

## **TRINIDAD: COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRODUCT IN CUBA**

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At the end of the Cold War and with the capitalist machinery set up, Cuba succumbed to the liberal market and, in recent years it turned into an international emerging tourist destination. From the Cuba's Special Period, the commitment of government brought about the development of the tourist industry by giving priority to eight areas. One of these areas is the tourist area Costa-Sur where is located the province in which our study is carried out, Santi Spiritus, with its municipality Trinidad. In our study, we are tackling the tourist resources that this city and its territory have. Trinidad has one of the oldest town centres in the country with a special appeal due to its historical legacy that its metropolitan area and its location, between the coast and the mountain, possesses. This feature grants Trinidad a special nature by turning it into a broad travel packages both cultural, sun and beach or even ecotourism.

Its geographic enclave was very important, since almost the 70% of the territory is made up of narrow costal plain straddling rivers. These rivers gave rise to an important agricultural development in the XIX century during the splendour period of sugar cane production. This agricultural development lasted during the whole economic USSR dependence. The main lure of the town to attract those tourists who visit the island is the Trinidad historical down centre and Ingenios Valley due to the fact that they are material goods protected by UNESCO. However, the importance that the tourism exerts in Cuba has undergone several stages of development. These stages of development have gone broadening their presence in the international context at the same time that they have gone adding new geographical areas of the country. Thus, we will stress four big stages that we will summarize below and these stages will be the reason why Cuba is also included between the new touristic packages as one of the most important Caribbean destination.

The origin of this importance begins in the 50's of the XIX century and goes on until its independence from Spain. In the independence from Spain, port cities became important due to the fact that its economy was under the authority of the metropolis and that all the wealth was the result of the commercial increase during this period. From the Spanish liberation until the triumph of the Revolution, the city would become in a main destination

with the promotion of big hotels, since the main appeal was the nightlife offerings. Nevertheless, during the period between 1959 until the collapse of the Soviet Union, a new splendid stage for the development of the national tourism came up with the National Tourism Industry Institute (NTII) creation. During the last years, from the Special Period to the present, tourism is an important part as inflow of foreign exchange and Cuba could be the engine for development to mitigate the crisis. Today, Cuba is promoted through a sustainable tourism which uses natural, cultural, human and economic resources in the most rational possible way.

In the recent stage of Cuba's tourism development, Trinidad has become an important destination that offers different options compared to the specialization the main attraction focuses, Havana as an exponent of urban-cultural tourism and Varadero as a sun and beach model. Thus, Trinidad has all the previous characteristics but the city adds the nature tourism and, in this way Trinidad is a total and comprehensive product by virtue of its place and its physical features. Trinidad tourism boom has its origin in the beginning of the 90's in the past century and it coincides with the Special Period. This spectacular economic boom is connected with the different natural and cultural resources that Trinidad had because the government and the international capital interest supported to change the resources into a profitable tourism product.

In this way, the tourism makes a great impact in the economic field, since it represents, on the one hand job for women in Trinidad because they have to service the tourist requests that their home has. On the other hand, the income of the home economy rises because they have to improve the urban real properties to adapt them to the visitors needs. It's worth highlighting the importance that the tourism has in the environment. For several years, tourism in Cuba is one of the alternatives to achieve the economic growth and diversification. To achieve this, the tourism development policy is based on the territorial arrangement and the environment protection, both of them following the sustainability criterion.

In general, tourism in Cuba is located where natural, historical and cultural conditions are attractive to visitors, so it will arise four areas that we will develop in their context. The first area will be the historical centre of Trinidad city because it is an example of city-museum converted into World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. The historical centre of Trinidad is also characterized by the great socio-commercial dynamism and by its locations near a hill which determines its urban scene, so tourism is one of the strategies used to dynamize the activity in the city. The second area will be the Valle de los Ingenios due to the fact that it has a great scenic and patrimonial value devoted to the agriculture. In this valley, they were big bourgeoisie properties of sugar cane devoted to the production and the growing of it. In this area, it is important the Manaca-Iznaga talent as a symbol of bourgeoisie opulence and power.

The third area is Topes de Collantes Natural Park. It is a place devoted to the ecotourism which is located in a landscape environment surrounded by nature and mixed up with recreational and sports activities. This space consists of six areas, five mountain areas and one maritime area, Cayo Las Iguanas. The fourth area is the Ancón Peninsula. It is a model of sustainable coastal tourism and a model of sun and sand tourism that was developed at the end of the 80's. This area also offers a great variety of landscapes.

Trinidad urban layout has not change much since Alejandro de Humboldt described it in his trip at the end of the XVIIIth century. The reason is that the recovery of the local and architectural heritage came to a standstill when the Revolution became. However, this recovery was taken up again when Cuba joined to the world tourism. So, Trinidad urban layout is an example of the colonial architecture which remains until today.

