

BANES

A well-kept secret

Find out ! But first, find Banes the unloved and unknown.



DISTANCES (km)

Biran, 94
Cayo Saetia, 100
Gibara, 103
Guardalavaca, 30
Holguin, 76 (via Baguano)
La Habana, 800
Las Tunas, 149
Mayari, 60
Santiago, 205

TRANSPORTATION

Bus service from Holguin 6 times a day (no Viazul or Astro busses running). • If casas are all full, try the Motel Oasis (tel. 3447) : 28 bedrooms, bar and dining room.

POPULATION 89.730

Ironique

Banes is a town full of irony. It is where Fidel Castro was married **and** Fulgencio Batista was born.

The place was from 1898 to the late Fifties, a company town, owned and operated by **the infamous United Fruit Company** (Chiquita bananas). So its colonial past is not Spanish, but rather American.

Stories say the cane cutters (*cor-tadores*), who worked for UFC only during the three months of the *zafra* would **cut off a finger** to collect insurance and thus receive a regular revenue.

There are long-term plans from Gaviota S.A. to build resorts on presently-deserted **Peninsula de Ramon**, something in the order of 5 to 7,000 rooms (in lots of 500), eventually including a horseback riding center, 6 golf courses and a port for cruise ships.

You can drive from here to El Ramon to enjoy its **pristine nature**. It's about a 55km via the village of Antilla.



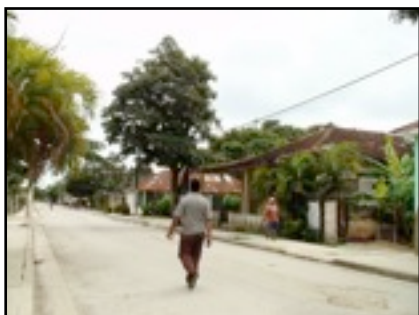
SEE, DO, DISCOVER

- **Casa de la Cultura**, one of the town's nicest buildings with its marble floors, its patio and pink and gold walls
- **Museo Indocubano Bani**, also unique in the country for its pre-Columbian artefacts, its collections on the aboriginal Araucos : engravings, statuettes and a large collection of 800-year old necklaces
- **Museo de Historia** for its icons of heroes of the *Revolucion*



- **Iglesia de Nuestra Senora de la Caridad** where, on October 12 1948, the mayor's daughter, Mirta Diaz-Balart, got married to someone named Fidel Castro Ruiz
- **Museo Aborigen Chorro de Maita** (27 km on the way to Guardalavaca) with a collection of some 60 skeletons of Spaniards from the 1490 to 1540 era, dug up in 1986

SEE, DO, DISCOVER



Top *Still too many pobre casas.*

Bottom *Quiet streets with no cars or busses (non-existent in these parts) :make it ideal for walking or cycling.*

PLAYAS • **Morales**, 12 km, from the name of the little town of fishermen. Guide-books are only just starting to mention this place so try to keep it a secret... **Puerto Rico**, further up the coast. Largely deserted beach where the palm trees provide shade while you feast on seafood. • **Guardalavaca**, 35 km, via Cañadon • **Corintia**, 129 km, via Mayari, past Cayo Saetia : supposedly one of the best beaches in the area • **Gaviota**, **Almendra** and **Penon** on Cayo Saetia.

RESTAURANTS & PALADARES El Paladar Familiar, Calle Bayamo 107, e/ Ignacio Agramonte y general Moncado.

EXCURSIONS

Parque Nacional La Mensura (25 km southwest of Mayari) • **Parque Natural Cayo Saetia** (100 km, via Mayari). An isolated, green-covered, 42 sq km key with imported fauna (antelopes, aras, ostriches, buffalos, camels, iguanas, tapirs and zebras) for the all-day photo safaris sold in the Guardalavaca all-inclusive resorts. Clients arrive in helicopter or in jeeps. Some prefer staying at **Villa Cayo Saetia**, a Gaviota resort Tel. (24) 9-6900 with 12 bedrooms and 5 cabins (100cuc/day 3 meals) which lead to three lovely deserted *playas* : Gaviota, Almendra and Penon.

EXCURSION IN THE COMANDANTE'S CHILDHOOD

Since Nov. 2002, travellers can visit the farm, in **Biran**, where Fidel Castro was born on August 8 1926 and where he grew up.

The site called Sitio Histórico de Birán is spread over 13 000 hectares. The original farm, Finca Mañacas, once covered twice that much.

Originally leased in 1910 from the United Fruit Company it was managed, then owned, by Angel Castro y Ariz (1875-1956), his father, a penniless immigrant from Galicia (España).



During the rise of the revolution, in 1956, to make a point that rich Cubans should share natural resources, Fidel had his father's sugar cane fields burned.

(As seen on film, his mother did not seem to appreciate her farm being made an example...)

Visitors see a small community unchanged from that era, including the original house and a small community built by his father for his children and employees.



De Alto Cedro voy para Marcané, llego a Cueto, voy para Marayi.

Biran is 20 km SW of **Mayari**, 60 km southeast of **Holguin** and 94 km SW of Banes via **Cueto**. Open Tuesdays-Sundays, 9h-12h and 13h30-16h Fee : Tourists 10cuc (20 with camera; Cubans : 10 pesos MN, double with camera.

COLONIAL GUEST HOUSE

**Gilma Quiñones Hernandez and her dad
Pablo Vazquez Naranjo** Calle H #1526F, e/
Vegueta y Francisco Franco, at town entrance.
Tel. (24) 8-2204

In the back of a large casa colonial built in 1920 by Gilma's granddaddy, a large ventilated bedroom (double and single beds) with private bathroom, balcony and *comedor*.

Small living room with tv, large rooftop terrace with a shade-providing glorieta. Modest amenities but Gilma and her old dad are so sympatheticos.



Our first choice, even without air-conditioning.

Rate : 25cuc (2 adults max.)

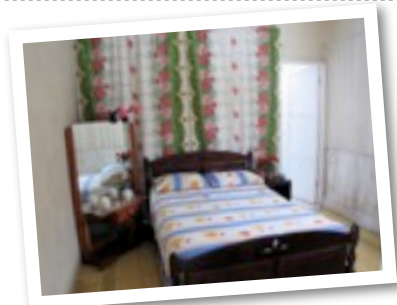


SERGIO AGUILERO
Calle Iglesia 4089, a bit passed the center, in reparto (borough) Nicaragua.

Tel. (24) 8-2472

Two aircon bedrooms with private bathrooms, mini bar, parking, shaded patio; generator (in case of power failures. Attentive hosts.

In 2005, almost in front of this casa, the former imposing private club of the UFC (with a unique wooden staircase, etc) transformed into a cultural community centre since the *Revolucion*, went down in flames.



ODALIS PEREZ BACALLAO
et son mari **MANOLO** Calle H #77, e/ avenida de Cardenas y Pisonero, on the street leading down to center. Tel. (24) 8-3120

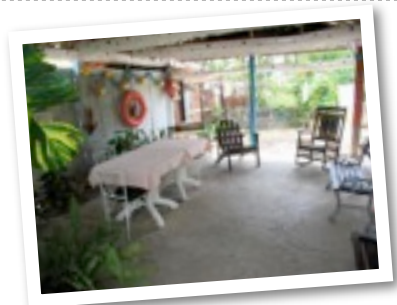
In her nice little casa, Odalis rents two aircon bedrooms with private bathrooms. Small living room, *comedor*, patio.



EVELIN FERIA DIEGUEZ
Calle Bruno Merino 3401-A e/ Delfin Pupo y Jose Maria Heredia Tél. (24) 8-3150

In town centre, two ventilated bedrooms with private baths along an upstairs terrace.

Meals served downstairs in the open air patio. Secured parking across the street.



JULIO Y OMayda DANTA
Calle Roble #85 A, e/7ma y 8va at entrance to the town from Guardalavaca, near the hospital, one block from the main town-crossing road. Neighbour to Nancy, below, shared phone numbers. Tel. (24) 8-3243 or 8-3648

Two aircon bedrooms with private bathrooms, patio, *ranchon*, meals served.



NANCY BACALLAO DRIGGS

Calle Roble #85 A, e/7ma y 8va in reparto Silva. Neighbour to Julio, above, shared phone numbers. Tel. (24) 8-3243 or 8-3648

One aircon bedroom with private bathroom, lovely living room, balcony, meals served : breakfasts, 3cuc, meals 6cuc (filet of *pargo*, etc).



HOLGUIN PROVINCE

Area 9300,5 km² • % de Cuba 8,4 • Urban areas 143,3 km² • Population 1.030.400 • Density 110 hab/km² • Birth rate 13,8 • Death rate 6,1 • Growth rate 7,7

Capital Holguín Pop. 263,300
Towns of importance Banes (44,300), Mayarí (61,800), Moa (56,400)

Regional municipalities Gibara, Banes, Antilla, Báguanos, Holguín, Calixto García, Cacocum, Urbano Noris, Cueto, Mayarí, Frank País, Sagua de Tánamo, Moa

Natural bay Nipe 21,7 x 16,8 km; Banes 11 x 9 km; Gibara 3 x 3,3 km

- Summit Pico Cristal 1231m

- Longest river Mayarí 110km
- Largest artificial lake Nipe 112.000.000 m³
- Caves Tanques de los Cristalitos de Papaya (largest underwater cave).

Holguín province boasts : 34 rivers and streams, 6 waterfalls, 19 historical & cultural sites, 21 caves, 135 archeological sites, 6 thalassotherapy centers, 12 protected ecological areas and 41 beaches, mostly located in natural environments where 30 percent of Cuba's endemic species grow.

Nature Parks Alejandro de Humboldt - La Mensura/Pilotos - Pico Cristal Natural Reserves Cerro Galano

Ecological Reserves Caletones Flora Reserves Cabo Lucrecia Punta de Mulas - Cayo Rey - Cerro Miraflores - Cu-

pey - Guacacoa - Dos Ríos - La Cejas de Melones

Natural protected areas

Bahía de Naranjo - Cayo

Saetía - Península de Ramón

Protected natural elements

Cerros del Norte de Holguín

Fauba Reserves Bahía de Sa-

gua de Tánamo and its cayos

- Balsas de Gibara - Boca de

Cananova - Hacienda La Ca-

labazas - La Española - Vo-

ceadero

Protected Spaces Cuchillas del Toa (World Biosphere Area, 127.500 ha.)

Casas particulares Banes, Gibara, Holguín.

Also in the *Oriente* :



HOLGUIN CITY AREA

Holguín is perfect for cyclists and walkers : it's located on a plateau.



GIBARA LA BLANCA

Attractive and quiet with museums, colonial and post-revolucion buildings and a great bay.



BAYAMO & ITS SIERRA

Reasons to like Bayamo : calm, history, *liberacion* and *patriotismo*.



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