

Habana Province



Patchwork fields, palm-dotted villages and a craggy coastline of brush-covered cliffs: the first and last view most visitors get of Habana Province is from a Boeing 747 as it descends into José Martí International Airport. Though neither as geographically spectacular as Viñales nor as picture-postcard perfect as Trinidad, the flat and agriculturally rich landscape that splays like a broken wheel out from the City of Habana has its own individual charm.

The best way to get to know the area is by hopping onto an antiquated Hershey train as it plies its way east from Habana to Matanzas via Santa Cruz del Norte, Jibacoa Pueblo, Arcos de Canasí and just about every house, hut, horse and hillock in between. Stop off in Camilo Cienfuegos and poke around the rusting hulk of an abandoned sugar mill, or disembark at dusty Jibacoa Pueblo where, 5km to the north, one of Cuba's most low-key and underrated beach resorts beckons invitingly.

Tempting visitors in the extreme east is Ranchón Gaviota, a picturesque country lodge where you can pitch off on bikes, boats or horses into the scenic Valle de Yumurí. Further west, in the former tobacco growing town of San Antonio de los Baños, birthplace of Cuban singer/songwriter Silvio Rodríguez, culture vultures can chase *trova* (traditional poetic singing/songwriting) music through the sunbaked streets, or stop off to chuckle ruefully at the sartorial exhibits on display at the quirky Museo del Humor. A tempting finale awaits in Bejucal at the annual Charangas, a popular feast where two rival dancing ensembles – *La Espina de Oro* (The Golden Thorn) and *La Ceiba de Plata* (The Silver Ceiba Tree) – compete for popularity in an orgy of laughing, dancing, singing and music. Habana Province – boring? Are you kidding?

HIGHLIGHTS

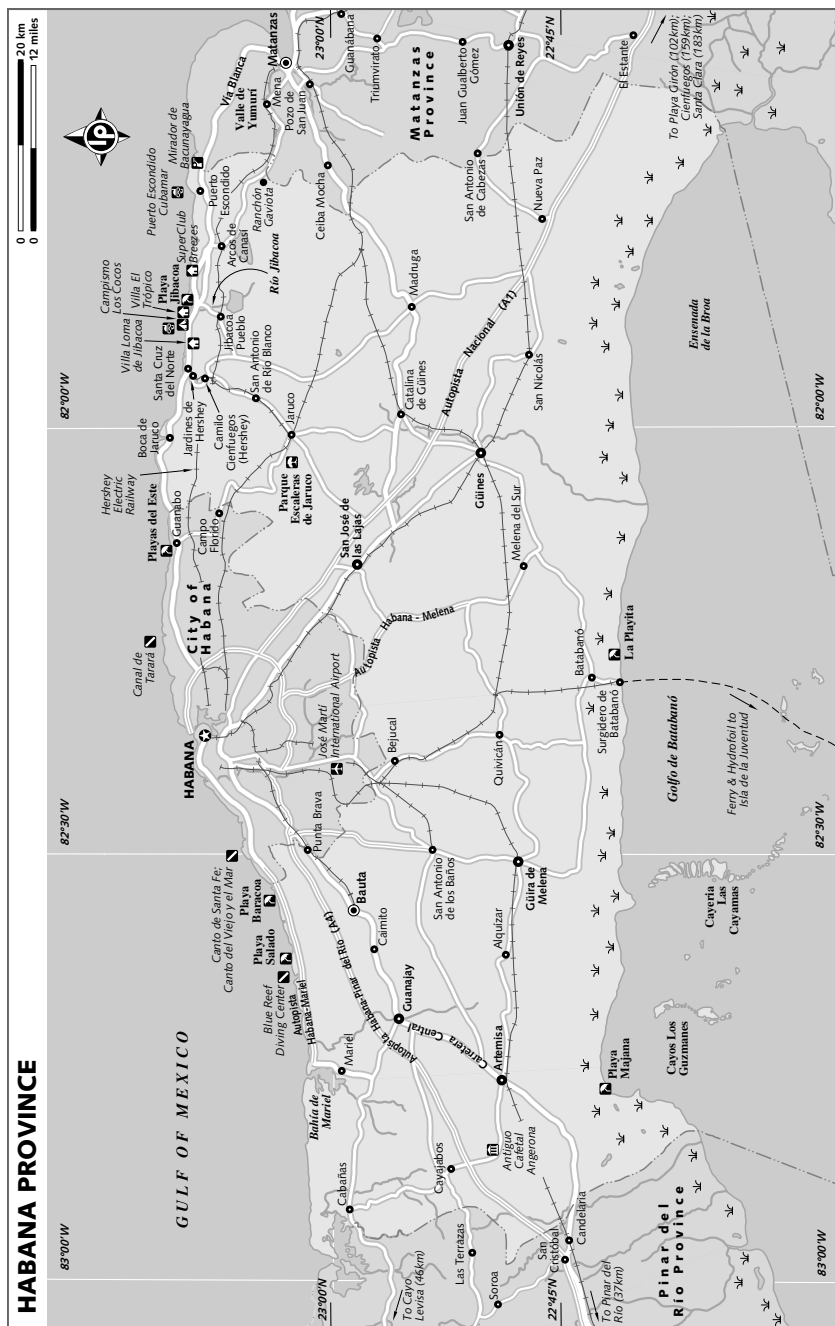
- **Garden Escape**
Enjoy a lazy lunch at the Jardines de Hershey (p174)
- **R and R**
Rediscover rural life in the Valle de Yumurí at bucolic Ranchón Gaviota (p174)
- **Train Trek**
Escape the tourist trails on the historic Hershey Electric Railway (p173)
- **Humor House**
Have a laugh at the Museo del Humor (p177) in San Antonio de los Baños
- **Beach Escape**
Lie low on unspoiled Playa Jibacoa (p173)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: VARIES

■ POPULATION: 711,590

■ AREA: 5731 SQ KM



PLAYA JIBACOA AREA

692

Little beaches, clusters of campismos and good offshore snorkeling make Playa Jibacoa, 60km east of Havana and 50km west of Varadero, the preferred getaway for Cubans of ordinary means. It doesn't have the white sand (or high price tag) of Playas del Este or Varadero, but the lofty limestone terrace overlooking the coast provides terrific views and hiking. Travelers with children will find interesting things to do in the surrounding area and the popularity of the region with Cuban families means fast friends are made wherever you go. The Vía Blanca, with beguiling sea and oil derrick vistas from Havana to Matanzas, runs along this coast; just inland are picturesque farming communities linked by the Hershey Electric Railway. Although Playa Jibacoa is a good pit stop between Havana and Matanzas, getting there will be difficult without your own transport (or catching rides Cuban-style). This area is changing fast and there are already two deluxe resorts at Arroyo Bermejo at the east end of the beach.

Sights

Above the Vía Blanca on the border of Havana and Matanzas Provinces is the **Mirador de Bacunayagua**, a lookout over Cuba's longest (313m) and highest (100m) bridge. This is one of the best views in Cuba, with densely wooded valley chasms backed by blue waves. Aside from the stupendous vista, the building contains a restaurant,

pool table and bar serving a selection of cold beers and freshly squeezed juice. Most tour buses between Varadero and Havana stop here and few motorists can resist the temptation.

West of here is **Santa Cruz del Norte**, a relatively quiet and unassuming town despite the presence of a famous rum factory. The plant in question is the Ronera Santa Cruz, producer of Havana Club rum and is one of the largest plants of its kind in Cuba.

Havana Club, founded in 1878 by the Arrechabala family of Cárdenas, opened its first distillery at Santa Cruz del Norte in 1919, and in 1973 a new factory was erected with the capacity to produce 30 million liters of rum a year. Unfortunately, for whatever reason (industrial espionage?), tourist visits are prohibited. A thermoelectric power station burning oil extracted from the coastal wells near Boca de Jaruco is just to the west. These and other oilfields west of Santa Cruz del Norte have been heavily exploited in recent years.

Five kilometers south of Santa Cruz del Norte is one of Cuba's largest sugar mills, the **Central Camilo Cienfuegos**, formerly owned by the US-based Hershey Chocolate Company. The headquarters of the Casablanca-Matanzas electric railway (**Hershey Electric Railway**), built by Hershey in 1917, is here. Five daily trains between Havana (Casablanca train station) and Matanzas cross nearby; there are also three trains from Hershey (as Camilo Cienfuegos is commonly called) to Santa Cruz del Norte and six from Hershey to Jaruco.

THE SUGAR MILLING PROCESS

In the mid-18th century, sugar replaced tobacco as Cuba's main crop. During the sugarcane harvest (*zafra*), from January to May, the country's sugar mills are working 24/7 cutting, chipping, shredding and crushing the cane. Like almost everything in Cuba, the process wastes nothing: the leaves are fed to animals, the fibers (or *bagasse*) are used as fuel to make cardboard, and a centrifuge spins off molasses used to make rum or animal feed.

It's a labor-intensive business. The harvested cane must be brought to the mill within two days of being cut, or it ferments – hence all those overloaded, double-hitch trailers hauling the stuff along the Carretera Central. Once at the *central* (sugar mill), the cane is crushed between huge rollers that squeeze out the juice. Milk of lime is added to the juice, and the mixture is fed into a clarifier and heated. Evaporators remove excess water from the purified juice and sugar crystals begin to form in a vacuum pan after further boiling under pressure. Once the molasses is spun off, hot air dries the raw sugar crystals that are now ready for export or refining into white sugar. In Cuba, white sugar is somewhat of a luxury, with brown or raw sugar being what is usually dispensed on the ration card.

Activities

The **Jardines de Hershey** (☎ 20 26 85) is a tract of land formerly owned by the famous American chocolate tycoon, Milton Hershey who ran the nearby sugar mill. It's pretty wild these days, with attractive paths, plenty of green foliage and a beautiful river, and this essentially is part of its charm. There are a couple of thatched roof restaurants on site and an all-pervading sense of peace and tranquility. It's a lovely spot for lunch and a stroll. The gardens are situated approximately 1km north of Camilo Cienfuegos railway station on the Hershey train line. Alternatively, if you're staying in Playa Jibacoa, it's approximately 4km south of Santa Cruz del Norte. The road is quiet and it makes a nice hike if you're up to it.

Puerto Escondido Cubamar (☎ 866-2524; Carretera Panamericana km 80) has a smallish water sports center at Puerto Escondido, 1.5km off the Vía Blanca, 7km east of Arcos de Canasí. It offers scuba diving at the usual prices of CUC\$30 per dive and two-hour snorkeling trips for CUC\$10 (four-person minimum), both including gear. Deep-sea fishing is also available.

Take any signposted side road heading toward the coast and you'll end up at one of the 10 national campismos (national network of 82 camping installations, not all of which rent to foreigners) that dot the landscape here. They all have their attractions and for an entry fee of CUC\$1, you can explore at will. There is good snorkeling from the beach facing Campismo Los Cocos and heading westward along the coast you'll find unpopulated pockets where you can don a mask or relax under a palm.

You'll need your own wheels to get to **Ranchón Gaviota** (☎ 61 47 02 admission incl meal CUC\$8; ☎ 9am-6pm), 12km inland from Puerto Escondido; it's a pretty drive through verdant countryside sprinkled with palms and sugarcane toward the Valle del Yumurí. This hilltop ranch overlooking a reservoir offers horseback riding, kayaking, cycling and a massive feast of *ajiaco* (meat stew), roasted pork, *congrí* (rice with beans), salad, dessert and coffee. To get here take the inland road for 2km to Arcos de Canasí, turn left at the fork for another 10km to the sign for Ranchón Gaviota.

Sleeping & Eating

Campismo Los Cocos (Cubamar; ☎ 29 52 31/32; s/d/t CUC\$19/30/41; P ☎ ☎) The newest of Cubamar's stable of rural retreats, this is a modern hotel-standard collection of self-contained bungalows arranged around a swimming pool and set flush onto the beach. There is a number of facilities here including a small library, a medical post, an à la carte restaurant, a games room and plenty of walks and trails that disappear off into the surrounding hills. The campismo is also a fully equipped camper van site. You can book ahead with Cubamar (see p448) or just turn up. The only downside is the blaring poolside music that seems to keep the Cuban clientele entertained day and night.

Villa Loma de Jibacoa (Islazul; ☎ 8-5316; s/d CUC\$29/38; P ☎) This hotel stands on a hill overlooking a small beach near the mouth of the Río Jibacoa, just off the Vía Blanca. The perfect place for a family or group beach vacation, it is actually 13 individual houses of one to four rooms each sharing a TV, fridge and bath. As each one is different, you should look at a few before deciding – not always possible at this popular, heavily booked place.

Villa El Trópico (Gran Caribe; ☎ 8-4203; s/d CUC\$70/100; P ☎ ☎) A little to the east of Campismo Los Cocos is this all-inclusive resort that recently reopened and is marketed mainly to Canadians on all-inclusive deals.

SuperClub Breezes (☎ 8-5122; s/d low season CUC\$151/242, high season CUC\$223/356) Just east of El Trópico this is a nicely laid-out all-inclusive that kisses a choice stretch of sandy beach. Rooms are in attractive two-story bungalows and the place has a low-key and tranquil air that trumps most of what Playas del Este has to offer. Children under 16 are not accepted here. SuperClub has a reputation for good food, entertainment and activities. Coming from Matanzas, the turnoff is 13km west of the Bacunayagua Bridge – you can't miss it.

Eating is a grim prospect over this way unless you're in a hotel. There's a couple of dodgy bars around selling microwave pizza. Striking up a friendly conversation with the locals pulling in their fishing nets and arranging a meal is the best way to go.

Caracol Tienda (☎ 9am-4:30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6:30pm Sat & Sun). Located on the inland side

of the road just before the turnoff to Villa Loma de Jibacoa, it offers a small range of groceries.

Entertainment

Discoteca Jibacoa (☎ 9pm-4am Tue-Sun) This is a local disco between Campismo Los Cocos and Villa Loma de Jibacoa. Great place to catch the locals shakin' their hips J-Lo style (well almost).

Getting There & Away

The most interesting way to get to Playa Jibacoa is on the Hershey Electric Railway from Casablanca train station in Habana to Jibacoa Pueblo. There's no bus to the beach from there and traffic is sporadic, so you'll probably end up walking the 5km to Villa Loma de Jibacoa. The electric train also stops at Arcos de Canasí, but that's still 6km from El Abra and it's not as nice a walking road (though the hitchhiking might be easier).

Another option is to take crowded bus 669 from outside **Estación La Coubre** (Desamparados), just south of Habana's Estación Central, to Santa Cruz del Norte. Unfortunately, this bus only operates three times a day and you'd still have to hitchhike or take a taxi 9km further east to Villa Loma de Jibacoa (for information on the risks associated with hitching see p477). Your best bet is probably to go to the Habana bus station and take any bus headed for Matanzas along the Vía Blanca. Talk to the driver to arrange a drop-off at Playa Jibacoa, just across a long bridge from Villa Loma de Jibacoa.

JARUCO

☎ 64 / pop 20,400

Jaruco, halfway between Habana and Matanzas but inland, is a good day trip for travelers with transport who value the journey over the destination. The **Parque Escaleras de Jaruco**, 6km west of Jaruco village, features interesting forests, caves, rock formations and limestone cliffs, but the picturesque countryside on unmarked roads along the way to Jaruco is what recommends this trip. It's a scenic 32km drive southeast from Guanabo via Campo Florido, and you can make it a loop by returning through Santa Cruz del Norte, 18km northeast of Jaruco via Central Camilo Cienfuegos. This

is a good moped or bicycle adventure from Playas del Este or Jibacoa.

SURGIDERO DE BATABANÓ

☎ 62 / pop 22,587

The small town of Batabanó, 51km south of central Habana, has few attractions for visitors except, perhaps, its **Museo Municipal** (Calle 64 No 7502; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun, closed Mon). The real reason to come here is to board a boat for La Isla de la Juventud (known locally as La Isla). Fidel Castro and the other Moncada prisoners disembarked here on May 15, 1955, after Fulgencio Batista granted them amnesty.

Surgidero de Batabanó receives mixed reviews from visitors. Some find charm in its rundown collection of ramshackle wooden houses and covered porches. Others feel the atmosphere is a little heavy and complain about hassle from *jineteros*. If you're stuck here there's a selection of little eateries selling fried fish and a small beach, **La Playita** (Little Beach) situated 2km east of the dock. Realistically, though, Surgidero de Batabanó is a transit stop and not a place to visit in its own right.

Sleeping & Eating

This is no place to get stranded overnight. If desperation strikes try the old four-story **Hotel Dos Hermanos** (☎ 8-8975; Calle 68 No 315) in Surgidero de Batabanó, a huge 29-room peso hotel looming near the port and train station. Expect no water unless it rains, in which case you'll get some through the ceiling.

END OF A SWEET ERA

In 2000 Cuba shut over half its 156 sugar mills in recognition of the industry's inefficiencies, signifying a shift away from the sugar dependency that had typified the country for over a century. One of the biggest casualties was the huge Central Camilo Cienfuegos mill in Habana Province built by the American entrepreneur Hershey in the early 20th century.

Out-of-work mill workers were given the opportunity to attend university or technical college. Though many took advantage, sugar towns throughout the country once reliant on the mill are struggling to adjust to their new, less sweet reality.

Better situated are the 20 small prefabricated cabanas with baths on the beach at La Playita, 2km east by road from the ferry terminal (or less on foot via the beach). How foreigners are received at these places and how much they're charged varies. Ask around for a private room; delicious fresh fish meals will find you.

Getting There & Away

The train station is just down the street from the Hotel Dos Hermanos and less than 1km from the ferry terminal. Trains from the Estación Cristina in Habana (2½ hours) should arrive/depart here twice a day, but they're often canceled.

The *kometa* (hydrofoil) from Surgidero de Batabanó to Isla de la Juventud is supposed to leave daily at 1pm (CUC\$11, two hours). In addition, a normal ferry (CUC\$7, five hours) leaves intermittently – supposedly on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday at 7:30pm, but don't bank on it. It is strongly advisable to buy your bus/boat combo ticket in Habana (p140) rather than turning up and doing it here. More often than not tickets are sold out to bus passengers. Call the **Agencia de Pasajes** (☎ 8-5355) in Surgidero de Batabanó for hydrofoil or ferry reservations. For information on direct bus connections from Habana, see p141.

Vehicles are shipped by barge daily and load at 1pm (CUC\$20 each way). One passenger per vehicle is allowed on the cargo barge. It's time-consuming and not always guaranteed to work. For information on the car barge, call the **Empresa Naviera** (☎ 8-4455).

There's a **Servi-Cupet** (Calle 64 No 7110 btwn Calles 71 & 73) gasoline station in the center of Batabanó town. The next Servi-Cupet station to the east is in Güines.

SAN ANTONIO DE LOS BAÑOS

☎ 650 / pop 37,059

San Antonio de los Baños, 35km southwest of central Habana, is famous for the Escuela Internacional de Cine y TV. Founded with generous donations from supporters of Cuban culture like Gabriel García Márquez, the world-class facilities at this film school include an Olympic-sized pool for practicing underwater shooting techniques. Despite being the hometown of musical giant Silvio Rodríguez (see below), friendly San Antonio de los Baños (founded in 1775) doesn't warrant a special trip, but the riverside Hotel Las Yagrumas is a nice escape from Habana's kinetic pace. The surrounding countryside is more citrus and tobacco than anything else; the region makes some of Cuba's finest Partidos cigars.

SILVIO RODRÍGUEZ

One of the undisputed giants of Cuban 'Nueva Trova' music, Silvio Rodríguez, was born in the small tobacco-growing town of San Antonio de los Baños in 1946 into a household replete with melodic boleros. With his father an ardent socialist and his grandfather a onetime associate of José Martí, it was perhaps inevitable that Silvio would one day grow up to compose the soundtrack to Cuba's burgeoning social revolution almost single-handed. It was Silvio's mother, an enthusiastic amateur singer who probably had the biggest influence on his musical awakening.

From the poignant melodies of *Ojalá* (an intimate love song), to the strident chords of *La Maza* (a lament about the fall of Salvador Allende's socialist government in Chile), to the poetic restraints of 1992 *El Necio* (Rodríguez's satire on the US 'occupation' of Guantánamo naval base), Silvio's lyrics – rather like those of his American counterpart Bob Dylan – have never been far from the pulse of popular consciousness.

Labeled in turn as a poet, visionary, dreamer and genius, Silvio remains an icon of idealism in Latin America despite his relative lack of fame in North America and Europe. 'I am quite an optimist,' he is once reported to have said, 'At the time (of the revolution), it seemed to me that song could truly change the world.'

Now approaching 60, Silvio, despite wider international fame, continues to reside in Cuba where he remains true to the values of the revolution. Intermittent live performances have included recent shows in Argentina, Puerto Rico and Venezuela. In July 2004 Silvio performed live in Habana's Plaza de la Revolución backed by a symphony orchestra with a be-suited Fidel Castro in attendance.

The post office is at the corner of Calles 41 and 64. Photo Service is across the street.

Sights & Activities

San Antonio de los Baños has several attractive squares, like the one with the old church at the corner of Calles 66 and 41. Nearby is the **Museo Municipal** (☎ 2539; Calle 66 No 4113 btwn Calles 41 & 43; admission CUC\$1; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sat, 9am-noon Sun).

Unique in Cuba is the collection of cartoons, caricatures and other ha-ha objects at the **Museo del Humor** (Cnr Calle 60 & Av 45; admission CUC\$2; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun). Among the drawings exhibited in this colonial house are saucy and satirical cartoons that capture the best of Cuban humor. If you like to laugh, head here in April for the **International Humor Festival**; winning entries remain on display for several weeks following.

The work of local artists is displayed at the **Galería Provincial Aduardo Abela** (☎ 4224; Calle 58 No 3708 btwn Calles 37 & 39; admission free; ☎ 1-5pm Mon-Fri).

A footbridge across the river next to La Quintica restaurant leads to a couple of **hiking trails**. Enjoy a drink in the bar, before sallying forth on a DIY adventure around the leafy banks.

Sleeping & Eating

Av 41 is the main shopping strip, and there are numerous places to snack on peso treats along this street.

Hotel Las Yagrumas (Islazul; ☎ 38 44 60/61/62; s/d CUC\$30/40; ☎ ☎ ☎) Situated 3km north of San Antonio de los Baños, it overlooks the picturesque, but polluted Río Ariguanabo. Each of the 120 damp rooms has a balcony or terrace. Take a room facing the river for maximum peace and quiet. All meals are (surprisingly decent) buffets. You can poke along the river in a rowboat, take a 6km river exploration in a motorboat or rent a bicycle for a zoom into town. There's table tennis, a gigantic pool and hilarious karaoke. Families will love this place.

Entertainment

Taberna del Tío Cabrera (Calle 56 No 3910 btwn Calles 39 & 41; ☎ 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 2pm-1am Sat & Sun) This is an attractive garden nightclub where

you can unwind with a cocktail in the courtyard.

La Quintica (☎ Tues-Sun) A local peso restaurant, you'll find it just past the baseball stadium alongside the river 2km north of town. There's live music Friday and Saturday nights (closed Monday).

Getting There & Away

There are supposedly four trains a day to Habana's Estación 19 de Noviembre (sometimes known as Tulipán; one peso) from the train station at the corner of Calles 53 & 54 on the south side of town. The other option is to take a 30-peso car from the **Intermunicipal Terminal** (El Lido, Av 41) in Marianao.

BEJUCAL

☎ 66 / pop 20,442

This teeny town right on the edge of Habana Province is recommended for one reason: the **Charangas de Bejucal** that takes over every December 24. A cross between Carnaval and the more famous Parrandas in Remedios, this festival – dating from the 1800s – sends 10,000 people into the streets laughing, dancing and singing among outrageously large, dazzling floats and countless brass bands. Things heat up at midnight in the central plaza. Trains shuttle between here and Habana's Estación Cristina day and night on December 24.

ARTEMISA

☎ 63 / pop 60,477

Artemisa is a bustling sugar town 60km southwest of Habana. If you're passing this way, it's worth a quick stopover – at least for a little pizza. Beside the Carretera Central between Artemisa and Guanajay is a restored section of the Trocha Mariel-Majana, a defensive wall erected by the Spanish during the Wars of Independence.

Revolution buffs may want to peel off the Carretera Central to visit the **Mausoleo a las Mártires de Artemisa** (☎ 3-3276; Av 28 de Enero; admission CUC\$1; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun). Of the 119 revolutionaries who accompanied Fidel Castro in the 1953 assault on the Moncada Barracks, 28 were from Artemisa or this region. Fourteen of the men presently buried below the cube-shaped bronze mausoleum died in the actual assault or were killed soon after by Batista's troops. The other Moncada

IF YOU HAVE A FEW MORE DAYS

To catch a quick and easily accessible glimpse of Cuba behind the socialist mask there's no better method of transportation than the Habana to Matanzas Hershey train. Running five times a day from Casablanca train station on the eastern side of Habana Bay, electric trains ply their lazy route west to east from Habana to Matanzas, stopping every 10 minutes or so at all kinds of eccentrically-named places. Timetables are erratic and interrupted by such spontaneous calamities as 'cow on the line' or 'train shut for cleaning', but the countryside is verdant and the party on board typically Cuban. If you're up for a bit of do-it-yourself adventure you can wander off at one of a dozen or more rural stations, including the following:

Central Camilo Cienfuegos – stroll around the ruins of the old Hershey sugar mill or wander a kilometer or so to the north for lunch in the rural ambience of the Jardines de Hershey.

Guanabo – Habana's rustic eastern beach resort with plenty of welcoming *casas particulares*. A 2km stroll from the Guanabo station.

Jibacoa – from the station it's a pleasant 5km walk to beautiful Playa Jibacoa and the brand new campismo of Los Cocos.

veterans buried here died later in the Sierra Maestra. Guides are available.

The **Antiguo Cafetal Angerona**, 17km west of Artemisa on the road to Cayajabos and the Autopista Habana–Pinar del Río (A4), has been preserved as a museum. Angerona was erected between 1813 and 1820 by Cornelio Sauchay, who had 450 slaves tending 750,000 coffee plants. Behind the ruined mansion lie the slave barracks and an old watchtower, from which the slaves' comings and goings were monitored. The estate is mentioned in novels by Cirilo Villaverde and Alejo Carpentier, and James A Michener devotes several pages to it in *Six Days in Havana*.

A **pizza joint** (nr Calles 31 & 54) serves up seriously good peso pizza, a block west of Artemisa's bus station. Try a *batido* (fruit milkshake).

The **Artemisa Train Station** (Av Héroes del Moncada) is four blocks east of the bus station. Only two trains a day pass through Artemisa, one around noon to Habana and another at midnight to Pinar del Río.

The bus station is on the Carretera Central in the center of town.

MARIEL

☎ 63 / pop 31,922

Mariel, 45km west of Habana, is known mostly for the 125,000 Cubans who left here for Florida in April 1980. Once you see it, you'll want to flee too. Founded in 1762, Mariel is a major industrial town and port with the largest cement factory in Cuba, a huge thermoelectric power plant, military

airfield and shipyards. There's also a new duty-free industrial zone adding to the action. It sits on the Bahía de Mariel at Cuba's narrowest point, just 31km north of the Caribbean at Playa Majana.

After Moa in Holguín Province, Mariel is Cuba's most heavily polluted town. The filthy cement factory at Mariel (once belonging to American cement producer Lone Star) is now run by the Mexican cement giant Cemex as a joint venture with the Cuban government.

The local **Museo Histórico** (☎ 9-2954; Calle 132 No 6926) is opposite the church at the entrance to town. A huge castlelike mansion, now a naval academy, stands on a hilltop overlooking Mariel.

Twenty-two kilometers east of Mariel on the Autopista is **Playa Salado**, a popular beach that swarms with locals in summer, but is largely deserted at other times. The shoreline is rocky instead of sandy, but the water is mostly clean. A few kilometers east of Playa Salado is the more developed **Playa Baracoa**. Come here for the local party atmosphere rather than the surf and sand (crowded, dark and limited). Imagine *West Side Story* meets West Palm Beach, with swarthy men and their beautiful dates hanging about big old American cars drinking beer while fishermen throw lines from the rocky shore. There are two *parrilladas* (barbecue restaurants) and the more upscale El Yunque in a big thatched hut. Alternatively, you can nosh on the best *chicharitas* (plantain chips) in Cuba (five pesos a box). It's a nice sunset spot.

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'