

# *Havana's Cathedral Square still Hosts Splendor*

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For first time visitors, and indeed, for the many tourists who keep coming back to our wonderful Havana, Cathedral Square or Plaza de la Catedral, in Old Havana, is the stuff of which memories are made.

Cathedral Square is one of the five main squares in Old Havana. and the site of the Cathedral of Havana from which it takes its name. Originally a swamp, after draining, the square was appropriately called la Plaza de la Cienaga. following the construction of the Cathedral in 1727, it became the site of some of the city's grandest mansions, such as the Palacio del Conde Lombillo, in front of which there is a statue of the flamenco dancer Antonio Gades.

The Cathedral of The Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception of Havana, or La Catedral de la Virgen María de la Concepción Inmaculada de La Habana, is one of eleven Roman Catholic cathedrals on the island. The building, in the Baroque style with [Tuscan](#) elements, was constructed of [coral](#) cut from the ocean floor of [Gulf of Mexico](#). You can see marine fossils on the outer walls.

The Tuscan features are the bell-towers, the one on the right is wider than the left. The larger tower has two bells that were cast with gold and silver mixed into bronze to give them an elegant, sweet tone.

Despite its grandiose exterior, the inside of the building is in austere [neoclassical](#) style consisting of white and black marble floors, three [naves](#) covered with wooden [vaults](#), and massive stone pillars. There are

eight chapels.

Walking around the sides of the chapels and altars of the cathedral, one can find paintings by Baroque artists Peter Paul Rubens and Bartolomé Esteban Murillo.

Above the altar three fading frescoes can be found by Italian artist Giuseppe Perovani—The Delivery of the Keys, The Last Supper and The Ascension. A statue of St. Christopher by Spanish artist Martín de Andújar Cantos, the namesake of the cathedral, can be found to the right of the altar. A hot-spot for flocks for pilgrims and tourists alike.

UNESCO designated both the Cathedral of Havana and the whole of Old Havana itself, World Heritage Sites in 1982.

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