



Ciego de Ávila Province

33 / POP 424,400

Includes ➔

Ciego de Ávila	303
Morón	306
Around Morón	309
Florencia	310
Cayo Coco	311
Cayo Guillermo	314

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Restaurante Maité la Qbana (p307)
- ➔ Lenny's Lobster Shack (p313)
- ➔ Ranchón Playa Pilar (p314)
- ➔ Rancho Flamingo (p313)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Alojamiento Maité (p307)
- ➔ Meliá Cayo Coco (p311)
- ➔ Iberostar Daiquirí (p315)
- ➔ Colonial Cayo Coco (p312)

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 eastern armies from the prosperous west. Today, the province continues to be the cultural divide between Cuba's Oriente and Occidente. Most tourists come here for 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 resorts.

Away from the tourist hordes, the province has been harboring intriguing secrets for more than 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 rites still practiced in cricket matches, folk-dancing, explosive fireworks and more.

When to Go

- ➔ Beachgoers should descend on the cayos between November and March for drier weather that, while cool by Cuban standards, is still pleasantly warm.
- ➔ Head for the countryside in November for the Fiesta de los Bandas Rojo y Azul, a folkloric throwback to Spanish times celebrated in rural Majagua.
- ➔ Morón's Aquatic Carnival kicks off in September, in the channel leading to Laguna de la Leche.



Ciego de Ávila Province Highlights

1 Morón (p306) Staying in a private homestay in this hard-working Cuban town.

2 Parque de la Ciudad (p303) Marveling at how waste ground got transformed into one of Cuba's most interesting city parks.

3 Laguna la Redonda (p309) Taking the controls

of a speedboat through the mangrove-fringed channels of this freshwater lake.

4 Florencia (p310) Taking to the hills on horseback in the bucolic paths and lanes of northern Ciego.

5 Cayo Guillermo (p314) Following 'Papa' Hemingway and taking to the waters of

the Gulf Stream for deep-sea fishing or kiteboarding.

6 Playa Pilar (p314) Finding out if this is really the finest beach in Cuba.

7 Jardines de la Reina (p310) Exploring the clear seas of Cuba's finest diving archipelago from a floating hotel.