETTER LOÍZA: EXPLORING POLITICS, AND GOVERNMENT"

LOÍZA IS A MUNICIPALITY LOCATED IN THE NORTHEAST COAST OF PUERTO RICO. THE MUNICIPALITY HAS A MAYOR-COUNCIL FORM OF GOVERNMENT, WITH A MAYOR AND EIGHT MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEMBERS. THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENACTING LOCAL ORDINANCES AND MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT LOCAL POLICIES.



## CURRENT MAYOR

JULIA M. NAZARIO FUENTES IS THE CURRENT MAYOR OF LOÍZA, PUERTO RICO. SHE ASSUMED OFFICE ON JANUARY 14, 2013, AND WAS RE-ELECTED IN 2016 AND 2020. SHE IS A MEMBER OF THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPD), ONE OF THE TWO MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES IN PUERTO RICO.

## WHAT IS JUNTA DE PLANIFICACIÓN?

THE JUNTA DE PLANIFICACIÓN IS A GOVERNMENT AGENCY IN PUERTO RICO RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING OF THE ISLAND'S DEVELOPMENT. IT WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1942 AND HAS THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE REGARDING LAND USE, ZONING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND OTHER ASPECTS OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

## ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM DATING BACK TO 1968

"THE JUNTA DE PLANIFICACIÓN, IN AN EFFORT TO JUSTIFY THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN LOÍZA AND CANÓVANAS, CLAIMED THAT THE TOWNS WERE SOCIALLY AND CULTURALLY DISTINCT. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, CANÓVANAS WAS VIEWED AS MORE ECONOMICALLY DEVELOPED, SELF-SUFFICIENT, PRACTICAL, INDIVIDUALISTIC, AND PURITANICAL DUE TO ITS PROXIMITY TO THE METROPOLITAN AREA AND THE GROWTH OF PROTESTANTISM. IN CONTRAST, LOÍZA RESIDENTS WERE SEEN AS SUBORDINATE TO A COHESIVE, HOMOGENEOUS, AND ISOLATED SOCIAL GROUP, AND WERE DEPICTED AS BEING INCLINED TOWARD A BOHEMIAN LIFESTYLE, ALCOHOL, CARNAL PLEASURES, AND FREE LOVE. THIS ILLUSTRATES HOW DIFFERENT IDENTITIES CAN INDICATE VARYING DEGREES OF VALUE AND POWER IN SOCIETY."

HIRALDO, SAMIRI HERNÁNDEZ. "IF GOD WERE BLACK AND FROM LOÍZA". LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES: A JOURNAL ON CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM 33.1 (2006): 66-82.



## ZONING LAWS

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ZONING LAWS THAT ENFORCED RACIAL SEGREGATION. THESE LAWS LIMITED THE TYPES OF BUSINESSES AND HOMES THAT COULD BE BUILT IN CERTAIN AREAS, AND AREAS WHERE AFRO-PUERTO RICANS LIVED WERE OFTEN DESIGNATED AS UNDESIRABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT. THIS LED TO A LACK OF INVESTMENT IN THESE AREAS AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS OR 'BARRIOS' WITHOUT BASIC SERVICES LIKE WATER AND ELECTRICITY.

## INFRASTRUCTURE FAILURES

"THE SITUATION LOÍZA, THE PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIR, IS EVEN MORE SERIOUS. STORAGE CAPACITY HAS DECLINED FROM 21,700 ACRE- FEET IN 1953 TO 10,100 ACRE- FEET IN 1985—A REDUCTION OF 53%. THE AVERAGE SEDIMENTATION RATE IS 1.8% PER YEAR OF THE ORIGINAL CAPACITY. UNDER OPTIMAL CONDITIONS, THE REMAINING USABLE LIFE IS CALCULATED TO BE 23 YEARS. HOWEVER, STORM EVENTS, FLOODING AND INCREASING AGRICULTURAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, WITH ACCELERATED SEDIMENTATION, ARE FURTHER SHORTENING THE RESERVOIR'S LIFE"



**DID THE JUNTA DE PLANIFICACIÓN CONTRIBUTE TO THE DISCRIMINATION IN LOÍZA?**

## DIVISION IN "BARRIOS"

THE RESIDENTS OF MEDIANÍA ALTA WERE OFTEN RIDICULED BY OTHERS IN LOÍZA DUE TO THEIR WAY OF SPEAKING AND WERE EVEN DESCRIBED AS "ALMOST FROM ANOTHER WORLD."

FURTHERMORE, THE RESIDENTS OF MEDIANÍA ALTA WERE OFTEN LABELED AS "WAY BLACK" OR "BLACKER," WHICH SERVES TO REINFORCE SOCIAL AND RACIAL HIERARCHIES THAT NEGATE THEIR CLASSIFICATION AS BLACK. ALTHOUGH OVER HALF OF LOÍZA'S POPULATION IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS BLACK IN THE 2000 CENSUS.

- **ACHIEVEMENT GAPS IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

THE LACK OF NECESSARY RESOURCES AND QUALIFIED TEACHERS RESULTS IN LOWER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG STUDENTS. MANY SCHOOLS HAVE ALSO OVERLOOKED AFRO-PUERTO RICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE IN THEIR CURRICULUM, LEADING TO A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY AFRO-PUERTO RICANS TO SOCIETY.

# **ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS: THE CONSEQUENCES OF INADEQUATE HOUSING**

**THE LACK OF PROPER SEWAGE SERVICES FROM THE PUBLIC WATER SERVICE IS ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUE IN LOÍZA'S BARRIO. INSTEAD OF USING THE SEWAGE SERVICES PROVIDED BY "THE AUTORIDAD DE ACUEDUCTOS Y ALCANTARILLADOS DE PUERTO RICO", RESIDENTS RELY ON SEPTIC TANKS. SEPTIC TANKS IN PUERTO RICO ARE UNREGULATED, WITH SOME NOT HAVING A FLOOR, LEADING TO WATER AND SOIL CONTAMINATION FROM SEPTIC TANK LEAKAGE. ADDITIONALLY, UNREGULATED DISCHARGE OF GRAY WATER INTO THE SOIL IS CONSIDERED ILLEGAL, YET THIS IS A COMMON PRACTICE IN INFORMAL HOUSING SETTLEMENTS.**

## **WHAT IS IT?**

**INFORMAL HOUSING SETTLEMENTS, COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS "BARRIO" ARE OFTEN BUILT IN RISK AREAS THAT EXACERBATE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES. LACK OF STATE PLANNING, BUILDING CODES, AND REGULATIONS PUT VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES AT RISK, PARTICULARLY IN AREAS PRONE TO FLOODING AND OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS.**

## **HOW IS LOÍZA AFFECTED?**

**LOÍZA IS EXTREMELY FLOOD-PRONE, WITH THE OCEAN AND TWO RIVERS (RIO HERRERA AND RIO GRANDE DE LOÍZA) MAKING IT UNIQUELY VULNERABLE TO FLOODING. AS A RESULT, THE TOWN IS ON LOW LAND, AND MASSIVE COASTAL EROSION IS WASHING AWAY BUILDINGS, ELECTRIC POLES, ROADS, AND LIGHT POLES. THE RISK OF FLOODING IS SO SEVERE THAT SOME STAKEHOLDERS FEAR THAT IN 20 YEARS, ALL THE HOMES IN LOÍZA WILL BE GONE, AND THERE WILL BE NO MONEY TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.**

**INFORMAL CONSTRUCTION PRACTICES IN SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS POSE SIGNIFICANT THREATS TO PUBLIC HEALTH, WHICH IS WHY BUILDING CODES AND ZONING REGULATIONS ARE ESSENTIAL. HOWEVER, DESPITE THE LINK BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS AND SOCIAL VULNERABILITY, VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES FACE ISSUES THAT ARE NOT ONLY ENVIRONMENTAL BUT HIGHLY LINKED TO DECISION-MAKING AND PUBLIC POLICY. FOR INSTANCE, GOVERNMENT DECISIONS SUCH AS THE CHANNELIZATION OF THE RIO GRANDE OF LOÍZA WORSENERED THE FLOODING PROBLEM, PUTTING THE COMMUNITY AT GREATER RISK.**

# **EXPLORING THE COMPLEXITY OF SOCIAL VULNERABILITY BEYOND ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS**

**SOCIAL VULNERABILITY IS A COMPLEX ISSUE THAT IS NOT LIMITED TO ECONOMIC OR DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS. IN THE CASE OF LOÍZA, PUERTO RICO, LOÍZA RESIDENTS RECOGNIZED THAT VULNERABILITY WAS ALSO RELATED TO INFORMAL HOUSING, LACK OF PLANNING, AND INADEQUATE DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE. LOÍZA'S BLACK POPULATION WAS PARTICULARLY MARGINALIZED DUE TO HISTORICAL REASONS AND THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENT ON COASTAL LANDS THAT ARE PRONE TO FLOODING.**

**LOÍZA RESIDENTS HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF REFORMING FEMA TO BE AN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY RATHER THAN JUST AN INSURANCE AGENCY. THEY EMPHASIZED THAT FEMA SHOULD CONSIDER THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT COMMUNITIES HAVE WITH PLANNING AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION AND FEDERAL AGENCIES LIKE HUD. THIS IS CRITICAL TO ENSURE THAT DISASTER RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF SOCIALLY VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES AND ADVANCE EQUITY.**

**THE LACK OF FORMAL LAND TITLES PREVENTED LOW INCOME COMMUNITIES FROM ACCESSING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM FEMA AFTER HURRICANE MARIA. MOREOVER, FEMA'S INDIVIDUALS AND HOUSEHOLDS PROGRAM HAD DIFFICULTY ADAPTING TO THE CHALLENGES OF WIDESPREAD INFORMAL HOUSING. THIS HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR FEDERAL POLICIES TO CONSIDER THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF BARRIO RESIDENTS TO ADVANCE EQUITY AMONG SOCIALLY VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES.**

## **PRESIDENT TRUMP'S IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO HURRICANE MARIA**



## **THE RESULT OF INADEQUATE SUPPORT FROM THE U.S**





For tourists  
PARADISE

Puerto Rico



For NATIVES not  
so much.....

**U.S. FAILED TO HELP PUERTO  
RICO, U.S. CITIZENS, BEFORE  
& AFTER HURRICANE MARIA...**

**WHY?**



# WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

## SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS



BY SHOPPING AT LOCAL STORES AND EATING AT LOCAL RESTAURANTS, YOU CAN HELP TO BOOST THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND PROVIDE JOBS FOR RESIDENTS.

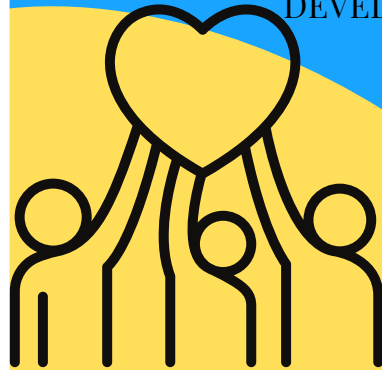


LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME AND SKILLS TO HELP WITH EDUCATION, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, OR ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS.

# DONATE



IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO VOLUNTEER, CONSIDER DONATING TO ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY IN LOIZA. LOOK FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT FOCUS ON EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.



PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNITY EVENTS IS A GREAT WAY TO SHOW SUPPORT AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS. LOOK FOR EVENTS SUCH AS FESTIVALS, CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS, AND COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP DAYS.



EDUCATION IS KEY TO CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE AND IMPROVING THE OVERALL WELL-BEING OF A COMMUNITY. BY EDUCATING ONESELF, YOU CAN BECOME MORE AWARE OF THE ISSUES FACING THEIR COMMUNITY, INCLUDING SYSTEMIC INEQUALITIES, SOCIAL INJUSTICES, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. THIS KNOWLEDGE CAN THEN BE USED TO ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE, PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES, AND SUPPORT INITIATIVES THAT PROMOTE A MORE JUST AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY.

