



Ciego de Ávila Province

📍 33 / POP 424,400

Includes ➔

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Best Water Sports

- ➔ Laguna de la Leche (p309)
- ➔ Jardines de la Reina (p306)
- ➔ Kiteboarding on Cayo Guillermo (p314)
- ➔ Cayo Media Luna (p314)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Meliá Cayo Coco (p311)
- ➔ Alojamiento Maité (p307)
- ➔ Iberostar Daiquirí (p314)

Why Go?

Diminutive Ciego de Ávila's finger-in-the-dyke moment came during the late-19th-century Cuban Wars of Independence: it became the site of an impressive fortified wall, the Trocha, built to keep out rebellious armies of the east from the prosperous west. Today, the province continues to be the cultural divide between the Oriente and Occidente. The main reason to stop off is the ambitious post-Special Period resort development of Cayo Coco and Cayo Guillermo. The brilliant tropical pearls that once seduced Ernest Hemingway have had their glorious beaches spruced up and daubed with over a dozen exclusive tourist resorts.

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 cricket.
- ➔ Morón's Aquatic Carnival kicks off in September, in the channel leading to the Laguna de Leche.



Ciego de Ávila Province Highlights

- 1 Browse through Ciego de Ávila's double act of delightful municipal museums, **Museo Provincial Simón Reyes** (p302) and **Museo de Artes Decorativas** (p302).
- 2 Marvel at how waste ground got transformed into one of Cuba's most interesting city

- 3 parks at Ciego de Ávila's **Parque de la Ciudad** (p302).
- 3 Steer a boat across mangrove-fringed **Laguna de la Leche** (p309).
- 4 Roam the remains of the Caribbean's most extensive indigenous settlement, **Los Buchillones**.

- 5 Follow in the wake of 'Papa' Hemingway and take to the waters off **Cayo Guillermo** (p313).
- 6 Bask in the beach paradise of **Playa Pilar** (p314).
- 7 Explore the almost-virgin waters of the secluded **Jardines de la Reina** (p306) archipelago.