



Sancti Spíritus Province

Sancti Spíritus is the province of good fortune. Spend a day trekking through its rolling Jatibonico hills or crested Sierra del Escambray and you'll quickly discover that there's more of everything here, and all of it squeezed into an area half the size of Camagüey or Pinar del Río.

The cities are a perennial highlight. Sancti Spíritus is the only province that hosts two of Cuba's seven founding settlements: in the east is the understated provincial capital, a soporific mix of weather-beaten buildings and bruised Ladas. South, and within sight of the coast, is ethereal Trinidad, Cuba's – and Latin America's – colonial jewel that is second only to Havana as a tourist magnet.

Unlike other colonial belles, Trinidad has beaches – nearby Ancón is a stunner, easily the best on Cuba's southern coast – and mountains. Within mirror-glinting distance of the city's colonial core lie the haunting Escambray, Cuba's best hiking area with an actual network of decent trails, a couple of which can be done – officially – *without a guide!*

Sandwiched in between is the once-formidable Valle de los Ingenios, the industrial heartland upon which Trinidad's fortunes were once laid out in sugar. But, while the valley's economic riches depleted, its tourist value sky-rocketed; it's now a Unesco World Heritage Site and best explored on a steam train.

The rest of the province hides a surprisingly varied cache of oft-overlooked curiosities. There's a great fishing lake at Zaza, a seminal museum to Cuba's guerrilla icon Camilo Cienfuegos in Yaguajay, and a barely visited Unesco Biosphere Reserve in the beautiful Bahía de Buenavista.

SANCTI SPÍRITUS PROVINCE

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Time-warp in Trinidad** Peel off the layers in Cuba's colonial jewel (p298)
- **Hook a Line** Go fishing in Embalse Zaza (p296)
- **Life by the Lago** Watch the flamingos in the lake and relax in mineral springs in Villa San José del Lago (p315)
- **Beach Break** Rent a house in La Boca and stroll the sands of Playa Ancón (p309)
- **Heavenly Hike** Discover the hikes, waterfalls and swimming holes of beautiful Parque La Guanayara (p312)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 041

■ POPULATION: 463,258

■ AREA: 6744 SQ KM

