

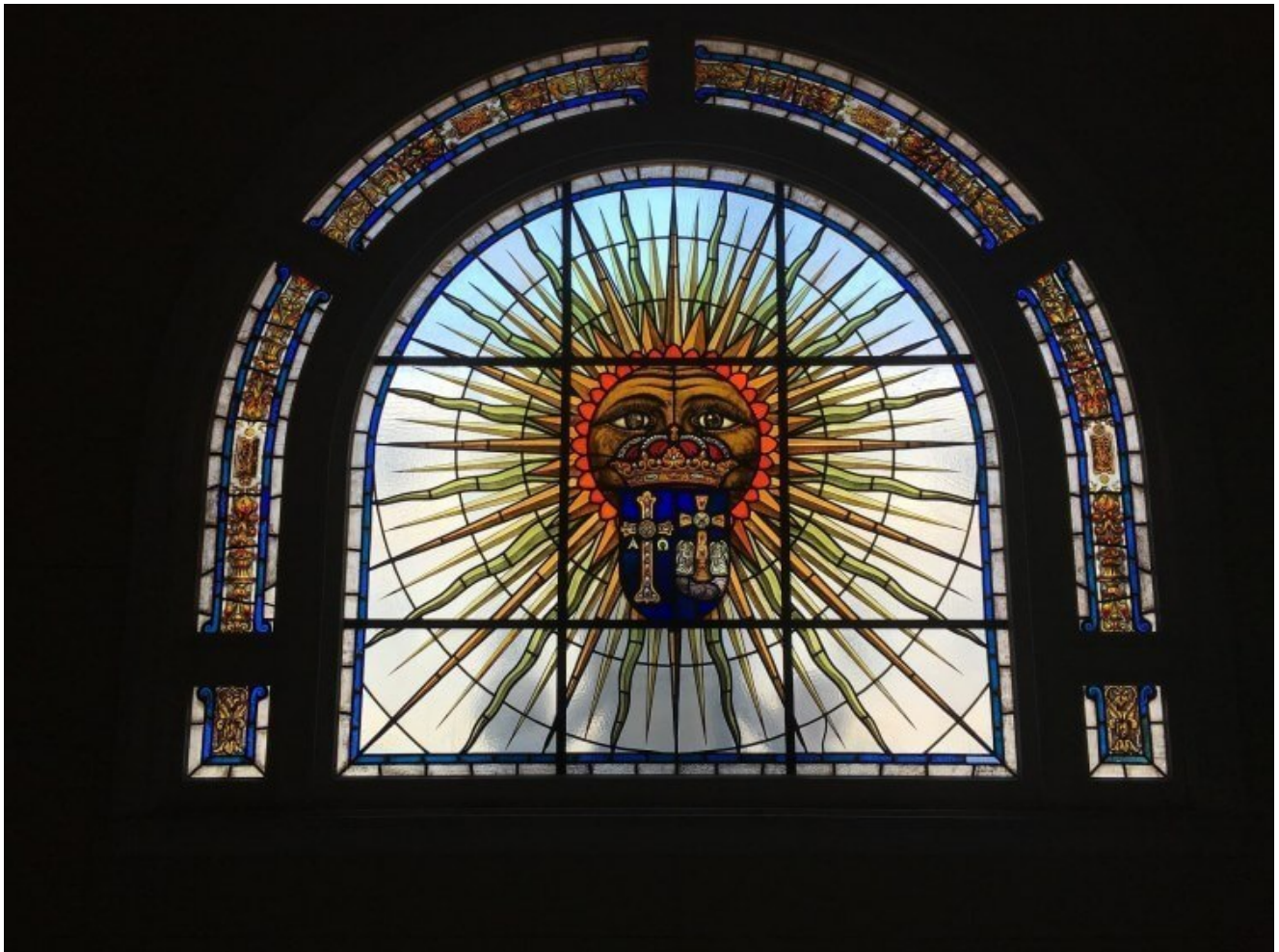
15 HAVANA MUSEUMS YOU MUST SEE

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February 25, 2019 By Talek Nantes Cuba , Other 0
Comments

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Havana museums do not get the credit they deserve. When you think Cuba, you think music, classic American cars, colonial architecture, smooth rum and a vibrant nightlife among other things. But Havana has so much to offer in the realm of the arts. Here is a curated list of some of the best museums in Havana, from breathtaking artistic achievement to historical to quirky, these museums deliver.



Havana Museums You Must See

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (National Museum of Fine Arts)

On par with top museums worldwide, this museum has an extensive and diverse collection and is easily one of the best museums in Havana. With two impressive buildings, one dedicated to Cuban Arts (the Palacio de Bellas Artes) and the other dedicated to Universal Arts in the International Gallery, this is the mother of all museums in Havana. The National Museum of Fine Arts of Havana displays exhibits spanning the colonial era up through contemporary art by world-renowned artists. There is surely something here for everyone.



Insider tip: Spend the bulk of your time in the Cuban art wing. It is extraordinary. [Learn More](#)

Museo Napoleonico (Napoleonic Museum)

If you're a fan of 19th-century history, then you should add this to your list of **museums in Havana, Cuba** to see. It houses one of the largest collections of Napoleon Bonaparte's belongings, and period artifacts, outside of France. The museum is housed in a beautiful setting in a former mansion. The rooms and gardens display recreations of what the mansion looked like during that period.

You should note that unless you speak Spanish, you'll need a guide/interpreter as most of the information is written in Spanish. [Learn More](#)



Church and Convent of St. Francis of Assisi

Located on Plaza San Francisco, the Church and Convent of St. Francis of Assisi was built at the end of the 16th century and then restored in the 17th century in the Baroque style. While it no longer houses a convent, it is now a museum and concert hall, boasting some of the best acoustics in the city.

If you're not afraid of heights, you should definitely climb the stairs to the roof of the bell tower, standing 138 ft. high, to get some of the best views of the city. [Learn More](#)



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Taquechel Pharmacy Museum

One of the most fascinating museums in Havana, Cuba is the Taquechel Pharmacy Museum. Step back in time to see what a pharmacy of days gone by might have looked like. With wooden shelves lined by flasks and ceramic jars filled with herbal concoctions, this family pharmacy founded in 1898 by Francisco Taquechel was restored in 1996 and now serves as both a museum and a working pharmacy.

You will find several restored pharmacies like this in Havana, for example, Drogueria Johnson and Museo de la Farmacia Habanera, including one displaying a skeleton. [Learn More](#).



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Museo del Ron Havana Club (Rum Museum)

Another of the **best museums in Havana** you must see is the Museo del Ron Havana Club, located in an 18th-century palace in the heart of Old Havana, is a museum created to tell the story of everything related to the history and manufacturing of rum. It features the traditional rum-making process and a store with a stellar selection of aged rums. [Learn More](#)

Insider Tip: Get free samples at the bar.



Photo Credit: Flickr

Museo de la Revolucion (Museum of the Revolution)

Inaugurated in 1920 by President Marío Garcia Menocal, the former Presidential Palace was designed by the Cuban architect Rodolfo Maruri and the Belgian architect Paul Belau, who also designed what is presently known as the Gran Teatro de La Habana. It remained the Presidential Palace until the Cuban Revolution of 1959.

The exhibits are mostly dedicated to the history of the Cuban Revolution of 1959, but there are also a few exhibits devoted to pre-revolutionary Cuba, including the 1895-1898 War of Independence against Spain. [Learn More](#)



Photo Credit: By Paul Mannix - The Museum Of The Revolution, Havana, Cuba, CC BY-SA 2.0

Museo del Chocolate (Chocolate Museum)

Billed as a museum, the Museo del Chocolate is more of a tasting room/café where the chocolate is to die for! The part that you would consider a museum houses displays about the history of cacao, production, and commercialization. For chocolate connoisseurs, you will be impressed by the materials donated by Belgian museums, including posts of long-gone Belgian chocolate brands like Martougin. [Learn More](#)

Insider tip: Try the hot or cold chocolate. Just trust me on this.



Museo de la Ciudad (Museum of the City of Havana)

Occupying the entire west side of Plaza de Armas, one of the 4 main squares of Havana, is the Museum of the City of Havana. This imposing structure was once the headquarters of the Spanish government in Cuba, and home to the Viceroyalty that ruled the island. After Cuban independence in 1898, it served as the headquarters of the U.S. military administration.

Today the building is a fine museum displaying the history of Havana from its founding. Inside you will see artifacts relating to all aspects of the city's development over the centuries. One of the most interesting exhibits is the living quarters of the Spanish governors complete with furniture and place settings with the family's crest.

Much of the exhibits in this museum in Havana are military-related; uniforms, carriages, and weaponry. There is also an elaborate throne room for the visiting Spanish king – who never came.

Insider tip: Don't miss the peacocks wandering the interior patio near the statue of Christopher Columbus. [Learn More](#)



Finca Vigia

Finca Vigia, Ernest Hemingway's home on the outskirts of Havana is a large airy residence with a fantastic view, sitting atop a hill in the Cuban countryside. Hemingway lived here from 1939 to 1960 when he became ill and moved back to the United States.

It was in this modest but well-appointed home that Hemingway wrote his classic, *The Old Man and the Sea*, and parts of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

When Hemingway returned to the United States, the Cuban government expropriated the farm. After years of neglect that left the farm in danger of collapse, the government restored it in 2007 and opened it to tourism. This museum is a nice drive outside of the city and well worth visiting. [Learn More.](#)



Museo de Arte Colonial

Often overlooked, the Museo de Arte Colonial is one of the Havana museums that shouldn't be missed. It is here you can see what life was like for the wealthy Cubans during the colonial period. The large two-story yellow house opens up onto a vast courtyard. The rooms are filled with colonial furniture, clothing, china, and other antiques, all depicting the aristocratic lifestyle. [Learn more](#)



Photo Credit: Flickr

Museo Historico de Guanabacoa

If you are fascinated by the Santeria religion, then this museum is worth a stop. It is a small but fascinating collection of Afro-Cuban items that have spiritual significance. It's worth noting that the exhibits are in Spanish, so you'll need a guide if you want to gain a full understanding of the items shown. [Learn More](#)

Coche Mambi

This railway carriage, still sitting on rails outside the Museo Palacio de Gobierno, originally belonged to the Cuban Railroad Company. Starting in 1902, it was used by Cuban presidents on campaign trips and official visits. Inside you can see the intricately inlaid mahogany furniture and ornate silver and glassware. [Learn More](#)



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Wifredo Lam Center

Named after the Cuban surrealist painter, Wilfredo Lam (often referred to as the Cuban Picasso) this gallery and Havana museum is housed in the beautiful 18th-century Casa del Obispo Penalver, just behind the Catedral de la Habana, Havana's Cathedral. It opened in 1983 for the purpose of studying, researching, and the promotion of contemporary visual arts in developing countries such as Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean. You can also find a permanent exhibit of Lam's lithographs and etchings. [Learn More](#)

National Museum of Contemporary Ceramics

While easy to miss, this small museum in Havana is worth a stop if you have an hour or two to kill. It houses a wide array of antique and contemporary ceramics. While many pieces are artistic and decorative in nature, others are filled with great political significance. To get the full experience you'll need a guide to explain the significance of each piece as the displays are only in Spanish. [Learn More](#)

Casa de Africa (Africa House)

This museum located in Old Havana offers you a chance to discover the influence of African culture on Cuba. There are over 2,000 African artifacts on display, most of which come from regions of Africa where AfroCuban ancestors had been taken as slaves. This is another interesting museum where, unfortunately, the displays are all in Spanish. [Learn More](#)

Here is a Havana museum and architecture walk that covers some of the most iconic streets, views, landmarks, and museums. This can easily be a full day affair for the culture vulture lover of art and history. Or cherry-pick your favorite location and move on to other Havana highlights.

A Map for Your Havana, Cuba Museum and Architecture Walking Tour

When you visit Havana, make sure to stay at a casa particular, Cuba's version of a bed and breakfast. You can book one easily with Airbnb and here is a \$40 credit to use on your first stay. Make sure to take a good guide book with you.

My book, *Don't Just Travel to Cuba, Experience Cuba: The Ultimate Cuba Travel Guide* not only gives you the best places to go, but it also explores the history and culture of the island nation.

So now that you have a ton of Havana museums to choose from, which ones are top on your list?

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BTW, if you are getting ready for your trip, make sure to take advantage of these useful, **money-saving links** to book your trip:

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