



9.4 Ongoing restoration project, Havana.

sugar, petrochemical and oil refining, textiles, metals (including nickel, copper, chrome, silver, iron and manganese), chemicals, paper and wood products, cement, fertilizers, and consumer products.

Cuba is in an economic transition caused by the collapse of the former Soviet bloc. Figures from 1988 indicate that the Soviet Union accounted for 65 percent of Cuba's exports. In 1995, Havana announced that the GDP had declined by 35 percent in the period from 1989 to 1993. This is the result of lost Soviet support by means of soft loans and higher prices for Cuban products. In response to this, Havana has focused on attracting investment through real estate joint ventures. This has created a new market for housing directed to foreigners, and with the UNESCO designation of Havana as a World Heritage City in 1982, tourism has become a major growth industry in Cuba. Foreign investment and tourism bring with them both the hope of economic prosperity and the threat of harm to the architectural treasure that is Havana. The ability to balance the demands of capital with historic conservation is the major issue facing the city today.

Christopher Columbus discovered Cuba in 1492. Before Spanish occupation, it was the home to Carib and Arawak peoples. The town of San Cristóbal de la Habana, founded in 1514, was the westernmost city under the control of Diego Velázquez. The first settlers abandoned the original site of settlement after several unsuccessful attempts, and established the location of the present city in 1519 next to the port of Carenas. With the opening up of the New World, the deep-water, protected port in Havana became a strategic stop for traders. The Spanish colonization of South America saw tremendous wealth pass through Havana on its way back to