

Santiago de Cuba, Oriente, Cuba

Havana's passionate rival, Santiago de Cuba pulses with revolutionary spirit, Afro-Caribbean music, and centuries of colonial history spilling onto its hilly streets.

Docked — city-center pier Typical call: 8–10 hrs Cuban Peso (CUP); USD sometimes accepted Spanish

MY DAY IN PORT

Ship/Date: _____	Arrive: _____	All aboard: _____
Excursion: _____	Notes: _____	

GETTING ASHORE

Docking: Ships berth at the Sierra Maestra Terminal, a 10–15 min walk from Parque Céspedes

Best For: History, Cuban music, rum, revolutionary sites

Walk to center: 15 min on foot; city center hills are steep in some districts

Don't Miss: Castillo de San Pedro de la Roca (El Morro) — UNESCO World Heritage fortress

Getting around: Taxi \$3–\$5 USD · Rideshare not available

TOP THINGS TO DO

- **Castillo de San Pedro de la Roca (El Morro)** — This 17th-century UNESCO fortress guards the mouth of Santiago Bay from a dramatic clifftop.
- **Colonial Old Town & Parque Céspedes** — Stroll the cobblestoned heart of the city: the Casa de Diego Velázquez (Cuba's oldest surviving house, 1522), the neoclassical cathedral, the Bacardi...
- **Cuartel Moncada & Revolution Museum** — Stand at the site of Fidel Castro's audacious 1953 attack that sparked the Cuban Revolution.
- **El Cobre Basilica & Sierra Maestra Foothills** — Drive 20 km into the Sierra Maestra mountains to Cuba's most venerated shrine — the Basílica de Nuestra Señora del Cobre, home of the black Virgin of...
- **La Gran Piedra & Baconao Biosphere** — Hike to a massive volcanic boulder perched about 1,225 m above sea level in the UNESCO-listed Baconao biosphere reserve — on clear nights you can...

BEST WALKS

- **Waterfront to Parque Céspedes Loop** 2–3 hrs | 3 km | Easy–Moderate (hilly in Tivoli) — From the pier, follow Avenida Jesús Menéndez along the bay, passing cigar shops and the Rum Museum.
- **Tivoli Quarter & Santa Ifigenia Cemetery** 2 hrs | 2.5 km | Moderate (steep slopes) — Climb into the Tivoli neighborhood — once a French-Haitian enclave — for ironwork balconies and hilltop views, then continue to the Cementerio Santa Ifigenia where José...

WEATHER · DAYLIGHT · MONEY

CLIMATE (AVG °F · RAINY DAYS)				DAYLIGHT & MONEY	
Mon	High	Low	Rain	Apr 6:45AM–7:21PM · Jun 6:23AM–7:43PM · Aug 6:43AM–7:31PM · Sep 6:50AM–7:05PM · Oct 6:58AM–6:39PM	
Apr	85°	72°	15d	Cuban Peso (CUP); USD sometimes accepted	
Jun	87°	75°	16d		
Aug	89°	76°	18d		
Sep	88°	75°	21d		
Oct	86°	75°	20d		

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Currency confusion: The CUC (convertible peso) was abolished in 2021 — Cuba now uses CUP only. Bring euros or Canadian dollars; USD carries a 10% exchange penalty. Carry small bills, ATMs are unreliable.
- Classic car taxis: The shared colectivo taxis (usually 1950s American cars) running fixed routes are cheap and fun. Private taxis are faster but negotiate the fare upfront in CUP.
- El Morro timing: Go early — the fortress gets crowded by midday, and the sunset cannon ceremony (roughly 6 PM) may be after your ship departs. Check your all-aboard time.
- Music everywhere: Street performers expect a small tip (CUP 50–100) after playing. Casa de la Trova on Calle Heredia is the real deal — avoid tourist trap 'shows' near the pier.
- Heat and humidity: Santiago is Cuba's hottest city — significantly hotter than Havana. Bring water, sunscreen, and a hat; shade is scarce on the fort and cemetery walks.
- Internet: Wi-Fi is available only in designated ETECSA hotspot parks (Parque Céspedes has one). Buy a prepaid card from ETECSA shops. Do not expect reliable mobile data.

Santiago de Cuba, Oriente, Cuba — Port Map

cruiseports.org

Red = walkable sights · Amber = excursions farther out · P = cruise terminal. Numbers match the order you'd typically visit.



- 1** **Castillo del Morro** Historic Spanish colonial fortress guarding Santiago Bay.
- 3** **Plaza de Marte** Lively public square, often hosting cultural events and gatherings.
- P** **Cruise port / terminal**

- 2** **Casa de Diego Velazquez** Cuba's oldest house, now a colonial history museum.
- 4** **Plaza de Dolores** Charming square with a church, known for live music.