

Valle de Viñales & Pinar del Río Province

3 48 / POP 595,000

	ncludes →	
V	alle de Viñales	176
٧	iñales	176
	arque Nacional	
V	iñales	183
C	ayo Jutías	185
P	uerto Esperanza	186
C	ayo Levisa	186
S	an Diego de	
Lo	os Baños	188
S	ierra de Güira	189
Ρ	inar del Río	189
C.	an Juan v Martínez	

Best Places to Eat

Guanahacabibes.....195

- → Tres Jotas (p181)
- ⇒ El Olivo (p180)

Península de

- → Balcón del Valle (p181)
- → Café Ortuzar (p192)

Best Places to Sleep

- → Casa Daniela (p178)
- → Hotel los Jazmines (p180)
- → Terra Mar 1910 (p192)
- → Villa los Reyes (p178)

Why Go?

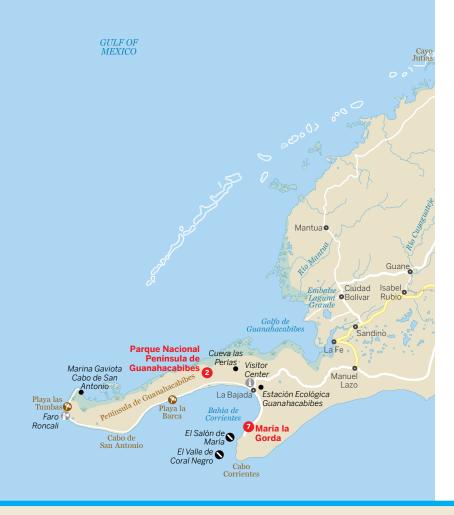
Tobacco is still king on Cuba's western fingertip, a rolling canvas of rust-red oxen-furrowed fields, thatched tobac-co-drying houses and sombrero-clad *guajiros* (country folk).

The crucible of this emerald land is the Valle de Viñales, a Unesco World Heritage Site framed by a backdrop of distinctive *mogotes* (limestone monoliths) that nigh-on beseech you to get hiking. Playing a tuneful second fiddle is the Península de Guanahacabibes, an uninhabited wilderness chock-a-block with fertile ecosystems that abut a swath of 50-plus offshore dive sites.

People primarily come here to be close to nature, basing themselves in the serene hassle-free village of Viñales. From here, huge cave complexes call for torch-lit exploration, tobacco plantations offer expert fact-finding tours, beaches invite lazy contemplation, and every horizon seems to be filled with a host of quintessential 'come to the Cuban countryside' images. So follow the fragrant aroma of tobacco and come

When to Go

- → Come from May through August to see prized wildlife, such as the Guanahacabibes turtles and thousands of red crabs.
- November through February is the tobacco-growing season and a good time to visit the plantations speckled with their deep-green plants.
- December through March is ideal beach weather. Calm seas also create good conditions for diving at María la Gorda.
- → July through early November is the hurricane season. Beware, in the last decade several big storms have hit the province, usually in August or September.



Valle de Viñales & Pinar del Río Province Highlights

• Parque Nacional Viñales (p183) Seeing, smelling and tasting the agricultural beauty of this wonderfully authentic Unesco World Heritage Site.

Parque Nacional Península de Guanaha**cabibes** (p195) Going turtlewatching on virgin beaches on the western fingertip of the Cuban mainland.

3 Valle de Palmarito (p185) Riding a horse or hiking up with the *guajiros* into this

pastoral valley in the Parque Nacional Viñales.

Gran Caverna de Santo Tomás (p183) Getting gobsmacked by the grottos of one of Latin America's largest subterranean cave systems.