



Villa Clara Province

42 / POP 803,690

Includes ➔

Santa Clara	256
Embalse	
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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Restaurant Florida Center (p262)
- ➔ La Piramide (p269)
- ➔ La Taberna (p270)
- ➔ Restaurante Casona Jover (p262)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Hostal Camino del Príncipe (p268)
- ➔ Meliá Buenavista (p272)
- ➔ 'Villa Colonial' – Frank & Arelys (p267)
- ➔ Iberostar Ensenachos (p272)

Why Go?

What is that word hanging in the air over Villa Clara, one of the nation's most diverse provinces? 'Revolution,' perhaps? And not just because Che Guevara liberated its capital, Santa Clara, from Batista's corrupt gambling party to kick-start the Castro brothers' 58-year (and counting) stint in power. Oh, no. Ultra-cultural Santa Clara is guardian of the Cuban avant-garde (having the nation's only drag show and its main rock festival). Meanwhile, the picturesque colonial town of Remedios and the beach-rimmed Cayerías del Norte beyond are experiencing Cuba's most drastic contemporary tourist development.

This region is indelibly stamped with Che's legacy and associated sights. Yet it should also win your heart for hosting the nation's most frenzied street party (Remedios), for its highs among the glimmering Escambray peaks and their adventure possibilities (around Embalse de Hanabanilla), and for its lows along the lolling white-sand strands off its northern coast (Cayo Santa María).

When to Go

- ➔ There's no better time to visit Villa Clara than December. Specifically, Christmas Eve. Swap your cold Christmas for the Caribbean's hottest street party in Remedios. Book ahead, it gets busy.
- ➔ Head over to the Cayerías del Norte for the start of the high season (December through March), when the chances of the skies raining on your beach parade are as low as they get.
- ➔ November is a good time to visit Santa Clara to engage in the joys of one of Cuba's most unique and revolutionary festivals, the Ciudad Metal (a celebration of Cuban rock music).



Villa Clara Province Highlights

- 1 Santa Clara** (p256)
Staying in a palatial casa particular while plugging into the electric nightlife at the legendary Club Mejunje and tracing the legend at the monument to Ernesto Che Guevara.
- 2 Embalse Hanabanilla** (p265) Hiking the trails, bathing in the pools and soaking up the solitude at this lovely lake surrounded by mountains.
- 3 Remedios** (p266) People-watching from a cafe in this recently rejuvenated but, as yet, unspoiled colonial town.
- 4 Calbarién** (p270) Seeing what the Villa Clara tourist board forgot to mention in this ramshackle yet heart-warming waterside settlement.
- 5 Cayo Santa María** (p271)
Basking on the balmy sands of Playa Las Gaviotas, one of Cayo Santa María's last remaining public-access beaches.