



Santa Clara

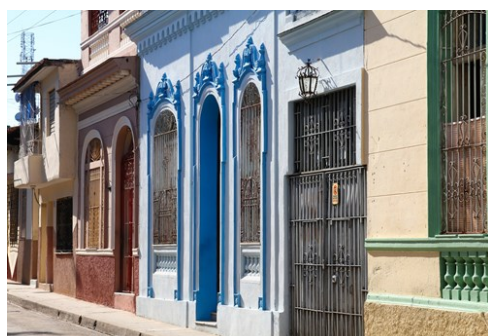
Photo: Tupungato / Shutterstock.com



Steve Rushing / Flickr

Santa Clara will forever be remembered as the site of the last battle of the Cuban Revolution, where Ernesto 'Che' Guevara led a group of rebels in a mission to derail an armored train, resulting the definitive defeat of the Batista regime. And though bullet holes still bear witness to the hardships of the revolution, today Santa Clara is youthful and ferociously creative city, whose large student population contributes to the casual nightlife, vibrant artistic scene and liberal and forward-thinking mentality, making it one of the most unique and entertaining cities in Cuba.

NOTE: This Guide has been limited to 20 points of interest per section. For the full guide, please visit ArrivalGuides.com

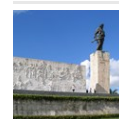


Tupungato / Shutterstock.com



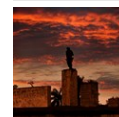
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Top 5



Che Guevara Mausoleum

The legendary revolutionary's remains, along with those of a few dozens of h...



Che Guevara Museum

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Monumento a la Toma del Tr...

This monument commemorates the historic battle fought here by Che Guevara an...



Parque Vidal

Parque Leoncio Vidal is the city's main square and principal center of civic...



Museo de Artes Decorativas

Dating back to 1810, when it was a private residence, the Museo de Artes Dec...



THE CITY



Tupungato / Shutterstock.com

Like most Cuban cities, life in Santa Clara revolves around the central square, Parque Leoncio Vidal. It is a pleasant space, surrounded by some of the city's most beautiful and best preserved buildings, including theaters, municipal buildings and restaurants. Most cafes and bars can be found around this area, including La Marquesina, a lovely outdoor café right next to the stunning Teatro La Caridad, and El Mejunje, an arts, culture and nightlife center and one of the most interesting spots on town. Just north of the square is a short pedestrianized stretch of Calle Independencia (nicknamed 'Boulevard'), the main shopping street in Santa Clara.

Head directly east or west from Leoncio Vidal to find the city's two main attractions: just a few blocks to the east lies Parque del Tren Blindado, the site of a historic and vital battle, the last of the revolution, and to the west you can find the Mausoleum, Monument and Museum, all dedicated to the city's hero, Che Guevara.

Santa Clara's central location in the country also makes it a perfect base for exploring nearby cities, such as breezy coastal Cienfuegos and the elegant colonial city of Trinidad. Havana and Varadero are also within easy reach.

DO & SEE



Frank Bach / Shutterstock.com

Life in Santa Clara is geographically centered around Parque Vidal, a pleasant park and square surrounded by museums, theaters and concert halls, all housed in some of the city's most beautiful buildings. Thematically, though, it revolves around Che Guevara and his role in the revolution and the battles fought here. Be sure to visit his mausoleum and the museum dedicated to his memory and struggles.

Che Guevara Mausoleum



The legendary revolutionary's remains, along with those of a few dozens of his fellow combatants, are buried at this location, having been transported here from Bolivia during the 1990's. Idolized as he is in Cuba, Che's Mausoleum holds great symbolic importance, and it is the centerpiece of most visits to Santa Clara.

Photo: Man-uccommons / Wikimedia Commons (image cropped)

Opening hours: Tue-Sun 8am-9pm

Phone: +53 42 205878

Che Guevara Museum



At the site of Che's Mausoleum there is also a simple but good museum dedicated to his life and struggles. Many of his personal possessions are on display, including a gun, water bottle and other artifacts, as well as an excellent photograph exhibit.

Photo: KKulikov / Shutterstock.com

Address: Av. Liberacion, Memorial Comandante Ernesto Che Guevara, Santa Clara
Phone: +53 4220 5878

Monumento a la Toma del Tren Blindado



This monument commemorates the historic battle fought here by Che Guevara and a band of rebels, a decisive battle in their struggle to overturn the Batista regime. The original train cars have been in place since 1958. Visit the small museum to gain further insight into the battle and the revolution more generally.

Photo: isol / Wikimedia Commons (image cropped)

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 9am-5:30pm

Parque Vidal



Parque Leoncio Vidal is the city's main square and principal center of civic life. The lovely buildings that surround the square serve as public gathering points, such as the municipal library and Casa de la Cultural, while street artists and pedestrians fill the square with life.

Photo: DayOwl / Shutterstock.com

Address: Parque Vidal, Santa Clara

Museo de Artes Decorativas



Dating back to 1810, when it was a private residence, the Museo de Artes Decorativas is the oldest building in Parque Vidal. The exhibits consist of crystals, statues and other decorative items spread throughout the beautiful home's interior.

Photo: Guillaume Baviere / Flickr (image cropped)

Address: Parque Vidal, Santa Clara

Opening hours: Mon, Wed, Thu 9am-12pm and 1pm-6pm.

Fri-Sat 1pm-10pm. Sun 6pm-10pm

Phone: +53 4220 8161

Catedral de Santa Clara de Asis



Now the city's main cathedral, it was built among a bit of controversy in the mid-20th century, as it replaced the original city church on Parque Vidal. It is home to a white statue of the Virgin Mary which was mysteriously lost for several decades, only to be found in a ditch and finally returned.

Photo: Lezumbalaberenjena / Wikimedia Commons (image cropped)

Address: Marta Abreu, Santa Clara

Phone: +53 42 202078

Internet: www.diocesisdesantaclara.com

Casa de la Cultura



Casa de la Cultura (House of Culture) is the city's premier venue for the performing arts, hosting concerts and other shows.

Performances usually start at 9pm on weekdays, and every Sunday they host a street concert at 4pm.

Photo: Aleksandar Todorovic / Shutterstock.com

Address: Parque Vidal 5, Santa Clara

Phone: +53 42 207548

Teatro La Caridad



Another stunning building on Parque Vidal, Teatro la Caridad is Santa Clara's main theater, which dates back to 1885 and is one of the few

remaining colonial theaters in the country. It is the main stage for several performing arts groups and orchestras.

Photo: Tupungato / Shutterstock.com

Address: Parque Vidal, Santa Clara

Fábrica de Tabacos Constantino Pérez Carrodegua

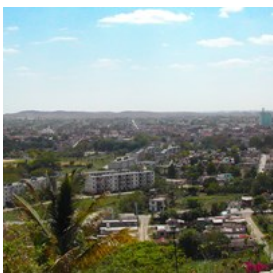


Santa Clara's main tobacco factory produces some of the best cigars in the country and can be toured at a leisurely pace. The nearby shop sells the

wares of the production line, as well as rums and other products.

Photo: Aleksandra H. Kossowska / Shutterstock.com

Loma del Capiro



Just minutes from the city center lies Loma del Capiro, a hill that offers stunning panoramic views of the city extending below. The top of the hill

sports a couple of flags and metallic monument

to Che Guevara.

Photo: Alexandra / Wikimedia Commons (image cropped)

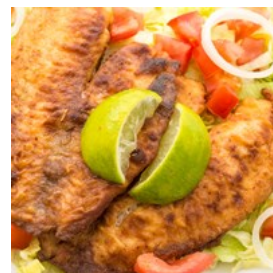
DINING



DayOwl / Shutterstock.com

Cuban food, like Caribbean food more generally, depends highly on rice, black beans and fried plantain, usually accompanied by a bit of meat or chicken to complete a hearty and wholesome meal. Santa Clara has an abundance of typical restaurants, as well as international restaurants serving the best of world cuisine.

La Casona Guevara



It is perhaps not surprising to find a restaurants named after Che Guevara in Santa Clara. This

hotel-restaurant serves up gigantic portions of fantastic home-cooked Cuban food at reasonable prices, and should definitely be your first pick for dining out.

Photo: DayOwl / Shutterstock.com

Address: Juan Bruno Zayas 160, Santa Clara

Phone: +53 42 224279

El Alba



Widely regarded as offering both the best food and the best value meals in all of Santa Clara, El Alba serves authentic Cuban cuisine.

All prices are in local CUP (as opposed to the CUC tourists have to use), making meals here some of the most affordable in the city for visitors.

Photo: bonchan / Shutterstock.com
Address: 26 Buen Viaje, Santa Clara
Phone: +53 42 203935

Complejo Gastronomico Cultural Santa Rosalia



As the name suggests, Santa Rosalia is as much a cultural and performance centre as it is a restaurant. It boasts a big open-air courtyard and patio bar, perfect for a cool evening, and regularly hosts live music.

Photo: AS Food studio / Shutterstock.com
Address: Calle Maximo Gomez and Marta Abreu, Santa Clara
Opening hours: Daily 11am-2am
Phone: +53 42 201438
Email: santarosalia@vcl.palmarec.cu

Sabore Arte



Sabore Arte is always packed with locals, which testifies to the authenticity and quality of the food and the warmth of the serving

staff. The seafood tends to be fresh, but you can't go wrong with the ropa vieja or ajiaco, either.

Photo: DayOwl / Shutterstock.com
Address: Maceo No. 7, Santa Clara
Phone: +53 42 223969

La Flor de Yucatan



If your meals in Santa Clara start to feel a bit monotonous, head for La Flor del Yucatan for a change of flavours. This restaurant serves

expertly prepared and well seasoned Mexican speciality cuisine.

Photo: Ezume Images / Shutterstock.com
Address: 256 Calle Maceo, Santa Clara
Phone: +53 4227 3510
Internet:
www.elflordeyucatan.com

Hostal Florida Center



Hostal Florida Center is widely regarded as one of the best 'casas particulares' in Santa Clara, perhaps even in all of Cuba. It boasts heaps

of characterful decorations and furniture, including plenty of antiques, as well as a lush garden and welcoming terrace. It is, naturally, a popular place to stay during visits to the city, but even if you don't manage to book a room, you should still definitely make a point of stopping by for a meal.

Photo: jirawatfoto / Shutterstock.com
Address: Maestra Nicolasa No. 56, Santa Clara
Phone: +53 42 208161
Internet: www.hostalfloridacenter.com

Casa del Gobernador



Housed in an imposing and impressive typical Cuban building, with high ceilings and marble pillars, Casa del

Gobernador is one of the city's very best restaurants, recommended as much for the food as for its picturesque setting.

Photo: Andrei Mayatnik / Shutterstock.com

Address: Independencia, corner of Juan Bruno Zayas, Santa Clara

Phone: +53 4220 2273

Internet: www.alamesacuba.com/en/villa-clara/restaurant/casa-del-gobernador/

Dinos Pizza



With several locations throughout the country, Dinos Pizza is a popular chain serving no-nonsense comfort food. The Santa Clara

location boasts offers air-conditioning, a nice bar, and most importantly, tasty pizza.

Photo: Anatoly Vartanov / Shutterstock.com

Address: Marta Abreu No 10, Santa Clara

Opening hours: Daily 9am-11pm

La Aldaba



Located on the meticulously decorated rooftop terrace of the Autentica Pergola Hostel, La Aldaba boasts an unbeatable panoramic

view of the city and serves great seafood, lamb and chicken dishes, as well as a wide selection of local rums.

Photo: GANNA MARTYSHEVA / Shutterstock.com

Address: Luis Estévez No. 61, Independencia and Martí, Santa Clara

Opening hours: Daily 11am-10pm

Phone: +53 4220 8686

Internet: hostalautenticapergola.blogspot.se

Email: carmenrt64@yahoo.es

Sabor Latino



Sabor Latino comes highly recommended by frequent visitors to Santa Clara for its authentic Cuban cuisine and friendly and welcoming

staff. The menu is varied and extensive, and servings are very generous. It is certainly worth the slightly higher than average prices.

Photo: Ayotography / Shutterstock.com

Address: Esquerra Nr. 157, Julio Jover and Berenguer, Santa Clara

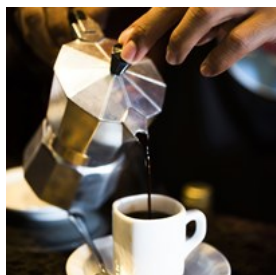
CAFES



kikovic / Shutterstock.com

Cuban coffee is famously strong and delicious, and Santa Clara is awash in great cafes and restaurants where visitors can give it a try. You can also find some modern cafes that prepare lattes, cappuccinos and espressos like you might get at home. Be sure to try some local desserts and baked goods, as well as Coppelia (the national ice cream). Visit the cafes around Leoncio Vidal for the best views and atmosphere.

Café-Museo Revolución



Perhaps the best coffee house in Santa Clara, Café-Museo Revolución has personality to spare - the walls are covered with paraphernalia from the Cuban Revolution. Order a Café Revolución, a house speciality with coffee, chocolate, syrup and merengue.

Photo: Kittibowornphatnon / Shutterstock.com

Address: Calle Independencia N°313. Santa Clara

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 11am-11pm

Phone: +53 5 2511017

Chaplin Café



Hugely popular among the bohemian and intellectual crowd (especially university students), Chaplin Café is a laid-back place located in a rustic building. Visitors are welcome to relax, write messages on the walls and enjoy the occasional live music hosted there.

Photo: Iryna Inshyna / Shutterstock.com

Address: Buen Viaje # 56, Maceo and Unión, Santa Clara

Opening hours: Daily 11am-11pm

Phone: +53 5 5405812

Email: g3wat06@gmail.com

Maní Bormey



A relative newcomer to the Santa Clara dessert scene, award-winning Maní Bormey is all about peanuts. The produce exquisite products of the highest quality, including peanut butter, turrón, ice cream, flan and other desserts.

Photo: Piotr Krzeslak / Shutterstock.com

Address: 331B Maceo, San Miguel and Nazareno, Santa Clara

Phone: +53 5 3921367

Internet: www.bormey.com

Ay Mamá Café



Ay Mamá Café is something of a local favourite for its delicious and always fresh food, great prices, friendly service and irresistible charm. It's worth a visit at any time of day, be it for lunch, afternoon coffee or evening cocktails.

Photo: Monkey Business Images / Shutterstock.com

Address: Calle Maceo # 252, Candelaria and San Miguel, Santa Clara

Opening hours: Daily 10am-11pm

Phone: +53 5 2711084

Café Colao



Café Colao is a lively little bar and cafe with a fiercely loyal clientele, which insists that you will not find a better cup of coffee anywhere else in the city. The atmosphere in the rather small space is laid-back but animated around the standing tables.

Photo: Stay_Positive / Shutterstock.com

Address: Callejón de la Palma #6, Juan Bruno Zayas and Esquerra, Santa Clara

Opening hours: Daily 7am-11:45pm

Phone: +53 5 8259655

Email: cafecolaocuba@gmail.com

Coppelia



Coppelia is Cuba's national, state-run ice cream chain, with grandiose locations around the country. This particular one was built where the old farmers' market stood for centuries, and has been in operation since 1967.

Photo: Marian Weyo / Shutterstock.com

Address: Corner of Mujica and Colón, Santa Clara

Panaderia Doña Neli



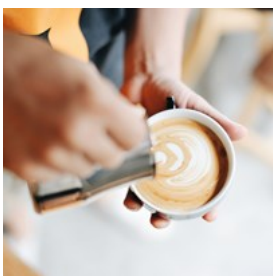
Visit Panaderia Doña Neli for the freshest bread, pastries and cakes in Santa Clara. Get up nice and early and stop there for breakfast at least once during your stay for the best possible experience.

Photo: DenisFilm / Shutterstock.com

Address: Corner of Maceo and 9 de Abril, Santa Clara

Opening hours: Daily 7am-6pm

Galería Café Obrador



This is a space where coffee and art come together. Part cafe, part workshop/gallery, Galería Café Obrador promotes local artists and publishes books by local authors. Equally important, they make great coffee.

Photo: I love coffee / Shutterstock.com

Address: Independencia #109, Luis Estévez y Plácido, Santa Clara

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 3pm-11pm

Phone: +53 5 4901781

Internet: www.casaobrador.com

Email: info@casaobrador.com

BARS & NIGHTLIFE



Africa Studio / Shutterstock.com

Like in the rest of Cuba, Santa Clara's nightlife centers around music and dancing. Crowds gather around fabulous live bands at bars, restaurants and cafés in breezy outdoor terraces and inner courtyards, each one claiming to have the best mojito or daiquiri, and each one also claiming to have been Ernest Hemingway's favorite haunt. That part may not necessarily be true, but that won't get in the way of a good night out.

Centro Cultural El Mejunje



El Mejunje is a Santa Clara institution, an iconic cultural and artistic centre with graffiti-covered walls, rustic decorations and local artworks. Crowds gather every night for all manner of events, parties and performances, meaning that if you only spend one night in Santa Clara, this is absolutely the place to visit.

Photo: Дэя-Бөяг / Wikimedia Commons (image cropped)

Address: Calle Marta Abreu, Juan Bruno Zayas y Alemán, Santa Clara

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 10am-1am, Sun 10am-12am

Casa de la Cultura



Casa de la Cultura (House of Culture) is the city's premier venue for the performing arts, hosting concerts and other shows.

Performances usually start at 9pm on weekdays, and every Sunday they host a street concert at 4pm.

Photo: Aleksandar Todorovic / Shutterstock.com
Address: Parque Vidal 5, Santa Clara
Phone: +53 42 207548

La Aldaba



Located on the meticulously decorated rooftop terrace of the Autentica Pergola Hostel, La Aldaba boasts an unbeatable panoramic view of the city and serves great seafood, lamb and chicken dishes, as well as a wide selection of local rums.

Photo: GANNA MARTYSHEVA / Shutterstock.com
Address: Luis Estévez No. 61 e/ Independencia y Martí, Santa Clara
Opening hours: Daily 11am-10pm
Phone: +53 4220 8686
Internet: hostalautenticapergola.blogspot.se
Email: carmenrt64@yahoo.es

Olé



Olé provides a taste of Spain in the Caribbean. The menu offers churros, tapas, sangria and many more Spanish specialities, making it a very popular

place to spend the evening with a refreshing drink in hand, trying all manner of snacks.

Photo: Elena Veselova / Shutterstock.com

Address: Lorda #60, Martí and Independencia, Santa Clara
Opening hours: Daily 6pm-12:30am
Phone: +53 42 203507

La Marquesina



La Marquesina sits pretty on the corner of Parque Vidal, connected to Teatro la Caridad. It is by far the best place for people watching in the city, with its breezy outdoor seating and its ideal location.

Photo: Chris Brown / Flickr (image cropped)
Address: Parque Vidal, corner Maximo Gomez, Santa Clara
Opening hours: Daily 10am-12am
Phone: +53 42 224848

Bar Club Boulevard



Bar Club Boulevard is an outstanding cocktail lounge that hosts regular live performances, including live music and dancing and even an occasional comedy show. It opens late (10pm), but it's a place you'll want to linger at for quite a while.

Photo: VitaminCo / Shutterstock.com
Address: Calle Independencia 225, Maceo and Union, Santa Clara
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 10pm-2am
Phone: +53 4221 6236

SHOPPING



Kamira / Shutterstock.com

Most visitors to Cuba look for two things when shopping: rum and cigars. And while you can find them in droves (and always of the highest quality), there is more to be found. Cuban handicrafts and artworks are top-notch, and you can also find pretty unique tomes at some of the city's bookstores. The main shopping artery is a pedestrianized stretch of Calle Independencia, nicknamed the 'Boulevard'.

Fábrica de Tabacos Constantino Pérez Carrodegua



Santa Clara's main tobacco factory produces some of the best cigars in the country and can be toured at a leisurely pace. The nearby shop sells the wares of the production line, as well as rums and other products.

Photo: Aleksandra H. Kossowska / Shutterstock.com

Calle Independencia - Boulevard



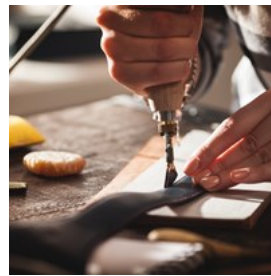
Calle Independencia, one of the city's largest avenues, is pedestrianized between JB Zayas and Maceo. That stretch is known as the

'Boulevard', and is one of the best parts of town for boutique shopping in Santa Clara.

Photo: sputnik / Flickr (image cropped)

Address: Calle Independencia, Santa Clara

ARTex



ARTex is an interesting artisan cooperative located on the pedestrian 'Boulevard'. They showcase and sell their creations, including decorations, souvenirs, T-shirts and even collections of Cuban music.

Photo: Maksim Toome / Shutterstock.com

Address: Calle Colón, Parque Vidal and San Cristóbal, Santa Clara

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 9am-12pm

Phone: +53 4221 4397

Pepe Medina



Librería Pepe Median is a small but attractive bookshop with a good selection of mainly Spanish-language books of all genres. As is to be expected, Cuban writers are well represented, though international authors can also be found.

Photo: Alextype / Shutterstock.com

Address: Parque Leoncio Vidal, Santa Clara

Opening hours: Daily 9am-6pm

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION



Paul D Smith / Shutterstock.com

Airport



Abel Santamaría Airport (SNU) is located about 10 kilometers from the city center of Santa Clara. It is a historical airport, as it is where the first

commercial flight from the US landed after 54 years (in 2016). It now handles numerous flights to and from the US, as well as many flights to European and Latin American destinations.

There is no public transportation from the airport, so visitors will have to either take a taxi or rent a car. Both options are easily accessible at the airport.

Photo: Juan Garces

Address: Aeropuerto Abel Santamaria Carretera a Maleza, Km 11, Villa Clara

Phone: +53 42 20 9138

Internet: santaclara.airportcuba.net

Email: ecasadir@ecasa.avianet.cu

Public Transport



Buses to other cities in Cuba can be taken at the two bus stations, the Inter-Municipal bus station (for destination in the Villa Clara region)

and the Inter-Provincial (for cities in other regions).

As non-Cubans, visitors are only allowed to take Viazul buses, which are clean, comfortable and generally pretty reliable. Be sure to check the schedules beforehand, as sometimes there are only a few departures per day to certain destinations.

Photo: Pierre-Luc Auclair

Internet: www.viazul.com

Taxis



The main taxi terminal is located just outside the Inter-Municipal bus station, to the west of Parque Leoncio Vidal, but taxis can easily be hailed

throughout the city.

Address: Amparo, Santa Clara

Post



Central post office:
Oficina Central de Correos de Cuba

Photo: Andy Fuchs

Address: Colón, just off Parque Leoncio Vidal, Santa Clara

Internet: www.correos.cu

Pharmacy



Farmacia Campa

Photo: Gemma Garner

Address: Calle Independecia, Santa Clara

Telephone



Country code: +53 Area
code: 42

Photo: Jardson Almeida

Electricity



The power supply in Cuba is mainly 110 volts, but most modern hotels have dual voltage, with 220 volts, and will accept both American dual-flat-prong

plugs and European round-prong plugs.

Photo: Stirling Tschan

Population

215,000

Currency

Cuba uses two distinct currencies: Cuban Peso (CUP) and Cuban Convertible Peso (CUC).

CUP can only be used by Cubans and residents of Cuba.

Visitors to the island will be doing most, if not all, of their transactions in CUC. It is technically the only currency tourists are allowed to use. Prices at most restaurants and shops will be displayed in CUC.

Opening hours

Most establishment in Santa Clara tend to open between 10 and 11am. Restaurants and bars can stay open late, while

shops usually close in the early evening, at about 6pm.

Newspapers

Vanguardia

Emergency numbers

Police: 106

Ambulance: 104

Fire brigade: 105