



**destinations**

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## **CUBA**

With a coastline surrounded by tranquil waters, Cuba continues to be that same seductive island which one day appeared before a Genoese sailor, eager to unearth its unknown treasures. Its charms are as many as its different shades of green, it is a mixture of cities and natural landscapes, of sensual dances and songs. It is relaxed but lively, with the exotic aroma of fruits and the flavour of rum.

With its colonial-style towns and cities, its magnificent countryside, its attractive surrounding seabed, its varied culture, and its people – widely renowned for their uniquely hospitable character – Cuba reveals itself to the world, with generosity and pride in its many charms and attractions.

This is not just another typical holiday island. This is Cuba, authentic and unique.

A scenic view of a Cuban courtyard. In the foreground, a white wrought-iron balcony railing is visible. The courtyard is paved and surrounded by buildings with red-tiled roofs. On the left, a yellow building has green shutters and a person is standing near an entrance. On the right, a light blue building has green shutters. In the background, a tall, white church tower with a dome and bell openings stands prominently. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds, and rolling green hills are visible in the distance.

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### **WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN CUBA**

The Historic Centre of Old Havana and its System of Colonial Fortifications (1982)

Trinidad and the Valle de los Ingenios (1988)

San Pedro de la Roca (1997)

Desembarco del Granma National Park (1999)

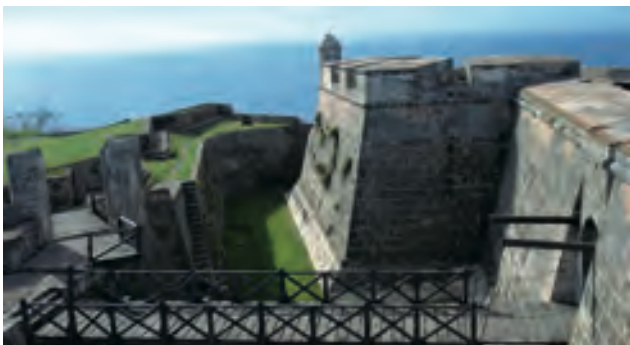
Archaeological Landscape of the first coffee plantations on the south-east of Cuba (2000)

La Tumba Francesa, declared a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (2000)

Alejandro de Humboldt National Park (2001)

Historic Centre of Cienfuegos (2005)

Historic Centre of Camagüey (2008)





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## CUBAN CURIOSITIES

### Wildlife

Cuban miniatures: Cuba is home to what are considered to be three of the smallest species of animals in the world: the zunzuncito or bee hummingbird, which is approximately 6 cm in length; the smallest amphibian in the world, the pygmy frog or sapito, which is less than 12 mm in length, and the butterfly bat, which only weighs 2-3 gr and measures approximately 3 cm. These tiny creatures are unique to Cuba.

The oldest species of mollusc in the world can be found in Viñales. It is the viana regina or calcifolio which lives by sticking to mogotes or limestone rocks, and feeds from the fungi which covers them.

The manjuarí, considered to be a living fossil, is a prehistoric fish which has survived to this day in Cuba. It has the body of a fish and the head of a reptile and is one of the most primitive vertebrates on the planet.

### Flora

Cuba is the place in the Caribbean with the largest variety and greatest quantity of endemic plants. Of more than 7,000 different species, more than half are endemic.

The Palma Corcho is considered to be a living plant fossil and it can only be found in Pinar del Río. About a thousand examples still exist and they are thought to go back to prehistoric times.

One of the largest of all species of flowers, the solandra grandiflora, is also a native of Cuba. It is an unusual climbing plant with satin-textured leaves and striking yellow to white flowers. These are 6-8 inches wide and take the shape of a chalice. The petals are yellow with five purple lines and the plant usually flowers between February and May.

The mountains of the Sierra Maestra and Sagua-Baracoa ranges, in the eastern part of Cuba, are the most important areas for endemic plants in the Caribbean and it is there that more than half of the original species in Cuba are to be found.



**Other curiosities**

The Espada Cemetery in Havana, established in 1806, was the first to be situated outside a church in Latin America. José Raúl Capablanca was the first World Chess Champion not to come from the developed world.

The greatest high jumper in history is Cuban Javier Sotomayor. World record holder both indoors and outdoors, his achievements have never been surpassed. The first danzón –Cuba’s national dance – was composed in 1878 and premiered in Matanzas on the 1st of January 1879. It is called Las Alturas de Simpson and its author was Miguel Faílde.

Cuba held bullfights from 1514 until they were eventually abolished on the 10th of October 1899.







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### ACCOMODATION

All over the island, whether in towns and cities, at beaches, or in the countryside, the range of accommodation is attractive and comfortable. Pinar del Río, Havana, Varadero, Cayo Largo, Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, Trinidad, Jardines del Rey, Camagüey, Las Tunas, Holguín, Santiago de Cuba and Baracoa all have comfortable three, four, and five star hotels and a range of other facilities including restaurants, shops, transport services, boating amenities, health and legal services, and event or conference organisation.



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### **Pinar del Río Natural Beauty**

Pinar del Río has a natural beauty typical of this wonderful island. Invaluable landscapes such as Cuba's six Biosphere Reserves and the Valle de Viñales, which has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, enhance this unspoilt and seductive region where the best tobacco in the world is cultivated. The main form of access is overland although the area can also be reached by sea, via the María la Gorda International Diving Centre.





### Places of Interest

One cannot pass through Pinar del Río without visiting: the **capital of the province**, one of the most picturesque and largest cities in Cuba, the citizens of which are renowned for being kind and friendly; the **Valle de Viñales**, a place of inspiring natural beauty, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO; the **Mural de la Prehistoria**, an unusual mural painted on the rocky surface of the mogotes, which is 120 metres long and 80 metres wide; the **Santo Tomás Cave**, considered to be amongst the most important in Cuba. Thanks to its size and the scientific treasures it guards it is a thrilling place to see; the **María La Gorda International Diving Centre** with its magnificent seabed which is perfect for underwater exploration; **Soroa**, a magnificent orchid garden featuring 700 species, 150 of which are endemic to Cuba; and the **Península de Guanahacabibes National Park, a Biosphere Reserve** with an extraordinary natural environment. It has a wide variety of flora and fauna and a number of unusual landscape



features, including the so-called Balcones de Guanahacabibes, with their peculiar formations created by sedimentation and the movement of the sea over thousands of years. In the Park there is a well-known lighthouse, the **Faro Roncali** which is the focus of numerous stories and legends. It is situated near to the Las Tumbas beach at the westernmost tip of the island.

The best way to get to know these places is through the excursions and visits organised by travel agencies.





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## La Habana

### A city with a welcoming spirit and positive vibrations

Both a destination and a starting point, a truly unique city, both ancient and modern, incomparable and exceptional. The capital of Cuba, Havana has a proud legacy of history, culture and tradition. With its magnificent beaches, its hotels, restaurants, marinas, centres for aquatic sports, historic sites, conference and recreation facilities, and its rich cultural life, it is by far the most popular destination on the largest of the Antilles.

It can be reached either by air, with three international flight terminals, or by sea, through the Hemingway and Tarára marinas or the Cruise Ship Terminal in the Havana Bay.



### Places of interest

Havana is best explored by visiting its most idiosyncratic places: the **Malecón**, a quintessential landmark of this sea-loving city, a long coastal esplanade where music, friendship, love, happiness and sadness all have their part to play; the **Historic Centre of Old Havana**, a World Heritage Site, which is amongst the oldest and best preserved urban spaces in South America; the **Christ of Havana**, a powerful sculpture which presides over this seafaring city, and provides, in its immediate surroundings, an ideal space for rest and relaxation; the **Museum of Fine Arts**, with its wealth of ancient relics which provide a good insight into Cuban and international art; the **Columbus Cemetery**, a fascinating place to visit with its combination of works of art and popular legend; the **Playas del Este**, a succession of excellent beaches with a good infrastructure of hotels and other services; the **National Botanical Gardens of Cuba**, an educational, scientific and recreational institution, and natural exhibition centre, which contains a huge range of Cuban plants and other tropical flora from all over the



world; the **Morro-Cabaña Park**, a place to witness a curious night-time tradition, the **"9 O'clock Cannon Shot Ceremony**, where history and custom create a magical ambience which transports us back every night to the 19th century; and the **Tropicana**, the best-known cabaret in Cuba, where a combination of music and theatrical spectacle create an unforgettable atmosphere.

A stroll through Havana is a must for visitors. The beauty of its architecture, its buildings, the treasures in its museums and its festive spirit, all invite the visitor to wander around its streets and experience the sensations of this romantic, seafaring city, with its unquenchable thirst for life.



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## Varadero

### A tempting sea

With its great natural beauty and charm, Varadero is the most attractive of Cuban beaches. The resort is particularly notable for its broad, clean, fine sandy beaches as well as its spectacular sunsets and exciting nightlife. Its situation, near to both Havana and Matanzas, makes it easy to reach either by land, sea, or air.



### Places of interest

The heart and soul of Varadero is all about the beach and entertainment. A visit to its most distinctive landmarks allows the visitor to capture its real essence and enjoy it to the full. The **Josone Park** is the perfect place for rest and relaxation: the lake and the trees, the peacefulness of its surroundings, and its range of gastronomic choices are all enchanting. For those who are more interested in music and dancing, the **Mambo Club** is the place to go: live Cuban music with a wide range of drinks and snacks. For golf lovers there is the **Varadero Golf Club**, a magnificent 18-hole, par 72 course, with the optimum conditions for a wonderful round. Meanwhile the **Cabaret Tropicana** with its spectacles of music and dance, offer a true reflection of the local culture and character.



The **Dolphinarium** is the place to go for those who love to observe these wonderful marine creatures, or just to pass some time with friends, whilst the unexpected tranquillity and peace of **Cayo Blanco** offer the perfect end to a day of adventure. Finally the **Centro Plaza América** offers a wide range of activities for visitors and residents alike, with its shops, restaurants, and cafeterias, whilst the upper floor provides an ideal setting for businessmen wishing to organise events or meetings in an unusual atmosphere.

It is possible to reach Varadero by land, sea or air. It has an airport, 2 international harbours and a viaduct which links the resort directly with Matanzas.



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### Cayo Largo

#### At the beginning everything was like this...

The jewel of the Los Canarreos archipelago, this unique island is considered to be one of the best for diving and other water sports. Its beaches are protected by beautiful coral reefs surrounded by shallow waters with gorgonians, fish and a variety of flora. Nearby are the Rico, Cantiles and Iguana cayos.

Access to the cayo is by sea or air. Its international airport has daily flights to and from Havana and each week there are links to other important tourist destinations such as Varadero, Trinidad, Pinar del Río, Cienfuegos and Santiago de Cuba.

#### Places of Interest

**The Sirena and Paraíso beaches.** The two most attractive beaches on the cayo are ideal for nautical activities, as well as diving, horse riding, or motorbike routes. The Criadero de Tortugas is another interesting place, and is protected by conservation plans for the natural environment. Three types of marine turtles are bred there: the Caguama, the Green, and the Carey.



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## Isla de la Juventud Treasure Island

Discovered on the 13th of June 1494 by Christopher Columbus on his second voyage to the New World, this island strikes the visitor with the beauty of its natural environment and its marina. It is thought by many to be the real site of Robert Louis Stevenson's famous novel, *Treasure Island*. The legends of the pirates who landed on the island and buried their treasure there give it a special aura of mystery which it retains to this day.



### Places of Interest

For those who love nothing more than exploring the underwater world, the Isla de la Juventud has more than 80 diving sites situated in areas such as the **Colony International Diving Centre** in Punta Francés. The surrounding seabed is a fascinating environment with a series of caves and walls of black coral, as well as the largest column of coral in the world, and wrecks of ancient galleons, all of which has made the area a favourite for underwater photography competitions. It is also the refuge and training area for the well-known Cuban diver and multi-record holder, Déborah Andollo. Other attractive spots on this small island include the **Punta Francés National Park**, which is one of the specially protected marine-coastal areas in Cuba, thanks to its great natural value, the diversity of its ecosystems, and the excellent level of conservation of its coral formations. Also of interest is the **Punta del Este National Monument**, with caves which have remains of the indigenous Siboney culture in the form of paintings and concentric circles, examples of which can also be seen in other caves around Caleta Grande and Puerto Francés.

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## Villa Clara At the very heart of Cuba

To the centre and north of the island of Cuba is the province of Villa Clara, an area where the natural environment offers a beautiful landscape of dramatic contrasts inhabited by important species of both flora and fauna. Villa Clara is a highly attractive tourist destination thanks to its wonderful beaches, its natural landscape, and its various places of interest.



### Places of interest

In its historic centre is the **Vidal Park**, around which are a series of buildings of varying architectural styles. Meanwhile the **cayería norte**, linked by a man-made road between the cayos and the mainland, features beautiful beaches on the **Ensenachos** and **Santa María** cayos. The most interesting towns include **Remedios**, birthplace of the world-famous Parrandas festivals which are celebrated each year on the 24th of December, and **Santa Clara**, with its memorial to Che Guevara. **The Resort of Elguea**, known for the curative and medicinal qualities of its sulphurous waters, and the area around **Lake Hanabanilla** in the mountains of El Escambray, are two other sites in the province which are well worth a visit.



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### **Cienfuegos, The Pearl of the South**

Known as the Pearl of the South for the stunning beauty of the bay, for the seductive quality of the city itself, and for the noble character of its people. Before the arrival of the Spanish, the area was populated by an indigenous population and it was known as the Cacicazgo de Jagua. The city was founded in 1819 by French colonists who called it Fernandina de Jagua, in honour of both King Fernando VII and its original inhabitants.

Access to the province is either by air, through its international airport, or by the well-established road network. It can also be reached by sea through the Cienfuegos harbour.





**The Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles de Jagua Castle**, situated in the canyon at the mouth of the bay, was built in 1745 and is the third most important fortress in Cuba. The **Necrópolis de Reina (1830)**, the first cemetery to exist in Cienfuegos, is an authentic funerary art museum, both for its ornamentation and its system of burial in vertical niches, which was typical of the colonial period. Other sites include: **El Nicho**, an incredible and awe-inspiring ecosystem with numerous waterfalls and natural pools in the Sierra del Escambray; the **Martín Infierno Cave**, created by nature for lovers of potholing who can descend into its interior and discover the largest stalagmite in Latin America, which is 67.20 metres tall; and the **Rancho Luna beach**, 18 km from the city of Cienfuegos, and very near to the Faro Luna hotel. This attractive beach is a haven of tranquillity and offers perfect conditions for diving.







### Places of Interest

The **Historic Centre**, declared a World Heritage Site, is a living memorial to its French past which can be observed in the architecture and form of decoration. The **José Martí Park**, originally the Plaza de Armas (parade ground) of the colonial era, is large and monumental, featuring the only Triumphal Arch in Cuba. The Paseo del Prado is the longest tree-lined boulevard in Cuba, and leads the visitor towards the Malecón of Cienfuegos. The **Palacio de Valle**, a building with a mixture of eclectic styles, dates back to the end of the 19th century. Known for its architecture and its history, it is a symbol of the city and houses a restaurant serving light meals.





### DISTANCES IN KILOMETERS

<b>162</b>	<b>LA HABANA</b>										
<b>109</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>ARTEMISA</b>									
<b>167</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>MATANZAS</b>								
<b>416</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>CIENFUEGOS</b>							
<b>438</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>SANTA CLARA</b>						
<b>516</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>SANCTI SPIRITUS</b>					
<b>588</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>CIEGO DE ÁVILA</b>				
<b>696</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>CAMAGÜEY</b>			
<b>824</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>LAS TUNAS</b>		
<b>905</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>HOLGUÍN</b>	
<b>1017</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>BAYAMO</b>
<b>1023</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>801</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>1067</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>161</b>
											<b>84</b>
											<b>84</b>

### GENERAL INFORMATION :

- Capital: Havana
- Population: over 11,217,000
- Average temperature: 77.9° F. (25.5° C.)
- Relative humidity: 78 percent
- Language: Spanish
- National flower: Butterfly lily (Hedychium coronarium)
- National bird: Cuban Trogon (Priotelus temnurus)
- National tree: Royal palm (Roystonea regia)





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**Trinidad**  
**The city museum of Cuba**

Considered to be the city museum of Cuba, Trinidad has retained the magic of its colonial past. Its historic centre with its cobbled streets is a place of majestic buildings turned into museums, and romantic squares. Beyond its boundaries, there are carefully protected natural areas such as the Valle de los Ingenios, an eternal reminder of the area's past glory.

Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1988, the old town of La Santísima Trinidad de Cuba – founded in the 16th century – is, without doubt, one of the colonial jewels of both Cuba and South America as a whole. It belongs to the province of Sancti Spiritus and is connected by a road network with the rest of the island. It also has an airport for small and medium sized aircraft.



### Places of interest

**The Museo Romántico**, is an architectural jewel which recreates the ambience of a typical 19th century colonial house, with a collection of furniture and decorative objects from the period. **Manaca Iznaga, in the Valle de los Ingenios region**, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, was the site of the most prosperous sugar refineries of the 19th century, the remains of which are still visible. **La Cancháchara**, a mixture of honey and liquor, drunk by the mambises or soldiers of the Cuban Liberation Army to overcome hunger and thirst, gives its name to this 18th-century tavern, one of the oldest buildings in the city. **Topes de Collantes**, in the Sierra del Escambray is an ideal place for walking, or simply relaxing in the natural environment. **Playa Ancón**, a beach to free the senses. The **Cayo Blanco Diving Centre** situated on the Ancón Peninsula, very near to the aforementioned beach, and surrounded by clear waters which contain the longest coral reef in Cuba, with patches of coral, ridges which reach up to 5 metres in height, tunnels, canalizos and other spectacular accidents of nature. Of particular interest are the areas of black coral, the great variety of sponges, the feathery gorgonians, the sea fans, and the tropical fish.





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## **Jardines del Rey Cayo Coco and Cayo Guillermo**

The oldest documented evidence about the cayería del norte avileño goes back to the time of the pirates. Cayo Coco, which covers some 370 square kilometres, is one of the largest islands of the Cuban archipelago. With its attractive forests it has a variety of animal life and is home to flamingos, reptiles and crustaceans. Its 22 km of beaches, perfect for diving, are notable for their beautifully clear, safe waters, and extremely fine sand.

Cayo Guillermo is an unspoilt haven of unusual beauty with a broad range of wildlife. Its unusual variety of colours makes it the ideal place for lovers of boat excursions and the observing of flora and fauna.

The islands can be reached by air and there is a modern international airport terminal. There is also a 17 km road across the sea which links Cayo Coco to the rest of the national network. By sea, the Cayo Guillermo harbour offers immigration and customs services as well as mooring facilities and charters.







### Places of interest

**Morón**, the provincial capital, is popularly known as the ciudad del gallo (city of the rooster). In the central area there are various architecturally interesting buildings whilst on the outskirts are the remains of a 19th century defensive system, which is considered one of the most significant military engineering works of the Spanish Americas.







Nearby, there are magical places such as the **Pilar, Flamenco and Prohibida beaches**, where nature reigns in all its splendour. **La Güira** is an old charcoal production site where the original "varaentierra" houses of the workers can still be seen. **La Cueva del Jabalí**, is a "hidden" cabaret where entertainment and fun are guaranteed. **The Playa Blanca Centre for the Investigation of Coastal Ecosystems** is a project dedicated to caring for the environment, and an ideal place for nature lovers. **The La Redonda Lagoon** is a magnificent place for hunting and fishing where the huge range of birds and fish makes it an attractive choice for lovers of these particular pastimes.



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### **Camagüey**

Founded in 1514 and initially called Santa María del Puerto del Príncipe, Camagüey is nowadays one of the most valuable places in Cuba in terms of historical heritage. Its Colonial Centre, the largest of its kind in Cuba, has squares, churches, grand houses and a unique layout of streets and alleys. Centuries of tradition and history are contained in its colonial patios, its tiled roofs, its railings, and its traditional clay pots or tinajones.

It is commonly known as either the city of the churches, because of the numerous religious buildings which add to its rich architectural heritage, or the city of the tinajones, because they are a symbol of the city, going back to its origins, when water was scarce and it had to be collected and stored.





### Places of interest

The **Plaza de San Juan de Dios**, an emblematic square in Camagüey, and one of the oldest and best preserved parts of the city. **Catholic Temples: La Soledad, La Merced, San Juan de Dios, Sagrado Corazón de Jesús and the Cathedral**, are some of the most revered places of worship for the local people. The churches were always an important part of the life of the city and everything connected with them had to gain catholic approval. Even the paths which connected them were considered to be royal streets. **The Funda del Catre**, a unique and dramatic street which is the narrowest on the island.



The **Sierra de Cubitas**, the main mountain range in the province, with more than 300 underground formations which are of interest for potholing as well as primitive cave paintings from the pre-Columbus era and the time of the conquest. **Cayo Sabinal**, linked to the mainland by a pedraplen which begins at Nuevitas, has 33 km of beaches including Playa Brava, Los Pinos and Playa Bonita. **Cayo Caguama**, peace and tranquillity in a beautiful natural environment.



Other sites of particular beauty in Camagüey include the region's mountainous areas such as the **Sierra de Cubitas**, which has numerous examples of cave paintings, the **Hoyo de Bonet**, a natural botanic garden which is almost 90 metres deep, and the **Sierra de Najasa**, with its perfect scenery for lovers of ecotourism.



### **The Santa Lucía Beach in Camagüey Coral reefs and legends**

The natural environment, a diverse underwater world, an impressive coral reef with 35 diving sites, peaceful safe islands, and beaches. These are just some of the qualities which make Santa Lucía de Cuba so special. Situated to the northeast of the province of Camagüey and enclosed by two large bays, this tourist area is a place of legend from the times when European adventurers came here to realise their dreams of grandeur.

The beach, on the north coast of the central-eastern region of Cuba, overlooks the Canal Viejo de Bahamas. The beautiful white sands of the gently-sloping beach are perfect for children, and the clear greenish blue waters are ideal for all kinds of nautical sports, particularly diving. For the more daring amongst us there is also the opportunity to dive with sharks: an intense but safe experience.





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### Las Tunas

Known as the capital of sculptures, Las Tunas is the site of the famous Latin American Décima Festival as well as the now traditional Jornada Cucalambeana. It boasts more than 30 unspoilt beaches around its coastline and has a fascinating history.



### Places of interest

Places such as the ancient **Cavalry Barracks**, the **La Loma Fort** and the **Salcedo Castle** are all emblematic landmarks which bore witness to the War of Independence. Meanwhile the **Casa Memorial al Mayor General Vicente García González** and the **Provincial Museum** are ideal for those interested in the history of Las Tunas. The main attractions of the **Cobarrubias beach** are its wonderful landscape features: unspoilt vegetation, long stretches of cream-coloured sands, and a magnificent coral bar.

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## **Holguín** **A land rich in nature**

Holguín is one of the richest parts of Cuba in terms of its natural surroundings and it has gradually become one of the most important tourist destinations. High sierras, fertile valleys, and fine sandy beaches are all to be found in this beautiful province with its wide range of attractions.

Access by air is via the Frank País international airport, whilst by land the region can be reached along the Carretera Central. Boats can land at the Puerto de Vita International Marina.





## **Guardalavaca A paradise on earth**

The discovery of the New World gave Columbus the opportunity to discover the beauty of a land which is ideal for contemplation and enjoyment. An enchanting landscape with a history going back more than five centuries, Guardalavaca is a place where serenity and beauty came together to form a natural paradise. Situated near to Bariay, the place where Columbus first set foot in Cuba, Guardalavaca is today the most attractive tourist resort on the north-eastern coast.





### Places of interest

The **Guardlavaca, Don Lino, Esmeralda and Pesquero beaches**. Charming beaches which are ideal for diving and other nautical sports. **Boca de las Esponjas, El Salto and el Cañón de los Aguajíes**, are just three of more than a dozen sites which are perfect for diving. The **Tanques Azules de Gibara**, are a series of underwater caves, unique of their kind in Cuba, which are popular with lovers of cave diving. The Archaeological Museum, in **Chorro de Maíta**, has made Holguín the archaeological capital of Cuba. **Aldea Taína**, with its life-size statues of figures and houses gives us an insight into a culture that was extinguished with the arrival of the conquistadors. The **Loma de la Cruz**, the best known landmark in Holguín, takes its name from the wooden cross which has stood on the hilltop for more than 2 centuries and is the symbolic protector of the town. Other interesting places to visit include the Mirador de Mayabe, Gibara and Cayo Saetía.



A horse-drawn carriage is the central focus of the image, moving from left to right across a cobblestone street. The carriage is dark-colored with red interior seating and is pulled by a brown horse with white markings on its lower legs. A driver in a white cap and dark vest sits at the front, holding the reins. Two passengers are seated behind him. The background is a large, multi-story building with a yellow facade and prominent red vertical columns. The building features arched windows and doorways, some with decorative elements. The sky is clear and blue. A large, stylized logo is overlaid on the left side of the image.

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## Granma

### The essence of Cuban nationality

Granma is celebrated for the beauty of its mountainous areas and its various National Parks including the Demajagua, the Desembarco del Granma – also a World Heritage Site– and the Gran Parque Nacional Sierra Maestra. Its capital, Bayamo, was the second settlement to be established by the conquistadors and dates from 1513, but the area originally had a large indigenous population. The city has a rich history and was declared the Capital of the Rebellion during the Ten Year War.



### Places of interest

**Bayamo**, officially declared a National Monument is the cradle of Cuban Nationality and it was here that the National Anthem was first sung. It has a number of attractive squares, grand houses, and an ancient cathedral. The **Birthplace of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes**, considered to be the Father of the Nation, the first man to free his slaves and launch the struggle for Cuban independence. The **Iglesia Mayor**, now a cathedral, was constructed in the 17th century, and amongst the notable works it contains is an altarpiece known as the Retablo de los Dolores, an authentic piece of craftsmanship in the Cuban baroque style. **Manzanillo**, the second city of the province of Granma and the municipality, is well known for its beautiful coastline overlooking the Gulf of Guacanayabo, with its beaches and other sites of considerable geographical interest. **Marea del Portillo** has an excellent beach of dark-coloured sand and forms part of the Sierra Maestra National Park.





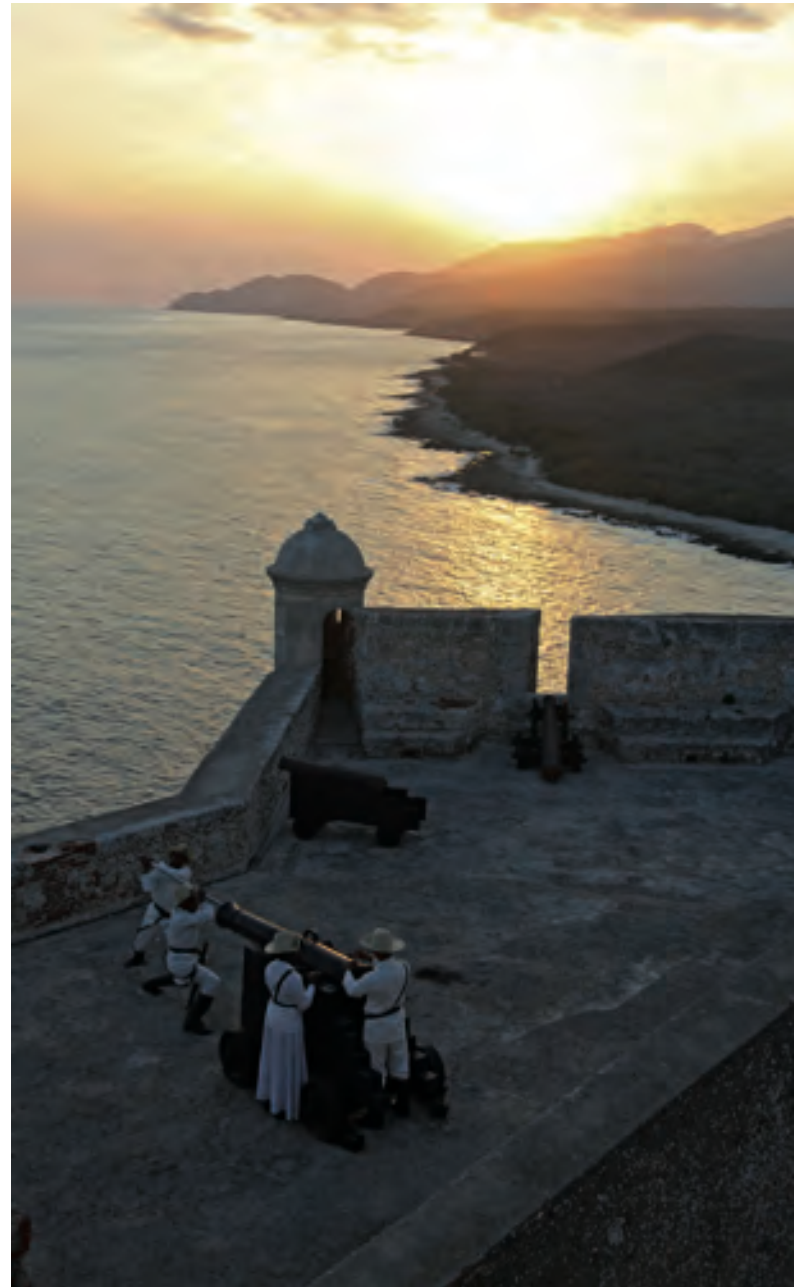
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## **Santiago de Cuba** **The most Caribbean of cities**

The city was founded on the 25th of July 1515 by the Spanish Adelantado (governor) Diego Velásquez. The province is surrounded by the Sierra Maestra mountain range, which contains the highest peak in Cuba, the Pico Real del Turquino, which reaches 1974 metres. The journey from its international airport to the city centre takes approximately 15 minutes by car.

Music spills out into the streets, and the lively local population are more than willing to participate in joyful celebrations of any kind. Hospitality, joie de vivre, and a rebellious nature are all typical characteristics of the city's people.

Direct access to Santiago de Cuba is available via the Antonio Maceo international airport, as well as by road from any other part of Cuba. The city can also be reached by sea through the Punta Gorda harbour.



### Places of interest

The **Tropicana Santiago Cabaret**. Life begins when night falls and the spectacle of music and dancing makes for an unforgettable occasion. The **El Cobre Basilica** Shrine to the Virgin of La Caridad de El Cobre, the Patron Saint of Cuba. **La casa más antigua de América** (the oldest house in America) was once the residence of the Adelantado Don Diego Velásquez and is now thought to be the only one of its type still standing in Latin America. It now houses the Museo de Ambiente Histórico. The **Céspedes Park**, once the Plaza de Armas, was where the most important civic events took place during the 16th and 17th centuries. Sitting on one of its benches, symmetrically set out beneath the shade of trees, one can rest and watch the coming and going of the local people or simply enjoy the tranquil peace of the afternoon.

The **Fiesta del Fuego**. Each year, during the first week of July, this Festival of Caribbean Culture is celebrated with non-stop music and dancing. A true carnival, each edition is dedicated to a different Caribbean country. The **Baconao National Park** is one of the most beautiful Biosphere Reserves in Cuba. It contains a large area of forestland which offers visitors a whole range of enjoyable and stimulating sites and activities including: the **Prehistoric Valley**, the **Land Transport Museum**, the **Gran Baconao Lagoon**, and the **Gardens of the Gran Piedra**, which are situated near the ruins of one of the most celebrated coffee plantations in the area, and make a perfect mirador.







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## Baracoa Cuba's first city

Situated in the easternmost province in Cuba, Guantánamo, Nuestra Señora de la Asunción de Baracoa, the capital of cocoa, the first villa of Cuba, the Ciudad Primada, or simply Baracoa, is a unique place, full of customs which go back to its foundation in 1512. Subject to violent attacks from pirates, the authorities ordered fortresses to be built and a cannon to be set up. A number of these forts still exist: Matachín (now the Baracoa Municipal Museum); Morrillo Chico; La Punta; and Seboruco, as well as the De la Villa Castle, nowadays a comfortable hotel. Baracoa can be reached either by plane or over land.



### Places of interest

The **Alejandro de Humboldt National Park**, forms the heart of the Cuchillas del Toa Biosphere Reserve and has also been awarded World Heritage Site status, reflecting the fact that it is the most important conservation area in Cuba in terms of biodiversity and the range of indigenous species. The **Yunque de Baracoa**, one of the symbols of the city, is an unusual land formation with steep sides and an almost flat top which was noted by Columbus in his diary of his first voyage in 1492. The **Cuchillas del Toa**, mountains, which are unusual for their abrupt scarp slopes. The **Iglesia Parroquial Mayor** houses the Cruz de La Parra, symbol of the Conquest and a reminder of the origins of the city. Of the 29 crosses erected by Christopher Columbus in the New World, it is the only one which has survived.



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