



Travel with Liz Barry



All photographs by Liz

# TRINIDAD



Cuba



**LIZ VISITS CUBA'S OLDEST SPANISH COLONIAL TOWN - TRINIDAD. HER WONDERFUL PHOTOGRAPHS CAPTURE THE COLOURFUL ARCHITECTURE AND PEOPLE OF THIS UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE.**

In 1988 UNESCO declared Trinidad a World Heritage Site as it is Cuba's oldest and most enchanting 'outdoor museum'. The town sits in a magnificent location nestled between the high mountains of the Escambray Range and the lovely white beaches and warm waters of the Caribbean Sea.

Trinidad is a picturesque Spanish colonial town which dates back to 1850, built on huge fortunes amassed by the sugar barons, from their plantations in the adjacent Valle de los Ingenios also known today as the Valley of the Sugar Mills. In 1827 there were 56 mills in the region, one of which harvested the world's biggest cane haul, worked by the hands of thousands of slaves shipped from the west coast of Africa.

**PICS:**

*clockwise from top left -*

*A cool beer or six*

*Tower of Convento de San Francisco in Plaza Mayor*

*Brightly painted casas*

*continues over*







**T**he riches of the town are still very much in evidence today, as I discovered on a walk around the old square Plaza Mayor where some of the ancient mansions have been restored and opened as museums. One of the rooms was set out to replicate a grand dining room ready for a banquet, with white linen table cloths draped over long dining tables laid with silver cutlery and sparkling wine glasses. French crystal chandeliers hung against a backdrop of delicate Italian frescoes that decorated the walls.



**PICS:**  
*clockwise from top left -  
 Palacio Burnet home to the Museo Romantico  
 Convento de San Francisco  
 View to the Caribbean Sea  
 Table laid for banquet  
 Plaza Mayor  
 Terracotta rooves of Trinidad*



**A** striking yellow church bell-tower rises above the town; I climbed a well-trodden blue wooden staircase which spiralled upwards to a viewing platform. Far below, a patchwork of terracotta tiled roofs appeared to be balanced on top of the adobe walls of the brightly painted casas.

In the distance I could see the glistening blue waters of the Caribbean washing across the white sands of Ancon Beach. The silence was broken by the sound of hooves on the cobbled streets as a lone rider, his face shaded beneath the brim of his cowboy hat, trotted by.





*Trinidad doors and windows  
Old man with his pipe  
Local lady watching over the street  
Tethered horse  
Caged songbird  
Watching the world go by*



**A**long the back streets, old ladies sat on their doorsteps to gossip, while others watched the day unfold through half shuttered doorways. Wicker cages containing songbirds hung along the walls. An old man, hand clenched around a homemade pipe, rested beside the road, spirals of purple smoke obscuring the lines on his weathered face as he gazed towards me, his eyes shaded from the sun, beneath a straw hat. Not far away a lone horse was tethered, waiting for his owner to return.







**PICS:**  
*clockwise from main pic opposite -  
Piccola Chiesa or small church  
Limes for Cuban Mojito or Canchanchara  
Traditional doorway  
Typical Trinidad street with brightly painted casas*





**T**rinidad is a lively town with a population of 60,000. When evening comes, the locals gather and sit on the steps outside the Casa de la Musica, to be entertained by bands of Trovadors and to dance to the salsa beat.

About 4 hours' drive from Havana, Trinidad is certainly far less chaotic and has over 3 miles of white sandy palm fringed beaches that are quieter than the better known resorts of Varadero and Guardalavaca. As tourism increases in Cuba and American citizens take advantage of the relaxation of travel restrictions between the two countries, Trinidad offers a tranquil oasis in what is otherwise a spirited vibrant country.

**FACT FILE:** *Flights* - Virgin Atlantic Gatwick London to Jose Marti airport Havana Cuba [www.virgin-atlantic.com](http://www.virgin-atlantic.com)

[www.cubatravelpplan.co.uk](http://www.cubatravelpplan.co.uk) part of Rickshaw Travel which can arrange independent travel to and within Cuba.

*PICS:*  
*clockwise from top left -*

*A friendly face*

*Lone donkey*

*Classic vintage car*

*Not quiet so classic!....*

