

Beatles fans will want to make a special trip to **Parque Lennon** (Calles 15 & 17 btwn Calles 6 & 8) where a hyper-realistic bronze of John lounges on a bench. Every December 8 there are vigils and music jams here remembering his murder. The statue was unveiled in December 2000 by Fidel Castro on the 20th anniversary of Lennon's death. Culturally speaking, it was one of the Cuban leaders more remarkable policy u-turns. The Beatles' music was banned in Cuba in the 1960s for being too 'decadent.' But following Lennon's strong social activism and opposition to US involvement in the Vietnam war he quickly became a hero among Cuban music fans and Castro has recently re-branded him as a 'revolutionary.' Tempting bait for would-be souvenir hunters, the bronze reincarnation of Lennon has suffered the ignominy of having his glasses stolen on a number of occasions and a guard has now been employed to keep a regular watch.

#### HOTEL NACIONAL

The neocolonial-style **Hotel Nacional** (☎ 873-3564; cnr Calles 0 & 21) was built in 1930. In August 1933 the US-backed dictator Gerardo Machado was overthrown during a popular uprising, and a month later army sergeant Fulgencio Batista seized power. Two months later, some 300 army officers displaced by Batista's coup sought refuge in the newly opened Hotel Nacional, where the US ambassador Sumner Wells was staying. Aware that the reins of power had changed hands, Ambassador Wells found urgent business elsewhere and Batista's troops attacked the officers, many of whom were shot after surrendering. The Nacional's tiled lobby, oversized chairs and aristocratic air capture the atmosphere of a bygone era and it's a nice place for a coffee or cocktail. Stroll straight through the lobby to the gardens behind the hotel. Several huge naval guns set up by the Spanish during the late 19th century still point out to sea from this cliff-top park where benches overlook the Malecón. If you're not down with crowds, this is a good perch for those frequent mass marches to the US Interests Section. The most recent demonstration revolved around the case of Luis Posada Carriles, a man suspected of bombing a Cubana Airlines flight in 1976

that killed 73 people. After the US refused to extradite American resident Carriles for trial in Venezuela (where he is alleged to have hatched the plot) in 2005, the Cuban government organized mass demos outside the US Interests Office and raised 73 huge black flags; one for each person that was killed in the crash. The Nacional is also headquarters for the Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (p457).

#### HOTEL HABANA LIBRE

Formerly the Havana Hotel it was commandeered by triumphant revolutionaries in 1959 and promptly renamed the **Habana Libre** (☎ 55 47 04; Calle E btwn Calles 23 & 25); the art here, starting with the 670-sq-meter Venetian-tile mural by Amelia Peláez splashed across the front of the building, is worth a look. Upstairs is Alfredo Sosa Bravo's *Carro de la Revolución* made from 525 ceramic pieces, plus a rotating painting exhibit. The shopping arcade has a good liquor store and there are some great 1959 B&W photos of the all-conquering *barbudas* lolling around with their guns in the hotel's lobby.

#### EDIFICIO FOCSA

Unmissable on the Habana skyline the modernist Focsa building was built in 1954–56 in a record 28 months using pioneering computer technology. In 1999 was listed as one of the seven modern engineering wonders of Cuba. With 39 floors housing 373 apartments it was, on its completion in June 1956, the second largest concrete structure of its type in the world; constructed in its entirety without the use of cranes. Falling on hard times in the early '90s, the upper floors of the Focsa became nests for vultures and in 2000 an elevator cable snapped killing one person. Sparkling once more after a recent restoration project, this skyline-dominating Habana giant nowadays contains refurbished apartments and – in the shape of top-floor restaurant La Torre (p128) – one of the city's most celebrated eating establishments.

#### UNIVERSIDAD DE LA HABANA

Every great city deserves a great university and the **Universidad de La Habana** (cnr Neptuno & San Lázaro) is just that (it even hosted anti-war protests when the US invaded Iraq in

2003). Before climbing the monumental stairs toward alma mater, head downhill to check out the **Monumento a Julio Antonio Mella** (cnr Neptuno & San Lázaro), a monument to the student leader who founded the first Cuban Communist Party in 1925. In 1929 the dictator Machado had Mella assassinated in Mexico City. More interesting than the monument, however, are the black and white **Mella portraits** permanently mounted in the wall in the little park across San Lázaro.

The university was founded by Dominican monks in 1728 and secularized in 1842. The present neoclassical complex dates from the second quarter of the 20th century, and today some 30,000 students (2000 of them foreigners), taught by 1700 professors, take courses in the social sciences and humanities, natural sciences, mathematics and economics.

Go up the stairway and through the monumental gateway into Plaza Ignacio Agramonte, the university's central square. In front of you is the **biblioteca** (library) and to your left the **Edificio Felipe Poe**, with two **museums** (admission CUC\$1; ☎ 9am–noon & 1–4pm Mon–Fri). Downstairs, the **Museo de Historia Natural** is the oldest museum in Cuba, founded in 1874 by the Royal Academy of Medical, Physical and Natural Sciences. Many of the stuffed specimens of Cuban flora and fauna here date from the 19th century. Upstairs is the **Museo Antropológico Montané**, established in 1903, with a rich collection of pre-Columbian Indian artifacts. The most important objects are the wooden 10th-century **Ídolo del Tobacco**, discovered in Guantánamo Province, and the stone **Ídolo de Bayamo**, but the mummies are also cool. Keep this building on your left, and the next building on your left is the **Anfiteatro Enrique José Varona**; films are screened here during the Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano.

Go down through the park on the north side of the Edificio Felipe Poe and exit the university compound via a small gate to reach the **Museo Napoleónico** (☎ 79 14 60; San Miguel No 1159; unguided/guided CUC\$3/6; ☎ 10am–5:30pm Mon–Sat), containing 7000 objects associated with Napoleon Bonaparte, including his 1821 death mask. The 10,000-seat **Estadio Universitario Juan Abrahantes**, where students

play soccer and baseball, is just up the hill from this museum.

#### MUSEUMS

Two museums further afield in Vedado that are worthwhile if you're in the neighborhood are the **Museo de Artes Decorativas** (☎ 830-9848; Calle 17 No 502 btwn Calles D & E; admission CUC\$2; ☎ 11am–7pm Tue–Sat), with its fancy rococo, oriental and art-deco baubles and the **Museo de Danza** (☎ 831-2198; Línea No 365; admission CUC\$2; ☎ 11am–6:30pm Tue–Sat), which collects objects from Cuba's rich dance history, including some personal effects of Alicia Alonso.

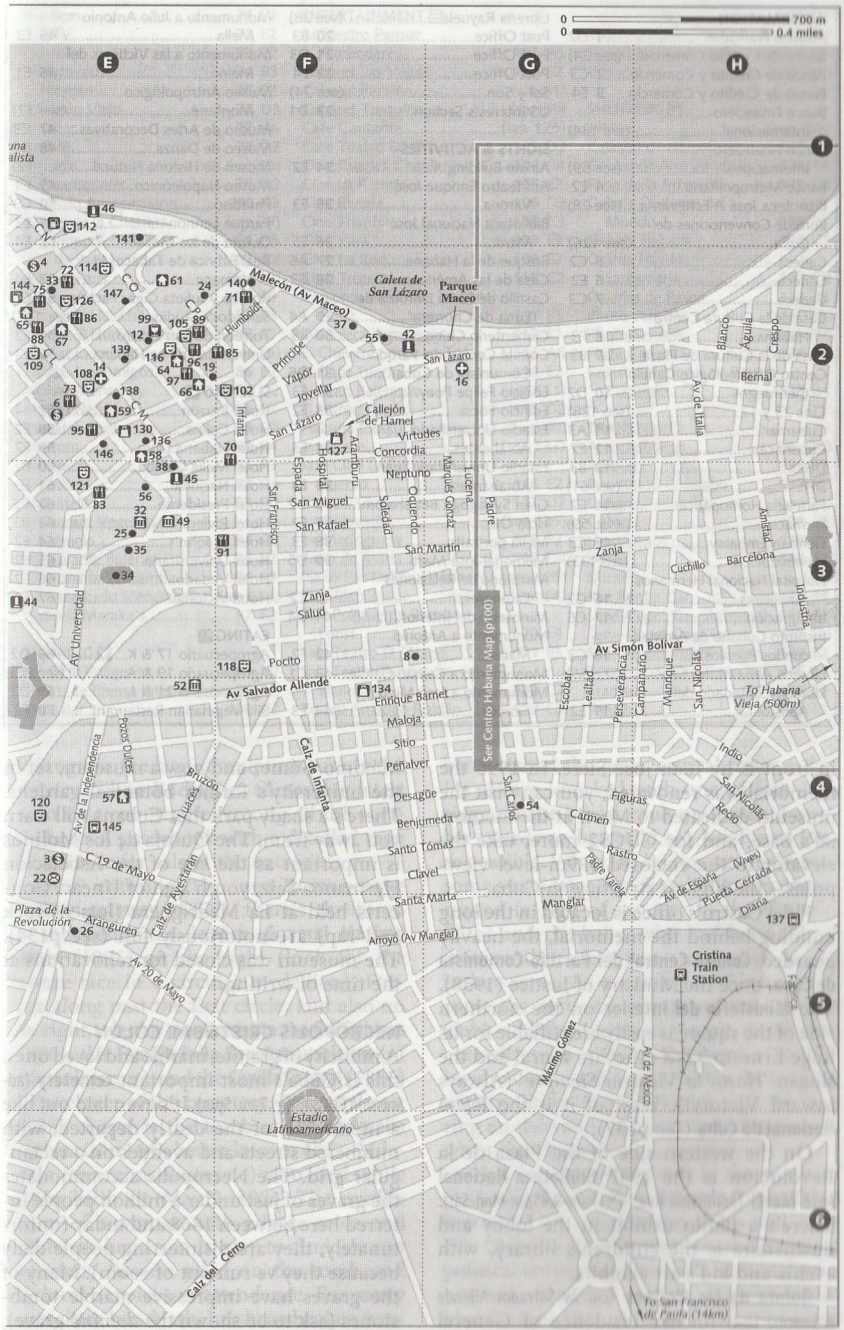
#### PARQUE ALMENDARES

Running along the banks of the city's Río Almendares, below the bridge on Calle 23, is this wonderful oasis of green and fresh air in the heart of chaotic Habana. The park was restored in 2003 and they did a beautiful job: benches now line the river promenade, plants grow profusely and there are many facilities here, including an antiquated **miniature golf course**, the **Anfiteatro Parque Almendares** (see Entertainment, p134) and a **playground**. There are several good places to eat. Take a 20-minute stroll through old-growth trees in the **Bosque de la Habana** and you'll feel transported (take a friend though: this is a very isolated spot and is considered unsafe by locals).

#### Plaza de la Revolución Area PLAZA DE LA REVOLUCIÓN

Those tingles you feel may be the emotion of being in Cuba's most important public space or maybe it's just the oppressive heat (for which the square is famous). Predating the 1959 triumph, the **Plaza de la Revolución** was once called Plaza de la República. Although this gigantic square has come to symbolize the Cuban Revolution due to the huge political rallies held here in the '60s, most buildings date from the Batista era. On important occasions Castro and others (including the Pope) have addressed up to 1.2-million Cubans and supporters from the podium in front of the star-shaped, 142m-high **Memorial José Martí** (☎ 59 23 47; admission CUC\$5; ☎ 9:30am–5pm Mon–Sat). Head here on May 1 or July 26 at 7am if you want to experience it yourself (most hotels offer excursions). The 17m marble Martí statue

VEDADO



<b>INFORMATION</b>		Librería Rayuela.....(see 28)	Monumento a Julio Antonio Mella.....45 E3
Alliance Française.....1 D2	Post Office.....20 B3	Monumento a las Víctimas del Maine.....46 E1	Museo Antropológico Montañé.....(see 32)
Banco de Crédito Comercio.....(see 24)	Post Office.....21 D3	Museo de Artes Decorativas.....47 C3	Museo de Danza.....48 D2
Banco de Crédito y Comercio.....2 C3	Post Office.....22 E4	Museo de Historia Natural.....(see 32)	Museo Neapoléonico.....49 E3
Banco de Crédito y Comercio.....3 E4	Sol y Son.....(see 24)	Paradiso.....50 C3	Parque Lennon.....51 B3
Banco Financiero Internacional.....(see 134)	US Interests Section.....23 D1	Parque Lennon.....51 B3	Quinta de los Molinos.....52 E4
Banco Financiero Internacional.....(see 59)	<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>	Real Fábrica de Tabacos H Upmann.....53 B4	Romeo y Julieta Cigar Factory.....54 G4
Banco Metropolitano.....4 E2	Airline Building.....24 E2	Salvador's Studio.....(see 127)	Torreón de San Lázaro.....55 F2
Biblioteca José A Echevarría.....(see 28)	Anfiteatro Enrique José Varona.....25 E3	Torreón de San Lázaro.....55 F2	Universidad de La Habana.....56 E3
Buró de Convenciones de Cuba.....(see 126)	Biblioteca Nacional José Martí.....26 E5	Universidad de La Habana.....56 E3	
Cadeca.....5 C2	Bosque de la Habana.....27 A6		
Cadeca.....6 E2	Casa de las Américas.....28 C2	<b>SLEEPING</b>	Hotel Bruzón.....57 E4
Cadeca.....7 C3	Castillo de Santa Dorotea de Luna de Chorrera.....29 A4	Hotel Colina.....58 E2	Hotel Colina.....58 E2
Casa de la Cultura Centro Habana.....8 F3	Cementerio Chino.....30 B5	Hotel Habana Libre.....59 E2	Hotel Habana Libre.....59 E2
Casa de la Cultura de Plaza.....9 B3	Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba.....31 D5	Hotel Meliá Cohiba.....60 B2	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2
Centro Oftalmológico Camilo Cienfuegos.....10 D2	Edificio Felipe Poey.....32 E3	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Presidente.....62 C2
Cine 23 y 12.....(see 128)	Edificio Focsa.....33 E2	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Presidente.....62 C2
Cubamar.....11 A3	Estadio Universitario Juan Abrahamantes.....34 E3	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Riviera.....63 B2
Cubanacán.....12 E2	Estadio Universitario Juan Abrahamantes.....35 E3	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel St John's.....64 E2
DHL.....13 B3	Gran Synagoga Bet Shalom.....36 D2	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Universitario.....65 E2
DHL.....(see 61)	Holá Ola.....37 F2	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Vedado.....66 E2
Farmacia Homopática.....14 E1	Mella portraits.....38 E3	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Vedado.....66 E2
Farmacia.....(see 59)	Memorial José Martí.....39 D5	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Vedado.....66 E2
German Embassy.....15 C3	Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores.....40 C2	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Vedado.....66 E2
Havanatur.....(see 133)	Ministerio del Interior.....41 D4	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Vedado.....66 E2
Hospital Nacional Hermanos Ameijeiras.....16 G2	Monumento a Antonio Maceo.....42 F2	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Vedado.....66 E2
Inmigración.....17 C6	Monumento a Calixto García.....43 C1	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Vedado.....66 E2
Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos.....18 C3	Monumento a José Miguel Gómez.....44 E3	Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Vedado.....66 E2
Librería Alma Mater.....(see 56)		Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Vedado.....66 E2
Librería Centenario del Apóstol.....19 E2		Hotel Nacional.....61 E2	Hotel Vedado.....66 E2

in front is by Juan José Sicre. In 1996 the memorial was renovated; you can visit the museum dedicated to Martí at the memorial's base, and for CUC\$2 more, take the elevator to the enclosed 129m-level viewpoint – the highest structure in Cuba.

Fidel Castro's office is located in the long building behind the memorial, the heavily guarded **Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba**, once the Ministry of Justice (1958). The **Ministerio del Interior** on the northern side of the square is easily identifiable for its huge Ernesto 'Che' Guevara mural and the slogan '*Hasta la Victoria Siempre*' (Always toward Victory!). West of it is the **Teatro Nacional de Cuba** (see p137).

On the western side of the Plaza de la Revolución is the 1957 **Biblioteca Nacional José Martí** (admission free; ☎ 8am-9:45pm Mon-Sat). There's a photo exhibit in the lobby and downstairs is the children's library, with events and kid's art exhibits.

**Quinta de los Molinos** (cnr Av Salvador Allende & Luaces) is a former residence of General

Máximo Gómez and now a museum, set in the university's former botanical gardens. There's a shady park that Cubans will warn you away from. The Quinta de los Molinos is important as the site of the Asociación Hermanos Saíz, youth arm of Unecac. Concerts held at La Madriguera (lots of rock and rap) are notoriously fun (see p134). The museum was closed for renovations at the time of writing.

#### NECRÓPOLIS CRISTÓBAL COLÓN

A minicity of granite, marble and loved ones, this is Cuba's most important cemetery (admission CUC\$1; ☎ 7am-5pm). It's even laid out like a metropolis of the dearly departed, with numbered streets and avenues on a rectangular grid. The Necrópolis accommodates the graves of just under a million people interred here between 1868 and today (unfortunately, they are disinterring people daily because they've run out of room). Many of the graves have impressive marble tombstones (ask to be shown the *dominó* grave),

Bim Bom.....71 F2	<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>	Teatro Mella.....124 C2
CafeTV.....72 E2	Anfiteatro Parque Almendares.....101 A5	Teatro Nacional de Cuba.....125 D4
Coppelia.....73 E2	Cabaret Las Vegas.....102 F2	Teatro Nacional de Guiñol.....126 E2
Decameron.....74 B3	Cabaret Parísien.....(see 61)	Unecac.....(see 115)
El Conejito.....75 E2	Cabaret Turquino.....(see 59)	<b>SHOPPING</b>
El Gringo Viejo.....76 D3	Cafe Cantante.....(see 125)	ARTex.....(see 108)
El Lugar.....77 A6	Cafe Teatro Brecht.....103 D2	Callejón de Hamel.....127 F2
G-Café.....78 D3	Cine Charles Chaplin.....104 C4	Centro de Arte 23 y 12.....128 B4
La Torre.....(see 33)	Cine La Rampa.....105 E2	Feria de la Artesanía.....129 C2
Le Chansonnier.....79 D2	Cine Riviera.....106 D3	Galería Ciudades del Mundo.....130 E2
Mercado Agropecuario.....80 C3	Cine Triunión.....107 C3	Galería Habana.....131 C2
Mesón de la Chorrera.....(see 29)	Cine Yara.....108 E2	Galería Haydee Santamaría.....132 C2
Organopónico Plaza.....81 C5	Club La Red.....109 E2	Galerías de Paseo.....133 B2
Pain de Paris.....82 C2	Club Tropical.....110 C2	Photo Service.....(see 133)
Pain de Paris.....(see 19)	Conjunto Folklórico Nacional de Cuba.....111 B3	Photo Service.....(see 99)
Paladar Aries.....83 E3	Discooteca Amanecer.....112 E1	Plaza Carlos III.....134 F4
Paladar El Helecho.....84 B3	El Chevere.....113 A6	Registro Nacional de Bienes Culturales.....135 B4
Paladar El Hurón Azul.....85 F2	El Gato Tuerto.....114 E2	
Paladar Escorpión.....(see 75)	El Gran Palenque.....(see 111)	<b>TRANSPORT</b>
Paladar Los Amigos.....86 E2	El Hurón Azul.....115 D2	Aerocaribbean.....(see 24)
Paladar Monopoly.....87 D2	Habana Café.....(see 60)	Aerotaxi.....136 E2
Paladar Nerei.....88 E2	Jazz Cafe.....(see 133)	Bus 400 to Guanabo.....137 H5
Palmares Centro.....89 E2	Jazz Club La Zorra y El Cuervo.....116 E2	Cubana Airlines.....(see 24)
Pan.com.....90 B4	Karachi Club.....117 D2	Cubatur.....138 E2
Peso pizza.....91 F3	La Colmenita.....118 F3	Havanaautos.....139 E2
Peso Stalls.....92 C4	La Madriguera.....119 D4	Micar.....140 F2
Peso Stalls.....93 D2	Patio de María.....(see 125)	Micar.....(see 133)
Restaurante Vegetariano Carmelo.....94 C2	Piano Bar Delirio Habanero.....(see 124)	Rex Rent a Car.....141 E1
Restaurante Bulerías.....95 E2	Pico Blanco.....(see 64)	Servi-Cupet Gas Station.....142 B2
Restaurante Wakamba.....96 E2	Sala Polivalente Ramón Fonst.....120 E4	Servi-Cupet Gas Station.....143 D6
Supermercado Meridiano.....(see 133)	Sala Teatro El Sótano.....121 E3	Servi-Cupet Petrol Station.....144 E2
Trattoria Maraka's.....97 E2	Sala Teatro Hubert de Blanck.....122 C2	Terminal de Omnibus.....145 E4
	Teatro Amadeo Roldán.....123 C2	Transtur.....146 E2
<b>DRINKING</b>		Transtur.....147 E2
Bar-Club Imágenes.....98 C2		
Centro de Prensa Internacional.....99 E2		
Opus Bar.....100 C2		

making this the largest sculpture park in the country. Silvio Rodríguez filmed his latest video *Cita con Angeles* among all the cherubs here. A guidebook with a detailed map (CUC\$5) is for sale at the entrance.

After entering the neo-Romanesque **northern gateway** (1870), there's the tomb of independence leader **General Máximo Gómez** (1905) on the right (look for the bronze face in a circular medallion). Further along past the first circle, and also on the right, are the **monument to the firefighters** (1890); the **Familia Falla Bonet mausoleum** (of artistic interest); and the **Capilla Central** (1886) in the center of the cemetery. Just northeast of this chapel is the tomb of **Señora Amelia Goyri** (cnr Calles 1 & F), better known as *La Milagrosa* (the miraculous one) who died while giving birth on May 3, 1901. The marble figure of a woman with a large cross and a baby in her arms is easy to find, due to the many flowers piled on the tomb and the local devotees in attendance. For many years after her death, her heartbroken hus-

band visited the grave several times a day. He always knocked with one of four iron rings on the burial vault and walked away backwards so he could see her for as long as possible. When the bodies were exhumed some years later Amelia's body was uncorrupted (a sign of sanctity in the Catholic faith) and the baby, who had been buried at its mother's feet, was – allegedly – found in her arms. As a result *La Milagrosa* became the focus of a huge spiritual cult in Cuba and thousands of people come here annually with gifts in the hope of fulfilling dreams or solving problems. In keeping with tradition, pilgrims knock with the iron ring on the vault and walk away backwards when they leave.

Also worth seeking out is the tomb of Orthodox Party leader **Eduardo Chibás** (Calle 8 btwn Calles E & F). During the 1940s and early '50s Chibás was a relentless crusader against political corruption, and as a personal protest he committed suicide during a radio broadcast in 1951. At his burial ceremony a

## CIGAR FACTORY TOURS

There are two factories presently allowing tours in Habana, and the programs are roughly the same. Visitors check out the ground floor where the leaves are unbundled and sorted before proceeding to the upper floors to watch the tobacco get rolled, pressed, adorned with a band, and boxed. Remember, these are factories where people toil (sometimes for 12 hours a day or more) for around 200 pesos a month, and some visitors find they smack of a human zoo. Still, if you have even a passing interest in tobacco, Cuban work environments or economies of scale, you'll enjoy one of the CUC\$10, 45-minute tours held Monday to Friday at the following factories:

**Real Fábrica de Tabacos Partagás** (Map p100; ☎ 862-0086; Industria No 520 btwn Barcelona & Dragones; ☞ tours every 15 min btwn 9:30am-11am & 12:30-3pm) The tobacco shop (open 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday) and smoking lounge are bonuses here. This is one of Habana's oldest cigar factories (1845).

**Real Fábrica de Tabacos H Upmann** (Map pp106-7; ☎ 862-0081; Calle 23 btwn Calles 16 & 14; ☞ tours 9:30am-2:30pm Mon-Fri) Founded in 1844 and housed in an impressive neoclassical building, Romeo y Julieta, Montecristo and Cohibas are rolled here.

At the time of writing the **Romeo y Julieta** (Map pp106-7; Padre Varela No 852) and the **Real Fábrica de Tabacos La Corona** (Map p100; Calle Agramonte No 106 btwn Colón & Refugio) factories were closed to the public, though the shop and smoking rooms were still open.

young Orthodox activist named Fidel Castro jumped atop Chibás' grave and made a fiery speech denouncing the old establishment – the political debut of the most influential Cuban of the 20th century.

A bronze **plaque** (cnr Calles 14 & 23), one block from the cemetery entrance, marks the spot where Fidel proclaimed the socialist nature of the Cuban Revolution on April 16, 1961, at a funeral service for those killed during a counter-revolutionary raid on a Habana air base the previous day.

For something completely different, exit the west gate of the cemetery and walk south for three blocks to the **Cementerio Chino** (cnr Av 26 & Zapata; ☞ 6am-6pm).

## Along the Malecón

Habana has become synonymous with the Malecón, its 8km seawall. Constructed during the American administration in 1901, it snakes along the coast from the Castillo de la Punta in Habana Vieja to Castillo de Santa Dorotea de Luna de Chorrera, another castle at the mouth of the Río Almendares. Here two one-way tunnels dive under the river, and the main thoroughfare continues through Miramar as Av 5, eventually becoming the Autopista (freeway) to Mariel. In the rougher months, waves splash high over the wall, soaking cars and strollers alike. Half-eaten by the salt spray, the pastiche of architectural gems, restored or collapsing, backing the Malecón

is enchanting. A new project erecting old-fashioned-style street lamps makes it even more attractive at night, when lovers paste themselves to the wall, wandering *trovadores* sing for tips, and there's always a bottle of rum being passed your way. Hustlers here can be fierce: tell them directly and unequivocally that you're hanging out on your own, and they'll soon go away. The Malecón was severely lashed by Hurricane Wilma in October 2005. Huge waves rose to 3m above the Morro lighthouse, chunks were taken out of the battered sea wall, and more than 250 people had to be evacuated by amphibious vehicles.

The 24-story **Hospital Nacional Hermanos Ameijeiras** (1980), the highest building in Centro Habana (but not in Habana – that would be the Focsa), dominates this area. Some of the clinics specialize in treating foreigners (see Medical Services, p91). Opposite the hospital is the **Monumento a Antonio Maceo** (1916), the mulatto general who cut a blazing trail across the entire length of Cuba during the First War of Independence. The nearby 18th-century **Torreón de San Lázaro** was built as a watchtower by the Spanish.

West beyond Hotel Nacional is a stretch of the Malecón known as Av Washington because the old US Embassy was here. In the center of the boulevard is the **Monumento a las Víctimas del Maine** (1926), which had an American eagle on top until the 1959 revolution. The current inscription on the side of

the monument alludes to the theory that US agents deliberately blew up their own ship to create a pretext for declaring war on Spain: '*A las víctimas de el Maine que fueron sacrificados por la voracidad imperialista en su afán de apoderarse de la Isla de Cuba*' (To the victims of the *Maine* who were sacrificed by voracious imperialism in its desire to gain control of the island of Cuba). The modern seven-story building with high security fencing at the western end of this open space is the **US Interests Office** first set up by the Carter administration in the late 1970s. Surrounded by hysterical graffiti that links Bush to all kinds of monsters including Hitler, the building is the site of some of the worst tiff-tat finger wagging on the island. Facing the office front is the Plaza Tribuna Anti-Imperialista, built during the Elián González affair to host major in-your-face protests (earning it the local nickname *protestódromo*). Concerts, protests and marches – some one million strong – are still held here.

Built in 1959 another impressive memorial is the **Monumento a Calixto García** (cnr Malecón & Calle G) to the valiant Cuban general who US military leaders in Santiago de Cuba prevented from attending the Spanish surrender in 1898. Twenty-four bronze plaques around the equestrian statue provide a history of García's 30-year struggle for Cuban independence. On Calle G just behind the monument is the **Casa de las Américas** (☎ 55 27 06; Calle G btwn Calles 3 & 5; admission CUC\$2; ☞ 10am-4:40pm Tue-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun), a major cultural institution set up by Moncada survivor Haydee Santamaría in 1959 sponsoring literary and artistic seminars, concerts and exhibitions. Inside there's an art gallery and a bookshop.

Many busts and statues line Calle G (Av de los Presidentes). In the middle of the avenue is a former monument to Cuba's first president – and ex-friend of José Martí – Tomás Estrada Palma, who is now considered a US puppet. His statue was toppled and all that remains of the monument are his shoes. On the other side of Calle G is the neobaroque **Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores**.

A large **feria de la artesanía** (craft fair) with handicrafts and used books is at the corner of Malecón and Calle D.

Cuba has three synagogues servicing a Jewish population of approximately 1:500. The main community center and library is at the **Gran Sinagoga Bet Shalom** (Calle I btwn 13 &

15) where the friendly staff would be happy to tell interested visitors about the fascinating history of the Jews in Cuba.

## HABANA VIEJA WALKING TOUR

It's unlikely you'll get to both the Habana Vieja and Centro Habana walking tours in a day, unless you hop some transport halfway through. You can connect with a horse carriage (CUC\$10 per hour) on Mercaderes just off Obispo, a coco-taxi anywhere around Plaza de San Francisco de Asís (horse carriages hang out here too) or a bici-taxi near the Estación Central de Ferrocarriles (Central Station).

Plaza de la Catedral is a moveable feast and you can espy most of what's going on from the lush **Restaurante El Patio** (1; p126), before heading into the **Catedral de San Cristóbal de la Habana** (2; p93). Track southwest next, past the resident fortune teller and the brightly clad ladies in polka-dot dresses (who'll plant a kiss on your cheek for a ludicrous tip), and pop into the alleyway on the right housing the **Taller Experimental de Gráfica** (3; p114). Here, in what must be Habana's funkier art gallery, Pink Floyd meets Jackson Pollack

## WALK FACTS

**Start** Restaurante El Patio

**Finish** Taberna de la Muralla

**Distance** 1.3km

**Duration** Three hours

