

Angerona, the old coffee plantation near Havana



The Antiguo Cafetal Angerona, 5km west of Artemisa was one of Cuba's earliest coffee plantations or *cafetales* and it was the most important one in the western part of Cuba in the first half of the 19th century. It's now a national monument.

Erected between 1813 and 1820 by German Cornelio Souchay and his Haitian lover Ursula Lambert, Angerona once employed 450 slaves tending 750,000 coffee plants. The ruins of the manor house, the overseer's house, restored some years ago, the water collection systems, the slaves' barracks and the walls of the confinement cells, the watch tower and the statue of the Goddess Angerona, are witness to the splendor and wealth of the property.

The estate is mentioned in novels by Cirilo Villaverde and Alejo Carpentier, and James A Michener devotes several pages to it in *Six Days in Havana*. It's a quiet and atmospheric place that has the feel of a latter-day Roman ruin. The manor house was built in neoclassical style, evident in the rhythm of the arches and the columns in the façade. The doors and windows were grandiose and there are Spanish traditional elements like the banisters and window grills.

Since 1969 and with the support of the Municipal Division of Culture in Artemisa, many dance and music groups perform here. Several folk bands have participated in what is known as the Angerona Folk Feast.

Visitors should look for the stone-pillared gateway and sign on the right after you leave Artemisa.

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