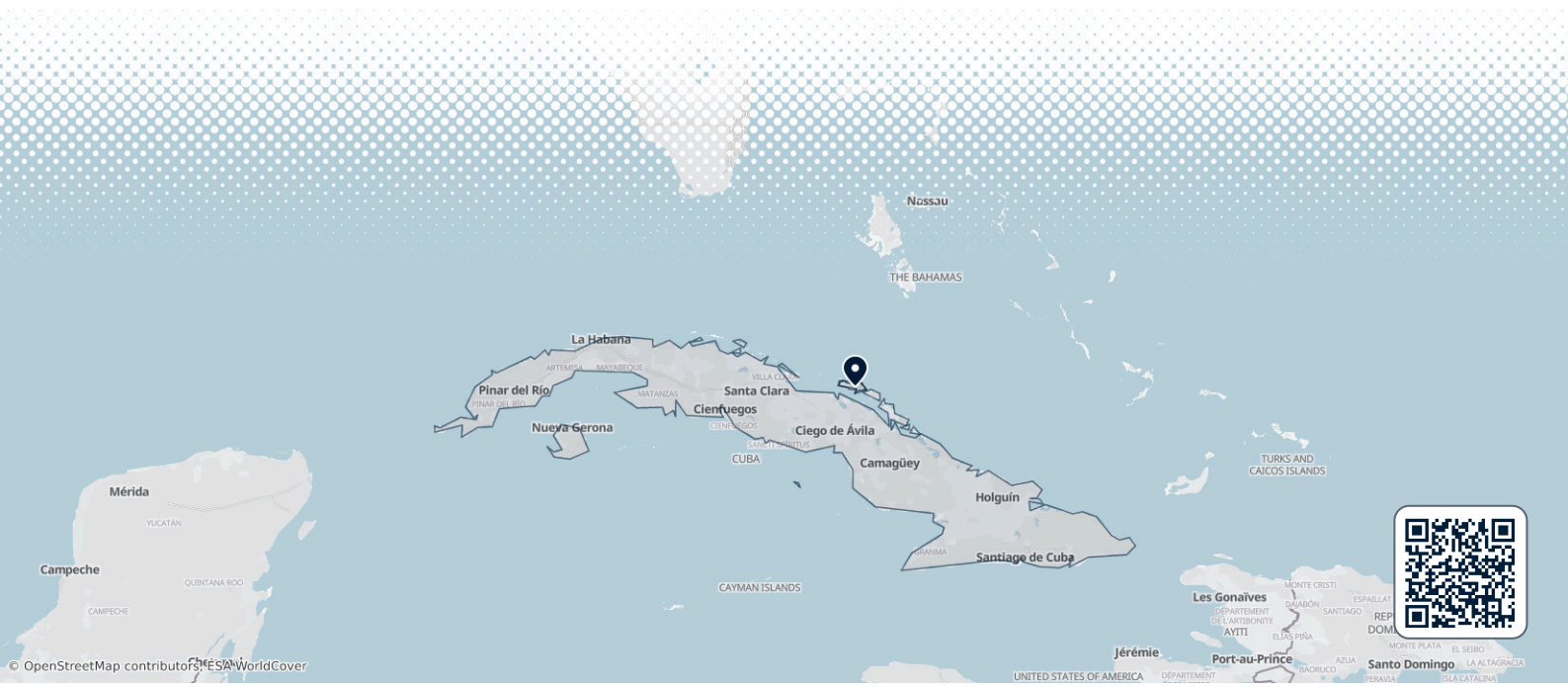


Cayo Coco

Cuba

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Cayo Coco is a low, flat island off the north coast of central Cuba, joined to the mainland by a long causeway across a shallow bay. It is part of the Jardines del Rey, a chain of cays along a coral reef. Long beaches of white sand face the Atlantic on the north shore, and the inside of the island is mostly mangrove, scrub and lagoons where flamingos and other water birds feed.

There are no towns on the island, only large all-inclusive hotels, a few beach bars and a small tourist area. Cayo Coco suits a quiet beach holiday with swimming, snorkelling and diving, not Cuban city life. Many visitors also spend a day on the neighbouring Cayo Guillermo or in the mainland town of Morón.

When to visit

The dry season from December to April is the best time to visit, with sunny days, little rain and a steady breeze. From May to October it is hotter and more humid, and September and October are the wettest months. The sea is warm enough to swim in all year.

The **hurricane season** runs from June to November, with the highest risk from August to October. Hurricanes can hit the island, as Irma did in 2017, so buy travel insurance that covers storm disruption.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for wildlife watching	24° / 27°	23° / 19°	Muggy, humid air
February	Great Great for wildlife watching	25° / 27°	23° / 20°	Muggy, humid air
March	Great Great for wildlife watching	25° / 28°	23° / 20°	Muggy, humid air · UV 9 (Very high)
April	Great Great for watersports	26° / 28°	24° / 22°	20 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · UV 10 (Very high)
May	Good Good for watersports	27° / 29°	25° / 23°	Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
June	Good Good for wildlife watching	29° / 30°	26° / 25°	16 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 9 (Very high)
July	Good Good for watersports	29° / 30°	27° / 26°	Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
August	Fair Fair for wildlife watching	29° / 31°	27° / 26°	19 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
September	Fair Fair for wildlife watching	29° / 30°	27° / 25°	22 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 9 (Very high)
October	Fair Fair for wildlife watching	28° / 29°	26° / 24°	22 rainy days · Oppressive humidity
November	Good Good for wildlife watching	26° / 28°	25° / 23°	16 rainy days · Muggy, humid air
December	Good Good for wildlife watching	25° / 27°	24° / 21°	13 rainy days · Muggy, humid air

Best months: January, February, March, April

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights

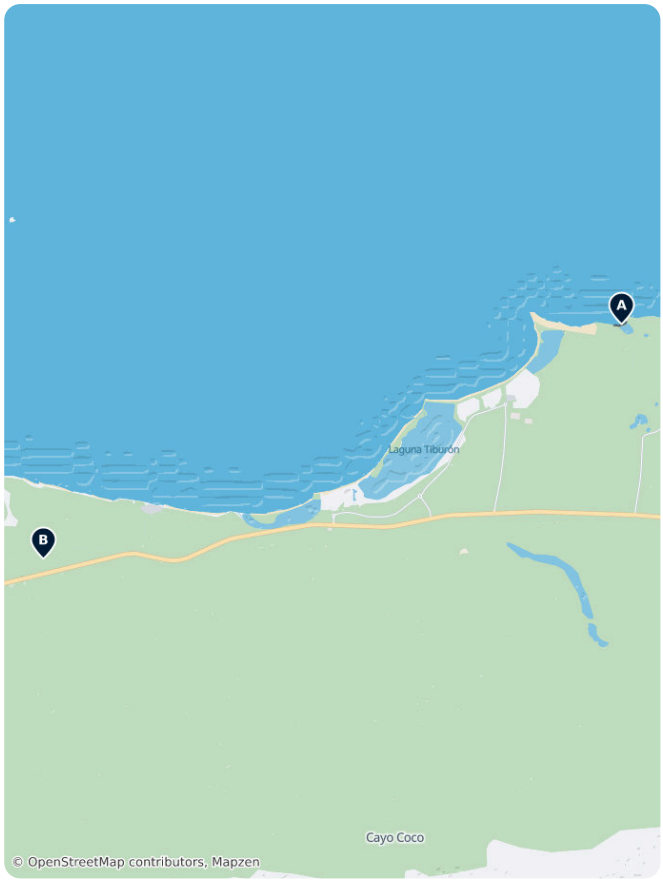
The island's north coast is one long line of white-sand beaches with calm, shallow water near the shore. The large hotels line Playa Las Coloradas, Playa Larga and Playa Los Flamencos, but every beach is open to the public.

A Playa Prohibida is a quieter beach backed by dunes and low forest. It has a small bar-restaurant and parking, and few buildings, so it feels much wilder than the hotel beaches.

B Parque Natural El Bagá is a nature park on the site of the island's first airport, with mangroves, small lakes and walking trails. Guided walks look for birds and other wildlife. It is not always open, so ask at your hotel before you go.

Sitio La Güira is a country farmstead in the interior of the island, with a restaurant serving Cuban food.

The causeway, or pedraplén, is a sight in its own right. The road runs for about 27 km across the shallow Bahía de Perros, and you may see flamingos in the water on either side.



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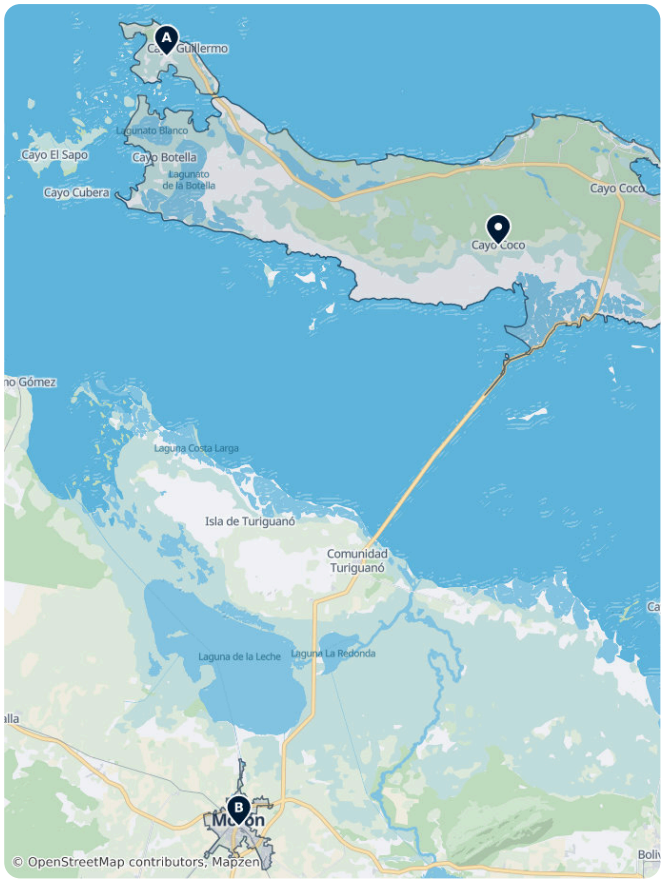
What to experience

Beyond the beach, these are the things visitors here most enjoy doing.

- **Dive or snorkel the reef**: a long coral reef runs off the north coast, with more than 40 dive sites. Hotel dive centres run boat trips for beginners and certified divers.
- **Watch the flamingos**: flocks of flamingos often feed in the shallow lagoons and bay. You may see them from the causeway, or join a guided nature trip.
- **Try kitesurfing or sailing**: the steady breeze and shallow water off Cayo Guillermo suit kitesurfing, windsurfing and small catamarans.
- **Go fishing**: fishing trips on the reef and in deeper water can be arranged through the hotels.

Day trips

The best day trips are to the neighbouring cays and to the lakes and hills around the mainland town of Morón.



- A Cayo Guillermo — under an hour by car or taxi, over a short causeway to the west. Playa Pilar at its western tip has sand dunes and very clear, shallow water. It is named after the boat of the writer *Ernest Hemingway*.
- Cayo Paredón Grande — under an hour east by car. A quieter cay with a few newer resorts, wild beaches and the Diego Velázquez lighthouse from 1859.
- B Morón — about an hour by car across the causeway. A small provincial town with a railway station and local life. Nearby, Laguna de la Leche and Laguna La Redonda are popular for boat trips and fishing.
- Loma de Cunagua — about an hour or more by car. A forested hill near Morón that is popular for birdwatching. Go in the morning with a local guide.

Where to explore

Cayo Coco is the centre of the Jardines del Rey resort area, and its neighbours are easy to combine with a stay here.

- Cayo Guillermo lies just to the west, with smaller hotels and the famous Playa Pilar.
- Morón is the nearest mainland town, a short drive south of the causeway.
- For a longer trip around Cuba, the colonial town of Trinidad and the capital Havana are the most popular second stops.

Getting there

- **By air**: Jardines del Rey Airport (CCC) is on Cayo Coco itself, a short taxi or transfer ride from the hotels. Before 2026 it was used mainly by charter and holiday flights, but it does not have regular international service at present.
- **Flights in 2026**: Cuba's international airports are without aviation fuel, and only Terminal 3 at Havana's José Martí Airport is operating. Many airlines, including all Canadian carriers, Air France and Iberia, have suspended flights to Cuba. Shortly before you travel, **check that your flight is operating** and which airport it uses.
- **By road**: the only road onto the island is the causeway from the mainland near Morón. Havana is a full day's drive away. Access is controlled by a security checkpoint, so carry your passport.
- **By bus**: long-distance buses do not reach the cays. In 2026 intercity bus services across Cuba have been cut sharply, so do not rely on Víazul or transfer buses. Check that your route runs before you plan around it, then take a taxi from Morón or Ciego de Ávila to the island.
- **Entry**: most visitors need a tourist card and must fill in the online D'Viajeros form before arrival. Verify the current rules before travel.

Getting around

- **Taxis**: official taxis wait outside the hotels. Agree the fare before you get in, and pay in cash.
- **Hotel transport and tours**: hotels sell excursions to the beaches, Cayo Guillermo and Morón. Ask at reception whether a shuttle bus runs between the hotels and beaches during your stay.
- **Bikes, scooters and cars**: ask at your hotel about renting a bicycle, scooter or car. Roads on the island are flat and quiet, but distances between beaches are long and there is little shade.
- **On foot**: you can walk along the beach in front of your hotel, but the hotels, beaches and sights are too far apart to walk between.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Low

There is no town on the island. Hotels, beaches and sights are spread over many kilometres, so you can only walk along the beach near your hotel.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

Roads are flat and quiet, and hotels rent bikes, but distances are long and there is little shade.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: not for a beach stay. Taxis and hotel excursions cover most needs. A rental car is useful only if you want to explore the cays and Morón on your own, and cars are expensive and often in short supply.
- **Fuel**: petrol and diesel shortages are severe in 2026. Filling stations may have long queues or no fuel at all. Fill up whenever you find fuel, and do not count on finding it on the cays.
- **The causeway**: it is a single narrow road with water on both sides and no shade. Drive slowly and watch for birds and cyclists.
- **Night driving**: avoid it. Roads on the island and the mainland have little or no lighting.

Food & drink

Almost all visitors eat at their all-inclusive hotel. Outside the hotels there are only a few places to eat, mostly simple beach bars and restaurants run by the state. The beach restaurants at Playa Prohibida and Playa Pilar are known for grilled fish and seafood. Sitio La Güira has a restaurant serving Cuban dishes in a country setting.

Supplies across Cuba are limited in 2026, so menus can be short and change from day to day. Bring cash for meals outside your hotel, and leave a tip, as wages are very low.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Moros y Cristianos · moros y cristianos
Black beans and rice cooked together, a staple side on most Cuban plates.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Cuban Sandwich · sándwich cubano
Roast pork, ham, cheese, pickles and mustard pressed in bread.

Tostones · tostones
Twice-fried green plantain slices, salted and crunchy.

DRINKS

Mojito
White rum, lime, sugar, mint and soda water, said to have originated in Havana.

Cuba Libre
Rum and cola with a squeeze of lime, Cuba's best-known cocktail.

Cafecito · cafecito cubano
A strong, sweet shot of Cuban espresso, drunk throughout the day.

SIGNATURE DISHES

Ropa Vieja · ropa vieja
Shredded beef slow-cooked in a tomato sauce with peppers and onions, usually served with rice.

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Safety & health

The UK government currently **advises against all but essential travel to Cuba**. Check your own government's latest travel advice before you book.

Crime against tourists on the cays is rare. Do not leave bags or phones alone on the beach. Change money only at official exchange offices or your hotel, as street exchange is often a scam.

Cuba faces serious fuel and power shortages in 2026. The national power grid has collapsed several times, and long blackouts happen across the country. They can affect hotel services, transport, water and medical care. Medical services on the cays are limited, so take good travel insurance.

- **Cash**: international Visa and Mastercard cards no longer work in Cuba, and you cannot use them at cash machines. Bring enough US dollars or euros in cash for your whole stay, plus a reserve.
- **Water**: drink bottled water, both in your hotel and outside it.
- **Insects**: mosquitoes and tiny biting sandflies are common near the mangroves, especially at dawn and dusk. Dengue and chikungunya are present in Cuba, so use repellent.
- **Sun**: the sun is strong all year. Use high-factor sunscreen and avoid the midday hours on the beach.

History

The island is named after the white ibis, a wading bird that Cubans call "coco". Spanish explorers named the whole chain of cays the Jardines del Rey, or "King's Gardens", in honour of *Ferdinand II of Aragon*. For centuries the cays had no permanent towns.

In the 1940s the writer *Ernest Hemingway* sailed these waters on his boat Pilar, and the cays appear in his novel *Islands in the Stream*. Playa Pilar on Cayo Guillermo is named after the boat. The causeway to the mainland opened in 1988, and the first hotel opened in 1993. Since then Cayo Coco has become one of Cuba's main beach resorts. The old airstrip was later turned into the nature park of Parque Natural El Bagá.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Cuba at a glance:

CURRENCY

CUP

ELECTRICITY



Type A / Type B
110 V · 60 Hz

LANGUAGES

Spanish

TAP WATER

Not safe to drink

Cayo Coco Essentials

Cayo Coco is defined by its extensive coral reefs and white sand beaches along the Atlantic coast. This island sanctuary features the El Bagá National Park, where mangroves and medicinal trees provide a habitat for diverse birdlife. Coastal highlights include Playa Los Flamencos, known for its namesake flamingo colonies, and the secluded dunes of Playa Prohibida. Visitors can access the island via the 27-kilometer Pedraplén causeway, stopping at Parador La Silla, or explore inland features like the natural cavern nightclub, La Cueva del Jabalí.



A El Baga National Park

Named after a tree that has medical properties. Wonderful piece of land covered with mangrove and wildlife.

Cuba (22.51610, -78.50890)

B Wild boar's cave

Nightclub and cabaret situated inside a natural limestone cave.

(22.54471, -78.40514)

C Playa Prohibida

Secluded beach featuring high sand dunes and views toward Cayo Guillermo.

Cuba (22.55326, -78.40989)

D Playa Las Coloradas

Calm, shallow beach on the eastern coast protected by offshore coral reefs.

(22.53134, -78.34466)

E Delfinario Cayo Coco

Center for interactive dolphin encounters and swimming programs.

(22.52250, -78.34124)

F Parador La Silla

Landmark roadside stop on the Pedraplén causeway known for its views and signature piña coladas.

Cuba (22.40318, -78.42888)

G Playa del Perro

Public sandy beach located on the western coast of the island.

(22.53684, -78.58661)

H El Indio

Roadside monument serving as a local landmark for travelers.

(22.52401, -78.49018)

I Playa La Jaula

Quiet stretch of white sand beach located between Playa Los Flamencos and Playa Prohibida.

(22.53661, -78.44711)

DATA SOURCES

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