



Guantánamo Province

21 / POP 511,000

Includes ➔

Guantánamo	431
South Coast	435
Punta de Maisí	436
Boca de Yumurí	436
Baracoa	437
Northwest of Baracoa	444
Parque Nacional Alejandro de Humboldt	445

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Restaurante Las Terrazas Casa Nilson (p443)
- ➔ El Buen Sabor (p443)
- ➔ Sabor Melián (p433)
- ➔ Restaurante La Punta (p443)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Villa Maguana (p445)
- ➔ Casa Colonial Ykira Mahiquez (p440)
- ➔ La Casona (p440)

Why Go?

A fantasy land of crinkled mountains and exuberant foliage, the Cuban Guantánamo remains a galaxy away from modern America in ambience. That doesn't stop most people associating it with the United States Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, which continues in operation, though downsized. Off the base, the region's isolated valleys and wild coastal microclimates (arid in the south, lush in the north) are Cuba at its most mysterious and esoteric. Herein lie primitive musical subgenres, 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.

Though brutally battered by Hurricane Matthew in October, 2016, Baracoa and its rural surroundings remain the regional highlight, closely followed by the vibrant endemism of the semivirgin Parque Nacional Alejandro de Humboldt. Further west, the city of Guantánamo, perennially bypassed by most travelers, represents the Cuba rarely tasted by tourists.

When to Go

- ➔ Baracoa's biggest festival, the Semana de la Cultura Baracoesa, takes place in late March/early April with an eruption of music, dance and cultural activities.
- ➔ Non-touristy Guantánamo lights a fire in mid-December for the sultry Festival Nacional de Changüí, the ancestor of the modern salsa.
- ➔ Hurricanes and bad storms mar the months of September and October, making this period the best time to avoid Baracoa.
- ➔ Guantánamo's climate varies hugely, but it's dependent more on geography than the seasons, meaning mountain passes and lush parks stay wetter than the dry coastal areas.

Guantánamo Province Highlights

- 1 Parque Nacional Alejandro de Humboldt** (p445) Searching for the world's smallest frog in the most diverse national park in the Caribbean.
- 2 Baracoa** (p442) Sampling the exotic culinary delights of the city.
- 3 La Farola** (p436) Cycling the ultra-scenic lighthouse

- 5 El Yunque** (p444) Ascending tropical jungle to summit Baracoa's mysterious flat-topped mountain.
- 6 Guantánamo** (p431) Uncovering multiple music

genres belonging to this forgotten city.

- 7 Boca de Yumuri** (p436) Boating upstream from the river mouth to the jaws of a narrow river gorge.

road from Cajobabo to Baracoa.

- 4 Zoológico de Piedras** (p435) Getting an eyeful of the homespun artistry of these stony statues.

