Santiago de Cuba Province

♪ 22 / POP 1,048,000

Best Bars

➡ Casa de las Tradiciones (p421)

➡ Casa de la Música (p420)

➡ Club Nautico (p420)

➡ Bar Sindo Garay (p420)

Best Places to Stay

➡ Hostal San Basilio (p417)

➡ Hotel Horizontes el Saltón (p432)

➡ Casa Colonial 'Maruchi' (p415)

➡ Brisas Sierra Mar (p433)

➡ Hostal Las Terrazas (p415)

Why Go?

Stuck out in Cuba's mountainous 'Oriente' region and long a hotbed of rebellion and sedition, Santiago's cultural influences have often come from the east, imported via Haiti, Jamaica, Barbados and Africa. For this reason the province is often cited as being Cuba's most 'Caribbean' enclave, with a raucous West Indian–style carnival and a cache of *folklórico* dance groups that owe as much to French-Haitian culture as they do to Spanish.

As the focus of Spain's new colony in the 16th and early 17th centuries, Santiago de Cuba enjoyed a brief spell as Cuba's capital until it was usurped by Havana in 1607. The subsequent slower pace of development has some distinct advantages. Drive 20km or so along the coast in either direction from the provincial capital and you're on a different planet, a land full of rugged coves, crashing surf, historical coffee plantations and hills replete with riotous endemism.

When to Go

➡ July is the key month in Santiago de Cuba's cultural calendar, when the city is *caliente* (hot) in more ways than one. The month begins with the vibrant Festival del Caribe and ends with the justifiably famous Carnaval.

➡ More music is on offer in March at the Festival Internacional de Trova, when the city rediscovers its musical roots.

➡ The period between these two events (March through June) is renowned for its high water clarity, ensuring excellent diving conditions off the south coast.

Santiago de Cuba Province Highlights

1 Stroll around the illustrious incumbents of Santiago de Cuba's **Cementerio Santa Ifigenia** (p412).

2 Visit the **Cuartel Moncada** (p408) in Santiago de Cuba and evaluate the audacity (or folly) of Castro's 1953 insurrection.

3 Make an eco-escape to luscious mountain getaway **El Saltón** (p432).

4 Explore Cuba's Afro-Cuban dance genres at a **folklórico show** in Santiago de Cuba.

5 Trace the history of Cuba's French-inspired coffee culture at **Cafetal la Isabelica** (p426) in Gran Piedra.

6 Undertake a pilgrimage to **El Cobre** (p431) to visit the shrine of Cuba's patron saint, La Virgen de la Caridad.

7 Stand atop Cuba's highest mountain, **Pico Turquino**

(p434), next to the bust of José Martí, and admire the view.

8 Dive to the wreck of Spanish warship **Cristóbal Colón** (p433) off the wild coast near Chivirico.

Map labels

Mayarí Arriba

Loma Blanca

Río Mayarí

Los Reynaldos

El Aguacate

Río Baconao

Gran Piedra

Cordillera de la

Playa Cazonal

Playa Baconao

Parque Baconao

5 Gran Piedra

La Maya

Mella

Sevilla

Guarico

Baconao

Santiago de Cuba

Playa Siboney

San Luis

Autopista Nacional

Puerto Boniato

1 2 4

Carretera Central

Playa Siboney

Siboney

Palma Soriano

Embalse Protesta de Baraguá

El Cobre 6

Antonio Maceo International Airport

Río Cauto

Presa Gilbert

Playa Mar Verde

Contramaestre

Río Contramaestre

Embalse Carlos Manuel de Céspedes

Cruce de los Baños

Río Mogote

3 El Saltón

Aserradero

CARIBBEAN SEA

Baire

Los Negros

Matías

Playa Sevilla

Río Seco

Jiguaní

Santa Rita

Victorino

La Alcarraza

8 Chivirico

El Horno

Guisa

El Uvero

S i e r r a   M a e s t r a

Pico Bayamesa (1730m)

Granma Province

Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Airport

Bayamo

Buey Arriba

Barranca

Sierra Maestra (5km)

Alto del Naranjo

Pico Turquino (1972m) 7

Ocujal

Cristóbal Colón **8**

Las Cuevas

Pico Cuba (1872m)

La Plata

20 km
12 miles

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