

For Oriole's Adam Jones, Dominican Republic scores a home run

Center fielder enjoys off-season trips to resort that offers sun and fun

By Stephanie Citron, Special to The Baltimore Sun



Baltimore Orioles' star center fielder Adam Jones loves to sleep out — which works out nicely for him, realization, since his team spends more than 80 days a year on the road.

Obviously undaunted by frequent changes of scenery, Jones has been a consistent performer for the Orioles, winning a Gold Glove Award in 2009 and being named the team's most valuable player last fall by the local news media.

All of this high-profile activity might lead one to assume that during the offseason Jones would prefer to unwind at home, sleeping in his own bed. But that couldn't be further from the truth.

"I love to travel," says Jones. "One of my best friends told me, 'If you have the resources to travel, go as

much as you can.' And that's what I do." Just before Friday's season opener, Jones regaled us with descriptions of his latest adventures and his new favorite vacation destination.

You spend so many days of the year on the road. When you finally have time off, where do you like to go?

There is so much I want to see. I visited a lot of places this year. First, [I went] to Cabo San Lucas for a relaxing week with my girlfriend. Then I did my big Europe trip: Amsterdam, Prague, Rome and Parma. I came back [home] to San Diego and took my mother to Hawaii with my girlfriend and her mother. We had Thanksgiving in Baltimore. But then I went to the Dominican Republic with my friends and their wives. That was the one I probably enjoyed the most, because it was with my friends.

Where did you stay in the Dominican Republic?

In Punta Cana at a beautiful place called the Fishing Lodge [in the Grand Resorts at Cap Cana].

How did you find it?

Big Papi [David Ortiz of the Boston Red Sox] invited me for his annual golf tournament. I went last year also. ... Just good friends, golf and beautiful weather!

How was it at the Fishing Lodge?

The resort is unbelievable — it's pretty new [it opened in November] and it still isn't finished. Our room was a suite with a living room and a kitchen. Flat-screens everywhere. I love big bathrooms, and our room had one ... with great water pressure.

What did you do there?

Hung out at the pool. It's December, and we're here by the pool. I'm with my best friends and their wives [and] my girlfriend. ... We're in a new part of the world, not home, looking out at the ocean, just enjoying ourselves. We spent one whole day on the golf course, which was gorgeous. None of us are golfers, but we were just enjoying ourselves and being together.

What part of December were you there?

Early December, before Christmas and the crowds.

How was the food?

The food was delicious. Papi set up our dinners every night. I loved the simple Dominican chicken, rice and beans.

Favorite day?

Saturday at the pool. We sat there from 10 to 7. Drinks all day. Laughing. I had my music through my Bose, which was blaring. I had my iPad, which I never leave home without, and just sat there and



chilled.



Do people recognize you when you travel?

Usually not. It's great being just a random person seeing the sites. I'm not anyone special, just like everyone else.

How do you stay in shape when you travel?

I'll go work out in the morning. I also like to go places [where] I don't have to drive, so I can walk everywhere. I try to eat right so I don't have to work hard to shed any pounds.

What is the one item you will not travel without?

My iPad and my portable Bose. I have the wireless one. I love to listen to R&B and hip-hop. Hip-hop is a very big genre, its not just rap. Jay-Z is a favorite, and Ludacris, Jennifer Hudson, Rihanna ... and, of course, Whitney Houston.

What's on your nightstand right now?

My iPad with a bunch of random movies and a stockpile of TV shows. My favorite is the "The Wire." But I really like "Dexter," and "Damages," too.

What are your favorite spots when on the road with the Orioles?

I really like Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle.

What's next on your travel wish list?

First, I have to face these next 162 [Orioles games]. But there are so many places I can't wait to see: Australia, South Africa, the Maldives and the Philippines. Definitely going back to Europe.

If you go:

Located just 10 minutes from the Punta Cana airport, Cap Cana is a self-contained, 30,000-acre ecological resort area with pristine oceanfront beaches, the luminous Cap Cana Marina, cliffs and forested hiking trails, as well as countless water-based activities. The development encompasses several resorts including Adam Jones' favorite, the Fishing Lodge.

Getting there

US Airways, Air Tran and American Airlines offer connecting flights to Punta Cana from BWI-Marshall. Nonstop flights are available through charter packages, booked through a travel agent (see information on packages below) and from nearby airports, including Philadelphia International.

Lodging

The Fishing Lodge at the Grand Resorts at Cap Cana, 866-855-4886 or 809-469-7500,

grandresortscapcana.com. This brand-new Mediterranean village-style resort is surrounded by the gleaming Cap Cana marina. In a region famous for all-inclusive accommodations, the Fishing Lodge boasts a variety of package options for visitors. Beach access is available via golf cart at the adjacent Punta Cana Resort or at the sister property, Sanctuary Cap Cana.

Accommodations are one-, two- and three-bedroom villas with full kitchens, living and dining areas, king beds, Wi-Fi and cable TV. The hotel website is offering 50 percent off room rates for stays through Nov. 30, when booked by April 30. All-inclusive deals start at \$199 per person per night. Neither includes airfare, which is lowest when bought in a package through a travel agent.

Dining

The Fishing Lodge has three restaurants and several bars. Bistrot is an open-air Mediterranean bistro specializing in fresh seafood that overlooks the Cap Cana Marina. The buffet-style Market Salamander Grille serves international fare for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The Poolside serves light fare in the afternoons. Most guests visit the five upscale restaurants at sister resort The Sanctuary, accessible via a five-minute shuttle ride.

—*Stephanie Citron*

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