



Cuba

POP 11.2 MILLION / 53

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Lamparilla 361 Tapas & Cervezas (p303)
- ➔ Doña Eutimia (p303)
- ➔ Tres Jotas (p313)
- ➔ La Redaccion Cuba (p320)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Hotel Ordoño (p333)
- ➔ Roy's Terrace Inn (p331)
- ➔ Hostal Peregrino Consulado (p300)
- ➔ Hotel Iberostar Parque Central (p301)

Why Go?

Cuba is like a prince in a poor man's coat; behind the sometimes shabby facades, gold dust lingers. It's these rich dichotomies that make travel here the exciting, exhilarating roller-coaster ride it is. And, as a country on the cusp of change, there's rarely been a better time to visit. Private enterprise is displaying the first buds of a creative spring, while the big-name brands from that well-known frenemy in the north have yet to dilute the cultural magic. As a result, the country is rife with experimentation. Here a free-spirited cafe where earnest students sit around debating Che Guevara's contribution to world revolution; there an avant-garde art studio where the furniture is as outlandish as the exhibits. From rural Viñales to urban Havana, it's as if the whole country is slowly awakening from a deep slumber. Come now and ride the wave.

When to Go

Nov-Mar Peak season, with cooler weather, prices 30% higher and advance booking of hotels required.

Apr & Oct Look out for special deals, but prices and crowds increase with the onset of Easter.

May, Jun & Sep Smaller crowds, but some resort hotels offer fewer facilities or shut altogether.

Cuba Highlights

- 1 Havana** (p287) Staying in a casa particular amid the grand splendor of the city's daily street theater.
- 2 Santiago de Cuba** (p326) Discovering the revolutionary history, legendary music and seedy charm of Cuba's second city.
- 3 Viñales** (p311) Visiting amid some of the country's extraordinary natural landscapes.
- 4 Baracoa** (p335) Visiting Cuba's oddball eastern outpost with its dense foliage, and interesting cast of characters.

- 5 Camaguey** (p323) Decamping for a pit stop in the city of earthenware pots, winding lanes and half-forgotten churches.
- 6 Trinidad** (p318) Taking

- in lazy colonial plazas in Cuba's most historic town.
- 7 Playa Girón** (p317) Diving and snorkeling off the coast in the clear waters that abut Cuba's largest wildlife region.

