

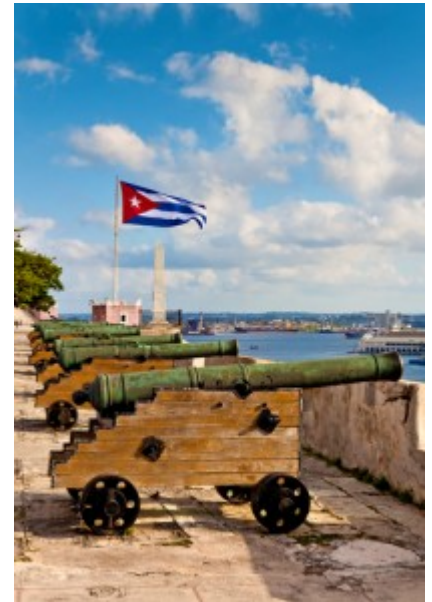
# Havana

Havana was founded in 1515 and grew to be the most important port this side of the Atlantic. It was the “head” of the Spanish Main, a group of ports which controlled all the trade during the colonial times from Latin America to Spain.



The Spanish ruled over the Havana trading laws with an iron fist until the British Lord Albamarle took the city following the Battle of Havana in 1762. The British ruled Cuba for 11 months during which time they changed the trading legal system to allow independent traders. The Spanish then swapped Cuba with Britain for a huge amount of other territory, including Florida and most of the southern States of what is now the USA. However, although the Spanish had taken back control of Cuba in 1763, they had lost control of the trading, allowing Havana to boom in its own right.

Finally Cuba gained independence from Spain in 1898 with a lot of help from the USA, who became their new best friends. At this time Havana's growth and development finished at what is now the edge of Central Havana.



Vedado and Miramar were national parks where it was forbidden to build. However, with independence this decision was overturned and in the 60 years following, Havana expanded 20 kms along the coast with large mansions being built in the areas now known as Vedado, Nuevo Vedado, Kholy and Miramar and beyond to Siboney.

In the years between 1900 and 1958 some of the most technically advanced properties in the world were being built by some of the top architects in the world. Havana was booming.

In the 30s and 40s Havana was responsible for developing and building some of the most advanced hospitals of the time. In those days many of the old Spanish regional societies (Asturiana etc) had their own cost effective health insurance plans which they offered to families, and ensured they had some of the best medical care available anywhere in the world.

Sadly along with the boom came corruption, gambling, prostitution and a darker side with secret police and violence.



In 1958/9 Fidel Castro's revolution finally kicked out the corrupted "Batista" Government. The whole country then became nationalised and was absorbed under the control of the new Government.

The rest is history.....

Today Havana retains its faded grandeur and charm, together with a relaxed friendly vibe, and feels much like a European city in the Caribbean.

As the private sector is allowed to open up and new restaurants, bars and small businesses blossom all over the city, the real personality and imagination of the people is coming through in the food, drinks, and atmosphere. Competition is forcing the quality of food up and keeping prices to more realistic levels.

With our ever evolving list of the coolest places in town we can help you select the best destinations to suit your taste in food, music and overall vibe.

So go ahead and sign up: Give our Concierge a call or e-mail today.

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