

Cuba: New Winds for a Classic Hotel

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The Cuban tourist sector, full of anniversaries of emblematic hotels, is commemorating the 88th anniversary of one of its most recognized establishments worldwide.

The Hotel Nacional de Cuba, a distinguished institution of culture and history, is included among the 10 Palace hotels in the world, in addition to holding the category of National Monument of Cuba and World Heritage.

Likewise, the documents that record its history are part of the Memory of the World collection, sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Located on the coastal ledge of Punta Brava, on the hill of Taganana, nearly at the end of the San Lazaro cove, the Hotel Nacional de Cuba is on the site where, in the 18th century, the Battery of Santa Clara was located, as part of the defensive system of the Cuban capital and whose vestiges are still preserved to the delight of visitors.

These pieces of artillery have a greater appeal if one takes into account that, according to some analysts, the world's largest canyon, baptized as the Ordoñez, is at the Hotel Nacional de Cuba.

Between 1895 and 1898, the Krupp and Ordoñez canyons were deployed there, the latter was inspired by the French naval piece of 1870.

Its constructor was Salvador Ordoñez and it was considered the largest existing canyon for its time, its caliber was 30.5 centimeters and it was 10 meters long and 48,300 kilograms in weight.

In June 1898, during the naval blockade of Havana, during the Spanish-Cuban-American war, the Ordoñez fired at the US cruiser Montgomery, and there is a plaque at the site that tourists can photograph.

Its 457 rooms, including 15 suites and one presidential suit, welcomed major Mexican artists like Mario Moreno

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(Cantinflas), Pedro Vargas, Tin-Tan and Maria Felix, as shown in the photo exhibition at the Gulf Gallery.

Among the divas who stayed at the hotel are Libertad Lamarque, Rita Hayworth and Ava Gardner, as well as the famous "top models" Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell.

The presidential suite, still active, welcomed leaders of the time such as Sir Winston Churchill, who was the prime minister of England; the king and queen of Belgium and several of heads of State who visited Cuba.

A point of reference for international tourism and entertainment until the 1950s, the Hotel Nacional de Cuba also opened its doors to the famous US swimmer Johnny Weismuller, the legend of professional boxing Rocky Marciano, and major scientists like Alexander Fleming, who discovered the penicillin.

Therefore, the hotel's greatest attraction is precisely the history enclosed between its walls, silent witnesses of the passing of personalities of the most diverse nature, from political leaders to artists, famous athletes and sinister figures of the US mafia.

In addition, it stands out as a traditional venue for events of international fame, including the Festival of New Latin American Cinema.

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