



Journey to Havana, Cuba

Empire State

A People to People Educational exchange

Sunday March 8 - Saturday March 14 2015 – Itinerary Subject to Change

Organized by Cuba Cultural Travel

Sunday March 8

Participants will fly independently to Miami and congregate at the **Fairfield Inn & Suites** located near the airport at 4101 NW 11th Street, Miami 33126. 786-456-2100. Accommodations for the night in Miami will be included in the cost of the trip.

Day 1

Monday March 9

8:30 am

Meet in lobby of the hotel for our bus transfer to airport. Our flight from Miami to Havana is on **ABC Charter flight #AA9450**, operated by American Airlines. Check-in is located in **Concourse D**. Enter through Door 1 and check-in at the AA counter.

ABC Charters has the following luggage policy: All additional luggage fees must be paid in cash at the time of check-in. One carry-on and one personal item at no charge. 1st checked bag; \$20.00. Each additional checked bag; \$20.00. 70 lbs max weight per bag. 44 lbs allowed free; \$2.00 per pound over (including carry-on). No luggage fees apply on your return to Miami. *Please be aware that in the event of a full flight into Havana you may be required to check your carry-on luggage for an additional \$20.00 fee.*

11:30 pm

Depart for Havana. Flight time is 1 hour.

12:30 pm

Arrive in Havana. Clear immigration and customs and baggage, a process that takes about an hour and a half.

Lunch at the famous **El Aljibe**. Cuban food at its best; the roasted chicken soaked in orange garlic sauce is a favorite, located in the Havana neighborhood of Miramar, home to many embassies and residences of foreign diplomats

On the way into Havana we will stop by **Plaza de la Revolucion**, one of Havana's most active public squares. Our bus tour of Havana continues from Miramar along the Malecon to El Morro where we will make a quick stop to see the Havana skyline and harbor.

Check into **Hotel Parque Central**. This five star hotel is considered the finest hotel in Havana and perfectly located in the central part of Havana. Your bags will be dropped off at the hotel and will be waiting for you upon check-in while we explore the historic area surrounding the hotel.

Hotel Parque Central ★★★★★

Neptuno, esquina Prado y Zulueta, Havana, Cuba, Havana 10100, Cuba
Tel. 53 7 860 6627

All rooms include a safe deposit box free of charge.

4:00 pm Architecture walking tour guided by Architect **María Elena Martín**. Meet in the lobby of the hotel. We will walk around the historic area surrounding the hotel. We will visit Havana's **Central Park** and the first monument erected in Cuba (1904), dedicated to National hero Jose Martí. Visit to the former **Centro Gallego, Capitolio Nacional**, Walk along the **Paseo de Martí (Paseo del Prado)**. Visit the recently restored lavish **Palacio de los Matrimonios**, the former **Casino Español of Havana, Sevilla Hotel** and the **Baccardi building**.

Return to Hotel.

7:00pm Meet in hotel lobby and walk across the street to **Centro Asturianos** for a private musical performance and dinner. Our evening begins with demonstrative lecture on **Cuban Music** at Bar Asturias by **Prof. Alberto Faya** who since 1973 has been working as a musician, professor and researcher within the Cuban musical world. He has won national awards in music and musicology. He will be joined by a trio of musicians who will take us on a musical journey through the history of Cuba. This will be an interactive experience, with the audience encouraged to engage the lecturers and musicians.

8:00pm Welcome dinner at **American Club Asturiano**.

(L,D)

Day 2 Tuesday March 10

Complimentary breakfast is served at the restaurant on the lobby level from 7am to 10 am.

9:00am Lecture by Prof. Carlos Alzugaray Treto on **U.S./Cuba Relations**. Professor Alzugaray was the Former Cuban Ambassador to the European Union and former Director of the Institute of Foreign Relations. Professor Alzugaray will be accompanied by several English speaking students from Institute of Foreign Relations. Professor Alzugaray will then lead a question and answer session with the group and we have time for open dialogue and exchange. This presentation will take place in a conference room in the Parque Central.

10:30am Walking tour of **Havana Vieja** with **Juan A. Triana**, of *Instituto Superior Politecnico and Ciencias Sociales*. Make sure to wear comfortable shoes! We will be accompanied by Juan A. Triana who will explain the new economic reforms including visits to state ration stores and new private businesses.

11:30am We will meet with the Director at the **Escuela de Taller** where we will learn about the Restoration Project that is underway in Havana Vieja. This urban rehabilitation project is preserving the architectural history and cultural heritage of this beautiful city. We will visit a construction site and meet with engineers, builders, woodworkers and other craftsman utilizing traditional handcrafting methods to preserve the authenticity of these once – and soon to be once again - resplendent structures. Faced with challenges such as lack of materials, tools, equipment and even vehicular access to some of these sites, these monumental projects are a testament to the indomitable Cuban spirit to succeed in the face of adversity.

12:30pm Visit to **Fototeca**, the leading photographic guild in Cuba and the most prestigious venue for showcasing work from leading Cuban photographers. We will be received by **Nelson Ramírez**, who is Director of Fototeca and a very successful photographer. Nelson and his wife **Liudmila** have recently been selected to represent Cuba at the **Venice Biennale**. Nelson will be joined by fellow photographers who help us understand the professional challenges of being an artist in Cuba, government censorship issues, and building professional relationships without the use of the internet.

Visit the **Plaza Vieja**. This plaza is the oldest plaza in Havana, dating from the 16th century.

1:30pm Lunch at **Paladar Los Mercaderes**. This newly opened private restaurant in Havana Vieja is receiving rave reviews for its excellent food, service and ambience.

3:00pm Visit the **Taller de Grafica Experimental**. The Taller is Havana's printmaking and lithographic workshop. It is a studio, a school and most of all, an art institution that preserves and develops the sophisticated art of print making with relative freedom of spirit and form. We will be welcomed by artist **Yamilis Brito** and several fellow printmakers that belong to the guild. The artists will display their works and be available for personal exchanges.

Optional visit to the **Wifredo Lam Center**. The Wifredo Lam Center of Contemporary Art is a cultural institution dedicated to the study, research and promotion of contemporary visual arts from developing countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Caribbean. An extensive and valuable collection of contemporary visual artworks allows the Center to exhibit regularly in Cuba and abroad.

Optional visit to the **Galería Diago**, specializing in Afro-Cuban folk art. The shop next door sells movie posters from Cuba's extensive movie archives, silk screens, and the two volume book on Cuban folk painting, **Arte Magico de Cuba**.

Return to the Hotel at your own pace.

8:00pm Dinner at the famous **La Guarida Restaurant**. One of the best restaurants in Havana and famous not only for its delectable dining, but also as the location for the film "Strawberry and Chocolate." It is housed on the third floor of a large, old town house carrying the charming ambience of the 1920's.

Visit **Fabrica de Arte Cuba**. This former warehouse has been renovated and now boasts several thousand square feet of exhibition and performance space.

(B,L,D)

Day 3 Wednesday March 11

10:00am Lecture with **Rafael M. Hernandez** is a historian, author, and editor of **Temas**, a Cuban quarterly in the field of social sciences and humanities. Rafael co-authored "The History of Havana" and has recently returned to Cuba after role as adjunct professor at Columbia University.

11:15am Visit the **Museum of Cuban Art** with art historian **Nelson Herrera**. The museum is dedicated exclusively to Cuban Art from the earliest days of colonialism to the latest generation of Cuban artists.

1:00pm Enjoy a traditional Cuban **lunch** overlooking the Straits of Florida, at **La Barraca** restaurant at the historic **Hotel Nacional de Cuba**. Sit under the *palapas*, feel the ocean air and dine on traditional Cuban fare.

2:30pm Tour of **modern architecture** in Western Havana with **Architect Pedro Vazquez Rodriguez**, Founding Member of Cuba's National Union of Architects and Engineers. Few people realize the important place Havana holds as a treasure trove of 20th Century architecture. Pedro will highlight some of the best examples to be found in this incredibly diverse area of the city, including the **University of Havana** and the **Christopher Colon Cemetery**.

4:00pm **7ma y 60**. This is an art studio of four young and very talented Cuban artists: **Adrian Fernandez, Alex Hernandez, Frank Mujica, and Maria Cienfuegos**, who belong to an emerging constellation within the island's contemporary visual arts scene. By three different mediums (photography, painting, and drawing) and refine technique, the artists explore conflicts and problems existing in present day Cuba. The artists will receive us in their studio space and discuss their work.

Return to the hotel.

7:30 pm Depart for dinner at the **Casa Miglis** awarded best Paladar in Central Havana. The eclectic Scandinavian menu is set in a classical Swedish environment with a Cuban touch.

9:00 pm Following dinner we will enjoy a private performance at the **Hotel Capri** rooftop by the group known as **TradiSon**, playing traditional Cuban songs similar to the Buena Vista Social Club.

(B,L,D)

Day 4 Thursday March 12

10:00am Walk across the street from the hotel and attend a private dance performance of the **Compania Irene Rodriguez**. We will receive a warm welcome by **Irene Rodriguez** and her company at the **Centro Asturianos**. Irene is considered by many to be the finest flamenco dancer in Cuba. Irene will introduce the dancers, many of whom speak English; describe the history of her own dance career and formation of her independent dance company; and discuss the cultivation of artistic talent in Cuba, opportunities and challenges of being a professional dancer, and the arts more generally in Cuba.

11:30am Board our bus and depart for the neighborhood of Playa for our meeting at the **Organizacion Nacional de Bufetes Colectivos**. This Cuban Law Collective offers various legal assistance and representation to Cuban citizens, legal aliens and Cuban residents living abroad, for the means of arbitration, court hearings, customs, registry and other State institutions. Topics include the structure of the Cuban legal system, lawyer regulation, dispute-settlement procedures and a description of typical cases handled by the Law Colectivo.

1:00pm **Lunch** at the whimsical home of artist **Jose Fuster** who has made a major contribution to rebuilding and decorating the fishing town of Jaimanitas, in the outskirts of Havana, where he lives. Jaimanitas is now a unique work of public art where Fuster has decorated over 80 houses with colorful ornate murals and domes. Jose and his son Alex have invited friends and neighbors to share and discuss the public art projects and the impact on Jaimanitas and beyond.

Visit to **Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA)**. One of the few major architectural projects completed in Cuba in the early 1960s, this remarkable post-revolution campus is the premier school in Cuba for students studying music, visual arts and performing arts.

Return to Hotel. Remainder of afternoon free.

8:00pm Dinner at **Dona Carmela**. Located in a private home, the charming backyard dining area is a wonderful backdrop for the home cooked, family style meal.

Optional late night entertainment: Visit the cool bohemian club **El Gato Tuerto** ("**One-eyed Cat**"), a laid back venue featuring various styles of traditional Cuban music from sultry Boleros known as **Feeling**, a soul-like genre heavily influenced by jazz, and **Trova**, another unique musical style that gained its popularity in the 70s.

(B,L,D)

Day 5 Friday March 13

10:00am **Lecture by Cuban Law Professor** from the **Bufete Especializado de Casación** (Specialists in annulling or repealing a law or reversing a judicial sentence). This lecture will take place in a conference room at the Parque Central.

Artist studio visit with sculptor **Wilay Mendez** and contemporary painter **Antonio Jimenez**.

Lunch on your own.

Optional visit to the **Arts and Crafts market**, a great place to interact with local, everyday artisans. You'll find just about anything here, and can find souvenirs or gifts for your friends and family back home.

8:00pm Farewell dinner and celebration at **Paladar San Cristobal**. This cozy paladar has a reputation of excellence in both atmosphere and local cuisine. The food is refined and balanced (enjoy dishes like gazpacho, tender lobster, crème caramel) and the nostalgic atmosphere is unforgettable, adorned in a unique style of art nouveau.

Optional: Enjoy an evening of music at **Habana Café**, a venue that features a nightly variety-type show that includes Cabaret dancers combined with comedy and music. With a 1950's, nostalgic décor, **Habana Café** attracts locals and tourists alike. Be ready to get on the dance floor and dance all night to the rhythm of great Caribbean music.

(B,D)

Day 6 Saturday March 14

12:30pm Check out of the hotel and depart for the airport.

3:40pm Flight departs Havana for Miami on **ABC Charter Flight #AA9471**, operated by American Airlines. Flight duration is 1 hour.

4:40pm Arrive in Miami. Clear customs and connect with flights home.

(B)

**Tips may be given to your Cuban guide and driver at this time. The recommended tip is 5CUC per day, per passenger for your guide and 3CUC per day, per passenger for your driver.*

BE SURE TO COLLECT YOUR BELONGINGS FROM THE SAFE DEPOSIT BOX IN YOUR ROOM

- ✓ PASSPORT
- ✓ VISA
- ✓ PLANE TICKET
- ✓ OFAC LICENSE AND LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION
- ✓ 25 CUC DEPARTURE TAX (TO BE PAID AT THE AIRPORT)

**Please Note: This is a "Working" Itinerary. There may be some changes, additions and/or subtractions to the Final Itinerary. All venues and artist's studios are subject to final confirmations. Be assured that any changes made will be done to enhance the total program, and to promote a smooth operation of the tour.*

Note about Purchasing Art in Cuba:

The U.S. Government allows US travelers to bring back an unlimited amount of Cuban art and informational materials such as books and CDs. If you feel you might be interested in purchasing art during your stay in Cuba you should carry additional money to pay on the spot. Your hotel rooms includes a safe deposit box in which you can keep your valuables safe.

Acquiring additional money via an ATM machine in Cuba is not possible. Some of the more established artists could possibly have U.S. bank accounts in which the payment can be wired. The art can normally be brought home and payment sent at a future date. Our first recommendation is that you bring additional cash.

Note about bringing Gifts to Cuba:* *Anything will be much appreciated, including simple things that are difficult to procure such as:*

- Laundry soap
- Bathing soap, razors, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo
- Seasoning and spices
- Batteries (AA or AAA)
- Socks & shoelaces
- Reading glasses
- OTC medicines such for cough, flu, headache, diarrhea, allergies.
- School supplies such as pens, pencils, paper.

**If questioned by officials when arriving to Cuba please do not state that the items are donations.*

