



Guantánamo Province

21 / POP 511,100

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Best Off-the-Beaten-Track

- ➔ Güirito (p440)
- ➔ Punta de Maisí (p436)
- ➔ Zoológico de Piedras (p434)

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Bar-Restaurant La Terraza – Casa Nilson (p442)
- ➔ El Buen Sabor (p442)
- ➔ La Rosa Nautica (p443)
- ➔ Restaurante La Punta (p443)

Why Go?

Banish those grainy news images of prisoners in orange jumpsuits from your consciousness; the Cuban version of Guantánamo (on the *other* side of the security fence) is a fantasy land of crinkled mountains and exuberant foliage that seems as far away from modern America as a star in another galaxy. In the region's isolated valleys and wild coastal microclimates (arid in the south, lush in the north), you'll encounter Cuba at its most mysterious and esoteric. Herein lie primitive musical sub-genres, little-known Afro-Cuban religious rites, and echoes of an indigenous Taíno culture supposedly wiped out by the Spanish centuries ago – or so you thought. The town of Baracoa and its rural surroundings is the regional highlight, closely followed by the vibrant endemism of the semi-virgin Parque Nacional Alejandro de Humboldt. Further west, the city of Guantánamo, perennially bypassed by most travelers, hides another saucerful of secrets.

When to Go

- ➔ Baracoa's biggest festival, the Semana de la Cultura Baracoesa, is in late March/early April.
- ➔ The city of Guantánamo gets animated in mid-December for the Festival Nacional de Changüí.
- ➔ Avoid the worst of Baracoa's heavy storms by staying away in September and October. Guantánamo's climate varies hugely, but it's dependent more on geography than season.



Guantánamo Province Highlights

- 1** Search for the world's smallest frog in **Parque Nacional Alejandro de Humboldt** (p445), the most diverse national park in the Caribbean.
- 2** Sample the culinary smorgasbord of exotic **Baracoa** (p442).
- 3** Cycle **La Farola** (p436), the lighthouse road from Cajobabo to Baracoa.
- 4** Get an eyeful of the stony statues at the **Zoológico de Piedras** (p434).
- 5** Hike through the tropical jungle up to Baracoa's mysterious flat-topped mountain, **El Yunque** (p444).
- 6** Uncover multiple music genres in the city of **Guantánamo** (p430).
- 7** Jump on board a local boat upstream from the **Boca de Yumuri** (p436) and navigate through the jaws of a narrow river gorge.