



# Artemisa & Mayabeque Provinces

47 (48 IN LAS TERRAZAS & SOROA) / POP 885,545

## Includes ➔

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ El Romero (p153)
- ➔ Casa del Campesino (p153)
- ➔ San Miguel (p148)
- ➔ Don Oliva (p147)

## Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Maité Delgado (p150)
- ➔ Castillo de las Nubes (p150)
- ➔ Hotel Moka (p153)
- ➔ Memories Jibacoa Beach (p156)

## Why Go?

Leap-frogged by almost all international visitors, Cuba's two smallest provinces, created by dividing Havana Province in half in 2010, are the preserve of more everyday concerns – like growing half of the crops that feed the nation, for example. But in among the patchwork of citrus and pineapple fields lie a smattering of small towns that will satisfy the curious and the brave.

The most interesting corner is Las Terrazas and Soroa, Cuba's most successful ecoproject and an increasingly important nexus for trekking and birdwatching. East of Havana, Jibacoa's beaches are the domain of a trickle of Varadero-avoiding tourists who guard their secret tightly. Wander elsewhere and you'll be in mainly Cuban company (or none at all) contemplating sugar-plantation ruins, weird one-of-a-kind museums, and improbably riotous festivals. For a kaleidoscope of the whole region take the ridiculously slow Hershey train through the nation's proverbial backyard and admire the view.

## When to Go

- ➔ The provinces' attractions vary considerably climate-wise. Because of their unique geographical situation, Soroa and Las Terrazas have a microclimate: more rain and minimum monthly temperatures 2°C to 3°C colder than Havana.
- ➔ The big parties around here are December for the carnival-esque frivolity of Bejucal's Las Charangas and April for the International Humor Festival in San Antonio de los Baños.
- ➔ December through April is best for the beaches at Playa Jibacoa.



GULF OF MEXICO



## Artemisa & Mayabeque Provinces Highlights

- 1 Antiguo Cafetal Angerona** (p147) Roaming the abandoned ruins of a once-mighty coffee plantation.
- 2 Las Terrazas** (p151) Going green at Cuba's primary ecovillage, where the slopes have been replanted with trees, orchids, painters and poets.
- 3 Soroa** (p148) Hiking in the 'rainbow of Cuba' amid giant ferns and diminutive orchids.
- 4 Museo del Humor** (p146) Seeing the funny side of San Antonio de los Baños.
- 5 Hershey Electric Railway** (p155) Escaping the tourist trails on the still-functioning electric railway of an erstwhile chocolate czar.
- 6 Playa Jibacoa** (p154) Bagging a beach retreat where you can snorkel direct from the shore.
- 7 Parque Escaleras de Jaruco** (p156) Feasting with a view amid the heights of folk and weekend Havana Mayabeque.