



Ciego de Ávila Province

33 / POP 424,400

Includes ➔

Ciego de Ávila	309
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Florencia	318
Cayo Coco	318
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Best Watersports

- ➔ Laguna de la Leche (p316)
- ➔ Jardines de la Reina (p313)
- ➔ Boat Adventure (p321)
- ➔ Cayo Media Luna (p321)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Meliá Cayo Coco (p320)
- ➔ Alojamiento Maité (p315)
- ➔ Iberostar Daiquirí (p322)

Why Go?

For centuries Ciego de Ávila was little more than an overnight stop on Cuba's arterial east-west highway. Then came Cuba's ambitious post-Special Period tourist project and the resort development of Cayo Coco and Cayo Guillermo (the bright tropical pearls that had once seduced Hemingway) had their drizzling of glorious beaches spruced up and daubed with nearly a dozen exclusive tourist resorts.

Chopped off the western flank of Camagüey province in 1975, Ciego de Ávila has in reality been harboring intriguing secrets for over a century. Various non-Spanish immigrants first arrived here in the 19th century from Haiti, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Barbados, bringing with them myriad cultural quirks, exemplified by cricket in Baraguá, voodoo in Venezuela, country dancing in Majagua and explosive fireworks in Chambas.

When to Go

- ➔ Beach-goers should descend on the cayos (keys) between November and March for drier weather that, while cool by Cuban standards, is still pleasantly warm.
- ➔ Take to the field on August 1 in Baraguá, where people celebrate Slave Emancipation Day with music, dancing and a game of cricket.
- ➔ Morón's Aquatic Carnival kicks off in September, in the channel leading to the Laguna de Leche.



Ciego de Ávila Province Highlights

1 Eat fresh fish for ridiculously cheap prices at the **Laguna de la Leche** (p316).

2 Dive from a liveboard into the almost-virgin waters of the secluded **Jardines de la Reina archipelago** (p313).

3 Browse through one of the best municipal museums

in Cuba, **Museo Provincial Simón Reyes** (p309) in Ciego de Ávila.

4 Follow in the wake of Papa Hemingway while deep-sea fishing off **Cayo Guillermo** (p321).

5 Dig your toes in the sand at the beach paradise of **Playa Pilar** (p321).

6 Escape the resorts and immerse yourself in the rustic simplicity of the **Loma de Cunagua** (p317).

7 Marvel at how waste ground got transformed into one of Cuba's most interesting city parks at Ciego de Ávila's **Parque de la Ciudad** (p309).