Your personalised eBrochure

Cuba 3 Star All Inclusive

eBrochure ref: PDF405870
created: 30 December 2014

call Not Just Travel Isle of Wight direct on:
01983716727
Holiday Quotation

Date: 30/12/2014
Agent: Not Just Travel Isle of Wight  
web: www.gotravelto.co.uk
Agent Phone: 01983716727  
Agent email: iow@notjusttravel.com

Please find below details of the quotation we have created for you. Should you have any further queries please contact us on the details supplied above.

Passengers

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Travel Details

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Luggage Allowance: included checked in allowance & cabin allowance

Transfers
Coach transfer is included in this holiday

Accommodation

Duration: 14 nights

Accommodation: Brisas Guardalavaca, Guardalavaca, Cuba
Room Type: Twin room balc/terr, bath, shower
Board Basis: All Inclusive

Travel Insurance

We will be pleased to offer a competitive quote for your travel insurance.
Price

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TOTAL £1668.00

All prices shown are subject to change without prior notice. This holiday can be reserved today by paying a deposit.

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Cuba 3 Star All Inclusive
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Brisas Guardalavaca 评分

Guardalavaca,

The Brisas Guardalavaca offers friendly service, excellent facilities and comfortable surroundings, with views of stunning sands and sea. Guests can share the facilities between the hotel and bungalows.

LOCATION
Overlooking Guardalavaca Beach, on the eastern side of Guardalavaca, 700m from the resort centre.

BOARD BASIS
All Inclusive

SWIMMING POOLS
Two outdoor pools • Two whirlpools

EATING & DRINKING
Six restaurants including one main buffet and Italian, Cuban, international, seafood and pub-style à la carte restaurants • Nine bars including two pool bars, snack grill bar and lobby bar

CHILDREN
Hotel-run kids' club (4–12 yrs) • Splash pool • Playground • Highchairs • Cots

Child prices age limit 12

ENTERTAINMENT
Regular daytime activities and evening entertainment

HEALTH & BEAUTY
Gym • Sauna • Whirlpool • Beauty salon

FACILITIES & SERVICES
24hr reception • Internet café

KEY FACTS
231 rooms • 206 bungalows

OUR OFFERS
• Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve Gala meals are included in the price of your holiday
• Honeymooners receive a bottle of sparkling wine, flowers and special dinner in an à la carte restaurant (marriage certificate to be shown)
• Single parent offer: adult pays adult price plus single parent twin room supplement and children pay 1st and 2nd child prices

OPTIONAL EXTRAS
• Family adjacent room offer: 2 standard rooms next door to each other (not interconnecting) sleeping up to 4 adults and 1 child are available at a supplement

ACCOMMODATION
Standard rooms (2–3 people) have 1 king-size bed or 2 double beds. All have air conditioning, satellite TV, full bathroom, hairdryer and balcony or terrace.
Air-conditioned bungalows (3 adults or 2 adults and 2 children) have 2 double beds and sofa bed and the same facilities as standard rooms.

Rooms for sole use, family adjacent rooms and sea view rooms are available at a supplement. Superior bungalows with a seating area and bungalows for sole use are also available at a supplement.

all inclusive features
• Buffet breakfast, lunch and dinner; five à la carte restaurants (three reservations per week); snacks served 24 hours excluding meal times
• An unlimited amount of hot, soft and alcoholic drinks (including some international brands) served 24 hours; mini-bar stocked with water on arrival
• Activities usually include aerobics, aquaerobics, basketball, badminton, darts, football, French bowls, kayaks, pedaloes, pool table, sailing, snorkelling, table tennis, tennis, volleyball, waterpolo, windsurfing and an introductory scuba-dive in pool (once per stay); pool/beach towels included
• Frequent daytime activities and evening entertainment usually includes live music, shows, Spanish lessons and beach and pool games
• Gym; sauna; whirlpool
Cuba can portray itself as the archetypal image of a Caribbean island with its sandy, palm-fringed shores washed by crystal-clear waters and cooled by breezes carrying the scent of frangipani, mango and guava. But Cuba has so much more to offer those who venture away from its beaches to the towns and cities and their Spanish colonial architecture and grand plazas, where classic automobiles labour along streets and country roads, and the hip-swaying sounds of salsa music fill the night air. Together with cigar smoke and rum cocktails, baseball, and everywhere visual references of the 1959 revolution, these picture-postcard portraits of Cuba tell a more complete tale of the largest island in the Caribbean.

Christopher Columbus discovered Cuba on his way back to Spain after his second voyage to the New World in 1492 and was the first European to remark on its beauty. Today, the island state is starting to exploit its glorious attractions and offers visitors an alternative Caribbean holiday.

Cuba is so large that it allegedly confused Columbus, who thought he had discovered a continent and not an island. It sits at the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico; the main island is 746 miles (1,200km) long with an irregular coastline that offers hundreds of bays and beaches. The years of political isolation have protected Cuba from mass tourism; the main towns and villages retain a crumbling colonial charm and are generally devoid of resorts that blight some of its neighbouring islands.

With its history and great choice of natural attractions Cuba has much to offer. But most visitors agree that Cuba is a country so individual and extraordinary, that to be truly understood and appreciated it has to be experienced in person.

Places to Visit

Attractions Overview

Cuba is a country like no other: visitors here experience the thrill of the new; of being in unfamiliar territory. There is much to see and do, particularly if you enjoy Havana's majestically decaying colonial architecture and revolutionary artefacts infused with communist iconography. Cuba is a vibrant, fun and unique holiday destination and just wandering around the streets or along the pristine beaches is entertainment enough for most visitors. There are, however, plenty of cultural and historical attractions for those who enjoy sightseeing, including the Museo de la Revolucion, the Capitolio Nacional, and the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Then there are the fabulous beaches, mercifully free of the rampant resort development you'll find elsewhere in the Caribbean. And the beaches are not the only natural wonders. It is a pity that many visitors never get out of the capital because the countryside holds a wealth of natural splendour and interesting attractions, such as the sugarcane palaces of Trinidad and the colonial city of Sancti Spiritus. Cuba is also developing its potential for eco-tourism with environmentally stunning areas like the Montemar Natural Park which includes forests, marshes and beautiful clear lagoons. The cave systems of Gran Caverna de Santo Tomas are also pleasantly unspoiled, allowing for a more authentic caving experience than many of the glitzy tourist-orientated caves found on the international circuit. Cuba is a year-round destination, although it is busiest over the cooler winter months between December and March.
Playas del Este
Region/City: Havana
Twenty-five minutes east of Havana are the Playas del Este, a chain of sandy beaches stretching for six miles (10km) between Bacuranao and Guanabo. On the weekends, they are generally packed with Cubans escaping the city. There are a few tourist hotels lining the coast, but other than that, there are limited facilities. For those who need an escape from the city the beaches make a good day trip; however, those expecting pristine tropical island beaches might be disappointed. The ocean is still unbelievably inviting, with clear, warm turquoise water, but the beaches themselves tend to suffer from all the rubbish left by the crowds. During the week the beaches are much quieter and cleaner so that is the time to go if you want a solitary, peaceful experience. There are a number of pristine 'tourist' beaches in Cuba but the Playas del Este are fun because they offer a more genuine experience of the festive Cuban beach lifestyle; if you want to mix with locals and enjoy people watching then this is the perfect place to park your towel. There are usually lots of vendors selling food and beer at reasonable prices on these beaches and people are generally very friendly.

Museo de la Ciudad (Museum of the City)
Region/City: Havana
Built in 1791, the stately Baroque residence of Cuba's colonial governors and former Presidential Palace, the Palace of the Captains General stands as an impressive sight on the Plaza de Armas and is now the repository for the city's museum collections. The building itself is truly wonderful, with a central courtyard containing a white marble statue of Christopher Columbus. It has been beautifully restored and in itself justifies the entrance fee. The museum's displays and exhibits tell the tale of Havana, from its founding to the present day, including rooms devoted to the Cuban wars for national independence. The colourful Hall of Flags contains the original Cuban flag, as well as a number of others used by the Spanish colonial government. There are also exhibits relating to archaeology, folklore and weaponry, and an art collection that includes porcelain, paintings and furniture of historic value and great beauty. The treasures are varied and interesting but a guided tour does help supplement the labels, which are not comprehensive. Visitors should not that there have been reports of the museum attendants trying to hustle tourists out of money by offering to take photos for them, so be aware that they may approach you.

Cigar Factories
Region/City: Havana
Even non-smokers have to agree that a visit to Cuba would not be complete without investigating the island's most famous export, cigars. The art of cigar-making in Cuba is old and traditional, and three main factories in Havana offer tours for visitors to see cigars still rolled by hand. In the oldest factory, Partagas, founded in 1827, traditionally a reader is employed to keep workers entertained while they fashion the famous cigars. Apparently this is the reason some of the famous cigars are named after literary characters. Tours leave every 20-30 minutes, depending on what language you want to be guided in. The tour lasts about 45 minutes. Havana's other cigar factories are La Corona and the lesser-visited Romeo y Julieta. There are shops attached to the factories where cigars can be purchased. Visitors are advised not to buy cigars from people off the street, as these are usually rolled banana leaves fashioned into cigar look-alikes and the sellers are persistent hustlers. Los Cohiba Esplendidos are supposed to be the best cigars in Cuba, formerly only available to Fidel Castro.

Plaza de la Revolución
Region/City: Havana
The Plaza de la Revolución is a famous attraction in Havana. The gigantic square, which is dominated by the imposing José Martí Memorial, has provided the setting for numerous political rallies, and the podium in front of the memorial is where important political figures, like Fidel Castro, have addressed more than a million Cubans on important occasions, such as 1 May and 26 July each year. At the foot of the memorial is a museum dedicated to José Martí, a national hero who would most likely have become Cuba's first president had he survived the Second War of Independence in 1895. It is possible to take the elevator to the top of the 138-foot (42m) memorial, the highest structure in the city, to see some great views of Havana and get some photographs. Located behind the memorial are the closely guarded offices of Castro. Opposite the memorial, on the far side of the square, is the much-photographed Che Guevara image with the slogan Hasta la Victoria Siempre (Forever Onwards Towards Victory), that identifies the...
Ministry of the Interior building. The square is worth a visit if for no other reason than the important role it has played in Cuban history.

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes
Region/City: Havana
The Bellas Artes Museum was founded in 1913 and is now split into two buildings, both architecturally interesting and impressive, housing International and Cuban art respectively. Both fine art collections are worthy of detailed exploration and should delight any visitor interested in art. The Colección de Arte Universal covers everything from ancient Greek artefacts and Latin American pieces to art by French, Dutch and Italian painters, and includes work by masters such as Gainsborough, Goya and Rubens. The Colección de Arte Cubano is also outstanding and covers works from the 16th to the 20th centuries by prominent Cuban artists. The Cuban galleries have rooms dedicated to religion, landscape, portraits and scenes from Cuban life. Of course, the hyperrealism of the revolution and post-revolution years is also prominent and this has probably become the style of art most associated with modern Cuba. Famous paintings in the contemporary section include Gitana Tropical by Victor Manuel García (the 'Cuban Mona Lisa') and El Rapto de las Mulatas by Carlos Enriquez.

Museo de la Revolución
Region/City: Havana
Formerly the Presidential Palace and headquarters of the Cuban government, the impressive building now houses documents, photographs and artefacts pertaining to the Cuban Revolution (there are even bloodstained and bullet-riddled uniforms on display!), and provides an excellent introduction to, and understanding of, Cuba's history and its struggle for independence. Prepare to spend a few hours wandering from room to room as the story unfolds, from Spanish colonial times to the present day. In front of the museum entrance stands a watchtower that was part of the old city walls, as well as a tank used by Fidel Castro during the battle of the Bay of Pigs in 1961. Behind the museum is the glass-encased yacht, the 'Granma', which brought 82 revolutionaries, including Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, from Mexico to set the 1956 Revolution in motion. The anti-imperialist tone of the museum will delight some and possibly upset others but for history buffs and those interested in the revolution this museum is a treasure trove. Make sure to get the correct change at the museum counter as there have been reports of minor money scams.

Montemar Natural Park
Region/City: Havana
Cuba is developing its eco-tourism potential, and one of the prime spots for getting back to nature is at the Montemar Natural Park on the Zapata Peninsula in the province of Matanzas (about 75 miles or 120km from Havana). The hour long drive from Havana is well worth the effort as the Park can occupy the whole family for at least a day. The peninsula is one of the largest swamps in the Caribbean, and its vast area includes forests, marshes, crystal-clear lagoons and canals. Its exuberant flora, including more than 900 species of plants (115 of them endemic to Cuba) is complemented by its rich fauna, consisting of 160 bird species and 12 types of animal, including crocodiles. One of the park's many features is the Laguna del Tesoro (Treasure Lagoon), a fresh water reservoir inhabited by golden trout. In the midst of the lagoon is a reproduction Taíno village with its houses built on pillars. There are nature trails, a bird watching centre, and the largest flooded cave in Cuba. There is also a scuba centre, crocodile farm and several restaurants. Kids will love the chance to be outdoors and expend some energy and things like the crocodile farm and the flooded cave are delightful attractions for children and adults alike.

Capitolio Nacional
Region/City: Havana
One of Havana's grandest pieces of architecture, the Capitolio is an important landmark and one of Centro Habana's major touristic sights. It was designed to resemble the US Capitol in Washington DC, and the similarity is obvious. A monumental stone stairway leads to the vast domed hall, from where tours will take visitors beyond the doors to elaborately decorated chambers that once housed the seat of Cuban Congress. Today, it is home to the National Library and Academy of Sciences, and many of its rooms are still used for state events. It also houses a planetarium and a museum. Directly beneath the dome lies an imitation 24-carat diamond set into the marble floor, from where all highway distances between Havana and all sites in Cuba are measured. The building is today a bit rundown and the inside is often closed for renovations. Even so the outside makes a great photo spot. The area is a hot spot for vendors, artists and
beggar which can make it interesting but be sure to watch your belongings carefully.

**Baconao Park**

**Region/City:** Santiago de Cuba

The large park region, which is a World Heritage Biosphere Reserve, is filled with attractions other than wildlife refuges and coffee plantations. It is possible to climb 459 stone steps to the summit of the huge rock, La Gran Piedra, and stand 4,049ft (1,234m) above sea level for a beautiful view. It is said that on a dark night, one can see the lights of Jamaica in the distance. The park boasts extremely varied attractions and their relation to a general theme is not always obvious but there is an attempt to move chronologically through history beginning with the prehistoric and ending with the Cuban revolution. In the Valle de la Prehistoria visitors are awed by dozens of life-size model dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures lurking in lush vegetation. There is also a magnificent 45-hectare (111-acre) garden, the Jardín Ave de Paraiso, dating from 1860, that was laid out on a former coffee plantation, and features a series of colour-coded gardens with unique scents and displays in each. An artistic community consisting of ten families have formed a fieldstone hamlet, offering artwork of a high standard at Comunidad Artistas Oasis. There is also an Auto Museum, featuring gleaming old model cars, an aquarium, and multiple museums dedicated to Cuban history and the revolution. This is the area from which Castro planned the July 26th movement and it is of huge national importance to the Cubans. At Baconao Park there really is something for everyone.

**Castillo de San Pedro del Morro (Morro Castle)**

**Region/City:** Santiago de Cuba

Santiago's most impressive structure is poised ominously atop the cliffs at the narrow entrance to Santiago Bay, about nine miles (14km) south of Santiago. This enormous piece of military architecture, a maze of stairways and dungeons, was begun in 1640 and was originally built to defend the bay from pirates and naval attack. The Morro was rebuilt in 1664 after the English pirate, Henry Morgan, reduced it to rubble. At one stage in its long history the castle was also used as a prison before being converted once again into a military fortress. The castle now houses the Museum of Piracy, featuring excellent displays on piracy, colonialism, and slavery. There are old blunderbusses, muskets, cutlasses and Toledo blades in glass cases. The Morro is one of the best-preserved 17th century Spanish fortresses in the world and it has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There are amazing views from all over the fortress and many enviable photo opportunities. There is also a restaurant on the terrace. The Morro is a fascinating place to explore and visitors to Santiago are encouraged not to pass this attraction up.

**Bacardi Museum**

**Region/City:** Santiago de Cuba

Bacardi, the world's largest privately held, family-owned spirits company, started producing rum in Santiago way back in 1862. The family was forced to flee Cuba after the revolution in 1959, and Bacardi drinks are not found in Cuba today, but the brand still strongly associates itself with the country. Interestingly, it was the fruit bats that nested in the rafters of the original rum factory that gave Bacardi rum its world-famous bat logo. The company's current production sales exceed 240 million bottles a year, in 170 countries. Emilio Bacardi's private art and antique collection is still in Santiago, as is the original family rum distillery, and it is this collection that you can view in the Emilio Bacardi Moreau Museum. It is not a rum museum or a distillery tour but an eccentric collection of the famous family's historical artefacts and art. A fun and educational outing, the Bacardi museum is well worth a visit when in Santiago. Budget at least an hour to take in all the sights the museum has to offer. If you want to take photographs in the museum you can but only for an additional fee.

**Santa Ifigenia Cemetery**

**Region/City:** Santiago de Cuba

Santa Ifigenia Cemetery was officially founded in 1868, although some of its graves are older, and declared a National Monument in 1937. It now shelters a number of important historical and cultural figures including war heroes and famous politicians and artists. The gateway to this cemetery is dominated by a memorial to Cuban soldiers who died fighting in Angola. From here, the visitor is led to the impressive tomb of Cuban national hero, revolutionary and writer Jose Marti. The tomb is in the form of a crenulated hexagonal tower with each side representing one of Cuba's six original provinces. The round mausoleum is designed so that the sun will always shine on Marti's casket, which is draped with the Cuban flag. The cemetery also contains a shrine to the Virgin of Charity, Cuba's patron saint, in the form of the Basilica del
Cobre. This little church is said to be the scene of miracles performed by the saint. It is a very attractive cemetery with a number of impressive and quite original tombs and strolling around it is intriguing; a lot can be learned about a culture from the way they commemorate their dead.

Habana Vieja (Old Havana)

Region/City:Havana

Old Havana (Habana Vieja) is a very special attraction in Cuba which delights travellers and locals alike. This historic section of Cuba's capital was founded in 1519 and for centuries was an important naval port of colonial Spain. Being in such a strategic position, the city was targeted by pirates and fought over on numerous occasions, and the ruins of the defensive walls that surrounded the city can still be seen. During the years of Prohibition in the United States, Habana Vieja turned into a playground for Americans who flocked here for the cheap liquor, gambling, prostitution and flamboyant lifestyle. One of the district's most famous bars is La Bodeguita Del Medio, which was the favoured haunt of legendary US writer, Ernest Hemingway. The Old City now also contains museums, hotels, restaurants and shops lining the original cobble-stoned streets. Surrounding the picturesque squares (plazas) are beautiful restored colonial buildings with grand facades, and striking churches that form a magnificent setting for the late afternoon chess, domino games and salsa music. Plaza de Armas was the seat of power in Cuba for 400 years, from where the Spanish Captain's General, US military governors and Cuban president were based, and today is home to an interesting book market.

Gran Caverna de Santo Tomás

Region/City:Vinales Valley

Cuba's largest cave system, with more than 29 miles (46km) of underground galleries spanning eight different levels, the Santo Tomás caves are situated about 10 miles (16km) west of Vinales. Very informative, 90-minute guided tours take visitors 138 feet (42m) above the valley floor into the sixth gallery, where fantastic limestone formations, glittering stalactites and stalagmites, underground lakes and vast caverns are revealed by the light of headlamps. You may be taken to level seven as well but unless you are an advanced caver you will most likely be limited to these two levels; the entrances to levels six and seven are semi-hidden on a forested slope overlooking the valley and they provide wonderful vantage points for views and photographs. The cave system includes a tiny museum and visitor centre but for the most part the caves have been kept in their natural state, avoiding the tourist traps of electrical lighting and souvenir stands. In accordance with this, the place is refreshingly devoid of large crowds and tour groups which allows for a more mysterious and authentic tour than is usually possible in famous cave systems.

Museo Romántico

Region/City:Trinidad

Trinidad has a number of museums in colonial mansions, but one of the best is the beautifully renovated Museo Romántico overlooking the main square, Plaza Mayor. The Plaza Mayor is the historic centre of Trinidad and has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The mansions, or palaces, that surround the square date back to the 18th and 19th centuries when trade in sugar and slaves brought great wealth to the area. The Museo Romántico, or Brunet Palace, was built in 1812 by the wealthy Borrell family but it takes its name from the Brunet son-in-law who took over the house. The museum displays mostly the belongings and personal collections of these two grand families and boasts an excellent exhibition of paintings, decorative furniture and porcelain from the 1830s. The mansion itself is the main attraction, however, with the original marble floors still on display and splendid frescoes and neoclassical architecture and decoration. The Plaza Mayor is an un-missable attraction in Trinidad and visitors will do themselves an injustice if they don't explore some of these magnificent old houses, which provide so much insight into a certain period of Cuban history.

Museo Histórico Municipal

Region/City:Trinidad

This neo-classical mansion belonged to one of the richest families in Cuba, the Borrell family, between 1827 and 1830 but it was bought by German sugarcane plantation owner Justo Cantero, a controversial figure in local gossip. The mansion, now a museum, is still called Casa Cantero. The grandiose house, just off Plaza Mayor, is in itself the main attraction, with beautiful wall murals depicting classical scenes and splendid decor in the rooms. Apart from the cool, stylish rooms, the museum also displays some exhibits.
relating to the sugar industry and history of Trinidad, including collections of weaponry, furniture, art and important documents. One of Casa Cantero's most popular attractions is the superb view that can be seen from the mansion's tower - from here you can see wonderful vistas of Trinidad and the Escambray mountains. This view alone will more than justify the entrance fee for photographers. The museum starts getting crowded after 11am, when the tour buses arrive, so it is best to visit early in the morning to enjoy the personal charm of the place.

Ancón Beach
Region/City: Trinidad
The soft sand and still, warm waters backed by palm trees make the beach at Playa Ancón a popular trip from Trinidad. Situated at the end of the peninsula, seven miles (12km) south of Trinidad, Playa Ancón offers water sports and some good offshore snorkeling and diving sites. The colourful coral, rock tunnels and other exciting features of the seabed make this beach a scuba divers dream. Visitors can take a yacht out into the ocean for a swim, or hire boats to explore the coast or go fishing. The beach is famous among locals and travellers alike and the crowds there are a great mix of the two: it can be pleasant to go during the week when it is quieter; but, although it can get crowded during the weekend, it is quite fun watching the locals cavort and it is a good opportunity to mingle and meet people. Make sure to bring snacks or picnic because food stalls at the beach are limited and the hotels along the beach front generally only cater for their guests. A lovely way to see the countryside is to cycle from Trinidad to this beautiful beach - passing through a picturesque little village on the way, which is not strenuous.

Valle de los Ingenios (Valley of the Sugar Mills)
Region/City: Trinidad
This picturesque emerald valley was once the centre of the sugar trade industry, and home to the plantations that brought wealth and prosperity to Trinidad in the 18th and 19th centuries. At the peak of the sugar trade there were over 70 sugar cane mills in the valley area and about 30,000 slaves working on the plantations. Today, the ruins of estates, sugar mills and other remnants are visited by tourists who are attracted by the beauty of the valley, and the historical significance of the slave trade that operated during the valley's boom years. The main site is the Manaca Iznaga, a striking 144ft (44m) high tower that was used by a plantation owner, one of the wealthiest men in Cuba, Pedro Iznaga, to keep watch over his slaves working in the fields. The bells in this tower would toll to signal the end of the working day. Visitors can climb the tower for impressive views over the countryside. Along with Trinidad, the Valle de los Ingenios has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Horse riding tours to the valley, departing from Trinidad, are a popular way to see the sights and take in the beautiful surroundings.

Santa Clara
Region/City: Trinidad
Located 55 miles (88km) north of Trinidad, the city of Santa Clara is best known for its Che Memorial at the Plaza de la Revolución, and monuments relating to the Cuban Revolution. The armoured train monument (Monumento a la Toma del Tren Blindado) marks the spot where Che attacked the train sending Batista's troops to Santiago de Cuba, a battle which was a decisive factor in the victory of the revolutionaries. The Ernesto Che Guevara Monument was built to pay homage to the memory of Che and his comrades who fought with him in Bolivia, and the enormous monument incorporates a huge statue of Che with his famous phrase Hasta la Victoria Siempre (Forever Onwards Towards Victory), as well as representations of many aspects of his revolutionary life. To one side of the statue, a huge stone block has been inscribed in full with his farewell letter to Fidel Castro. The monument also includes a chilled mausoleum where the remains of Che and his comrades have been interred, and a museum with displays about his life and involvement in the revolution.

Sancti Spiritus
Region/City: Trinidad
The beautiful colonial city of Sancti Spiritus, with its gracious people, delightful architecture and maze of narrow, winding cobblestone streets remains almost completely unassuming and detached from tourism. Located in the centre of Cuba, 43 miles (70km) east of Trinidad, Sancti Spiritus lies on the banks of the Yayabo River, exuding charm, affability and authenticity. The old town dates back to 1514 and has been declared a National Monument. It is filled with picturesque, colourful little houses with uneven red-tiled roofs and weathered colonial homes. It also boasts the much-photographed green-towered church which dates
back to the early 16th century, making it the oldest church in Cuba. Streets are crammed with horse-drawn carriages, bicycles, scooters and pedestrians licking at ice-creams flavoured with a fruit which grows along the banks of the river. Spanning the river is the Puente Yayabo, an arched brick bridge built by the Spanish in 1815, and the city's most famous sight. The population of Sancti Spiritus is only about 100,000 and its rundown charm and friendly, laid-back people are part of its appeal. It is also renowned to be the home of many famous Cuban singers and musicians so it is worth seeking out some music when you visit.

Moncada Barracks

Region/City: Santiago de Cuba
If you are interested in the history of the revolution then visiting Moncada Barracks is something you must do in Cuba. The bullet-ridden Moncada Barracks and adjacent Parque Historico Abel Santamaria were the setting for very important events in Cuba's history. In 1953, a group led by Fidel Castro attacked the barracks in an attempt to steal weapons and launch the revolution, but the plan failed and 61 of them were killed. The rest were captured and many tortured to death by Batista's army. Fidel was later tried in the Escuela de Enfermeras for leading the attack, and this is when he wrote his famous 'History Will Absolve Me' speech. This failed attack is widely considered to mark the beginning of the Cuban revolution and the date of the attack, 26 July, was adopted by Castro as the name for his revolutionary movement (Movimiento 26 Julio) which succeeded in defeating Batista's dictatorship in 1959. The barracks was converted into a school after the revolution and in 1978 the perimeter walls were rebuilt and half of the building became a museum.

Cueva del Indio

Region/City: Vinales Valley
Located in the Viñales Valley, the Cueva del Indio is a magical place for kids to visit. The area provides some great family activities such as hiking and climbing, as well as some gorgeous rock pools for swimming in the stunningly bright green water. The caves are named for the local Indians who once inhabited them, the Guanajatabey Amerindians, who carved shelters into the limestone rock and hid in the caves from Spanish colonialists. Some of their bones were unearthed in the cave system and their art is still visible on the walls. The caves were rediscovered in 1920 and, with a gallery spanning 27 miles (45km), the Cueva del Indio cave system is very impressive. Travellers with kids in Cuba will find this a wonderful family activity; children will love the boat ride across the underground lake in the cave, and discovering the stalactites, stalagmites and petroglyphs on the walls of the cave. There is a museum and a cafeteria within the cave system. It doesn't take long to take the tour through the caves but it is quite a magical experience and worth a quick detour.

Acuario Nacional

Region/City: Havana
This aquarium, located in Habana Vieja, is a scientific research centre which aims to educate the public and conserve marine life. The aquarium features eight tanks displaying some truly beautiful freshwater fish, along with coral and other tropical species. The first marine mammal the aquarium collected was a seal called Silvia and seals remain a popular attraction at the Acuario Nacional: The Seal Stage has capacity for 1,000 spectators. The dolphins are also popular and have won awards for their performances. The Dolphinarium can hold 1,200 spectators and up to eight dolphins perform simultaneously. Other attractions include 30 specimens of marine tortoises and two exhibits which particularly please kids: a reproduction of a mangrove forest and a marine grotto. Children will love the aquarium and will delight in watching the dolphins, sea lions and seals, while parents can enjoy lunch in the aquarium's underwater restaurant. The subject of a recent renovation, the Acuario Nacional now also boasts a spellbinding display of brightly coloured saltwater fish. The aquarium has consistently been voted one of Havana's top tourist attractions for kids and those travelling with children in Cuba shouldn't miss it.

Camera Oscura

Region/City: Havana
A Camera Obscura is a dark room in which a lens and a series of mirrors reflect images of exterior surroundings onto a concave surface. Leonardo da Vinci first described such a camera in 1490. The Camara Obscura in Havana is in the old city, on the corner of Plaza Vieja and it offers spectacular 360-degree views over the city of Havana from a telescopic lens located atop a 115-foot (35m) tall tower. Guides give ten-minute tours of the old city and the bay, using the camera to point out special
places, architectural highlights and Old Havana's attractions. Some of the guides also use the camera to spy discreetly on people in the area in a very entertaining way; it is a great opportunity for people watching! The guides have various language skills and it is not difficult to find one that speaks English. If you are travelling with kids in Cuba then the Cámara Oscura is a great activity; children love the camera and the feeling of being a spy with access to a whole city. Apart from the camera tour you also gain access to a roof garden which is a nice spot from which to take photographs of your own.

**Parque Nacional Alejandro de Humboldt**

Region/City: Santiago de Cuba

This UNESCO World Heritage Site is located in the Cuban provinces of Holguín and Guantánamo, and features an impressive selection of flora and fauna, such as parrots, lizards and hummingbirds, which are unique to the area. The amount of endemic species in the park has made it one of the most valuable areas in the world for research and conservation. The area is said to be the most humid place in Cuba and this, in addition to the incredibly varied topography, may well be a factor in encouraging the diversity of species. The area has seen very little habitation by humankind and it remains a remarkably unspoiled wilderness area. It is widely hailed as the most important nature reserve in the Caribbean. The well-visited park is a firm favourite among young travellers to Cuba, and regularly features on lists of the best things to do with kids while in the country. It should appeal to all ages: who can resist pristine waterfalls and stunning natural rock pools to swim in? A guide is compulsory when touring the reserve. Although it is a few hours by bus or car to this incredible park it is a worthwhile excursion and makes for a wonderful weekend getaway.

**Ernest Hemingway Museum**

Region/City: Havana

Ernest Hemingway may be an American by birth, but Cubans have adopted this rambunctious writer/adventurer as their own - especially in Havana, where you'll find memorials to his apartments, regular haunts, and even favourite drink. Hemingway was a keen fisherman (and a keen drinker) and the bars and harbour in Cuba are full of references to him and his escapades. Finca Vigia, his home just outside Havana, has been restored and now functions as a museum to the famous author. The residence is kept as it was when he lived there, and visitors can see his typewriter and library of over 8,000 books. It was in this house that Hemingway wrote two of his most famous books, For Whom the Bell Tolls and The Old Man and the Sea (for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature). Walking around the house feels very personal and informal which makes it a special experience for fans of Hemingway. The museum has been known to close often for renovations so try to ensure that it is open for visitors before setting off. Although, a walk around the house and area may prove sufficiently exciting for many.

**El Malecón**

Region/City: Havana

A five-mile (8km) esplanade, roadway and seawall, running between the harbour in Old Havana and the historically Russian area of Vedado, El Malecón is the perfect place to start any Havana adventure. The two-hour walk, described by many as a cross-section of Cuba's history, begins in Habana Vieja, where the buildings have had their famous pastel colours faded by the sun and the salty sea-wind, and goes past various monuments to significant figures in Cuba's struggle history (including Máximo Gomez and Calixto Garcia), before ending up in the area of Vedado, a funky downtown district with great sights and vibrant nightlife. Walking El Malecón one bears witness to the strange disparity in Cuba between the wealthy tourist hotels and the rundown local joints. Construction of the walkway began in 1901 and its main purpose was to protect the city from the sea but today it is a very popular social haunt. It is very different to do the walk during the day and at night; perhaps the best way is to begin in the afternoon sun so that you can see the colours of the city, and finish in the evening when the lights come on. Celebrated by locals and tourists alike as the best way to gain an insight into the soul of Havana, travellers are strongly advised to begin their Cuban holiday with a walk along El Malecón.

**Bay of Pigs Museum**

Region/City: Havana

In April 1961, the United States (under the auspices of the CIA) launched an attack on Fidel Castro's government, attempting to overthrow it by securing the beach-head at Playa Giron. The 'Bay of Pigs' invasion, as it has come to be known, was a humiliating failure for the US, only serving to strengthen the Cuban people's support of Castro. Today, the fascinating Bay of Pigs Museum (Muséo Playa Giron) stands
as a simple record of the Cuban force's victory. Visitors can view maps and displays detailing the course of events as they transpired, as well as actual planes flown by the Cuban army during the siege, fragments of shot-down enemy planes, tanks, mortars and machine guns used in the battle, and much more. There is also a touching exhibition of photographs and biographies of the 156 Cuban soldiers that were killed during the invasion. Anyone with even a passing interest in modern history - or how US foreign policy has shaped the world in which we live - will find the Bay of Pigs Museum utterly enthralling. Budget at least two hours to take it all in.

Cayo Largo Del Sur
Region/City:Havana
One hundred and ten miles (177km) southeast of Havana is the popular diving and snorkeling paradise of Cayo Largo. The island offers 16 miles (26km) of white sand and crystal sea, where it is possible to swim and dive among grottos and sandy valleys full of crustaceans, sponges, coral and fish of every hue, shape and size. There are other numerous smaller cays accessible from the beach, each with their own natural treasures such as Cayo Iguanas, an isolated spot inhabited by iguanas. The living coral reef is also a big draw for visitors. It is possible to rent motorcycles, bicycles, horses and water sports equipment to make the most of a visit to Cayo Largo, which can be reached by yacht, or by daily air connection from Havana. Cayo Del Sur is the second biggest island in Cuba's Canarreos Archipelago and it has many special beaches to choose from. Nudity is permitted on the island and some of the beaches are frequented by nudists. The island is said to have been used as a base by pirates but now it is a tourist haven; there are five all-inclusive resort hotels on the island. Nobody lives permanently on Cayo Largo Del Sur.

Varadero
Region/City:Havana
With 22 miles (36km) of sandy, white, palm-fringed beach, Varadero Beach has often been referred to as one of the world's most beautiful beaches. With some of the most amazing diving, fishing and snorkelling opportunities, children splashing around in the crystalline turquoise waters will even be able to spot some fantastic fish with the naked eye. Glass-bottom boat companies abound here, too. Varadero Beach is a wonderful place to spend the day, and an absolute must-visit while in Cuba. Varadero is situated on a spit of land that reaches out into the Atlantic, a two-hour drive to the east of Havana. There are 23 world-renowned dive spots along this stretch of beach; dive centres offer dive courses, and there is deep sea fishing, windsurfing, parasailing, kayaking and sailing to be enjoyed. Outside of the water there are also numerous restaurants, cabaret spots, nightclubs, land sport opportunities, a skydiving centre, golf courses, and much more. The hotels in Varadero, Cuba's most popular beach resort, are some of the best in the Caribbean. Al Capone used to make this his holiday hideaway when taking a break from racketeering in Chicago, living it up in some of the best hotels in Varadero. Varadero's largest shopping complex is Plaza America where fancy boutiques and all manner of shops cater to American-style consumerism; holidaymakers looking for a spending spree will not be disappointed. There are a number of artisan markets that sell a wide variety of souvenirs along Avenue 1. For cigars the Casa del Habano sells excellent quality cigars. In Varadero town there is everything from market food stalls and fast food outlets to sit-down restaurants. There are many bars in Varadero offering live music, cabaret shows are popular, and dance clubs and discos in the town cater to Cubans and holidaymakers alike. The hotels have nightly entertainment, with lots of Cuban music, dancing and cocktails on offer. Whether you are visiting for a day on the beach, or staying at the resort for a holiday, Varadero is unmatched for its natural beauty and its touristic facilities.

Vinales Botanical Garden
Region/City:Vinales Valley
Almost all of the Vinales Valley attractions revolve around natural splendour and the Vinales Botanical Garden, the Jardin de las Hermanas Caridad y Carmen Miranda, is a special addition to this panoply of natural bounty. This small botanical garden ranks very highly among things to see and do in Vinales, partly because it is so refreshingly intimate and uni-touristy. The garden was cultivated by a local family, who still live on the property, in order to preserve samples of indigenous, tropical plants. It feels like a Cuban version of the Secret Garden; a riot of colour and controlled jungle which delights travellers of all ages. This is an ideal place to familiarise yourself with the flora of the region. Usually there is a family member available to show you around and teach you about all the different species of plants which makes for a lovely, personal experience. Roosters and chickens roam freely in the rambling garden and there are lots of lizards and birds. There are also some quirky decorations (dolls heads adorn some of the fence...
You can simply stroll into this garden from the main road of the village, and it is a wonderful place to wander alone, but be aware that although entrance is free small donations are expected, particularly if one of the family members gives you a tour. If you are lucky enough to be invited be sure to have a peek inside the house as it is also very charming.