

Viñales

Category: Tourist attractions

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Viñales is located in the center of the province within Sierra de los Órganos, with an approximate area of 100 km². It is the ideal place to discover part of the enigma that develops between the imposing vertical walls that surround its fertile intramontane valleys and its landscape is, without a doubt, an idyllic vision, source of inspiration for painters, writers and poets.

It stands out for the rusticity of life in total harmony with the environment, the industriousness of the peasant, vernacular architecture and the aroma of its mountains, also displaying its flora, endemic fauna and contrast between valleys and mountains, framed in the National Park faithful exhibitor of the most authentic viñalera nature.

The welcome is given by the Viñales Valley, included in the list, World Heritage with the category: "Cultural Landscape of Humanity" and declared "National Park". In the centre of the valley itself is Viñales village. For many reasons it seems stopped in time since its foundation on January 1, 1879. In its main street, escorted by male pines (*Pinus caribaea*), and distinguished by the red creole tiles of its houses, the Restaurant Don Tomás stands out, a building built in the last decade of the 19th century; the Museum of Local History, a neoclassical style mansion and the Patio del Decimista, a space where the outstanding poet Benito el viñalero, known as the singer of the Valley, was the reason for gatherings, guateques and canturías.

Chosen by visitors, the Main Square, open space with benches ideal for delighting and reading, the House of Culture, the Old Spanish Colony, the Art Gallery, the Parish Church and the Polo Montañéz Cultural Center, faithful exponent of Cuban dance and rhythms, incite us to enter the charismatic town.

Viñales has a great floristic richness that reaches nine hundred and sixty species. Of these, three hundred and five are endemic. The most charismatic are: ceibón or drago (*Bombax cosipii cubensis*), Palma de sierra (*Gaussia princeps*) (*Thrinax morrisii*), the bonita de la sierra (*Spathelia brittonii*) and the palma corcho (*Microcycas calocomas*), considered a living fossil, due to its more than 150 years of antiquity, declared a "National Monument".

The fauna includes Tocaroro, Nightingale, Carpintero churroso (*Colaptes fernandinae*), Cartacuba, the Iguana, (*Leiocephalus macropus*) and Majá de Santamaría and the *Sachrysia guanensis* mollusk, all endemic to our country.

Its great cavern system is the second largest in America which has allowed us to call it "la capital of the karst cubano", very well

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represented by the princess of the Cuban caves, the Great Cavern of Santo Tomás.

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