



# Cuba People & Culture: Havana, Trinidad & Cienfuegos

10 days | 13 days with West Cuba extension

Meeting students who are learning how to restore and preserve Havana's historic buildings. Taking in a Buena Vista Social Club-style performance at a 1950s-inspired cafe. Learning how to salsa dance—and play dominoes—under the tutelage of master teachers. Through these and countless other interactions with welcoming locals, get to know Cuba at its most authentic as you soak in the country's legendary, energetic culture.



## Your tour package includes

- 9 nights in handpicked hotels
- 9 breakfasts
- 7 lunches
- 9 dinners with beer or wine
- 1 food tasting
- 19 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach

## Included highlights

- Old Havana
- Dominoes lesson
- Museum of the Revolution
- Afro-Cuban Roots Community
- Ernest Hemingway's home at Finca Vigía
- Remedios baseball experience
- Salsa lesson
- Coffee farm visit
- Bay of Pigs
- Vintage car ride

## Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for about 3 hours daily across mostly flat terrain, including paved roads with some hills and stairs.

## Group size

12–22

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## Havana → 3 nights

### Day 1: Arrival in Havana & Life in Cuba Today visit

*Included meals: welcome dinner*

*Please note: Due to the nature of travel to Cuba, the itinerary may vary depending on departure.*

Welcome to Cuba! Arrive in Havana and transfer to your hotel before meeting with a local artist or photographer for an interactive discussion about what life is like in Cuba.

Tonight, enjoy an included welcome dinner with your group.

### Day 2: Sightseeing tour of Old Havana

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Get to know the UNESCO-listed neighborhood of Old Havana, the heart of the Cuban capital, with a local architect leading the way.

- Engage in open discussions about recent restoration projects in Havana as you walk along the colorful main streets
- Pass through Plaza de Armas, the neighborhood's oldest square, as well as Plaza de San Francisco de Asís and Plaza de la Catedral
- Stop in a scenic park to learn the game of dominoes, a beloved Cuban pastime, from a local dominoes champion

After enjoying an included lunch at a local restaurant, continue your exploration of Havana.

- Enter the Museum of the Revolution, housed in the former Presidential Palace
- Learn about the Fidel Castro-led overthrow of Fulgencio Batista's government, as well as the Cuban perspective on the revolution
- Admire the museum's beautiful interior details, from the replica of Versailles' Hall of Mirrors to decorations done by New York's Tiffany Studios
- Engage in insightful conversations with locals at Arte Corte, a community project centered around a hair salon and barber school

Tonight, enjoy dinner at one of the city's small, family-run restaurants known as paladares. Then, tap your toes and sway along as local musicians perform songs inspired by Buena Vista Social Club, a group of Cuban musicians whose self-titled, 1997 debut album sold millions of copies around the world.

### Day 3: Afro-Cuban cultural visits & Finca Vigía

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, tasting, dinner*

Today, learn more about the diverse lives of people in Havana.

- Head to the district of Guanabacoa, one of the city's centers of Afro-Cuban culture
- Enter the Guanabacoa Museum and learn about Afro-Cuban religion and ceremonies
- Stroll the alleys to get a taste of everyday life
- Sit down for a lunch of traditional Afro-Cuban food
- Listen to the sounds of Afro-Cuban music while you enjoy lunch and a taste of Aguardiente liquor

This afternoon, get a look at some of Cuba's world-famous cultural touchstones.

- Meet with a local historian at Finca Vigía, where Ernest Hemingway wrote some of his most famous works
- Enjoy an engaging discussion about the importance of Hemingway's novels in Cuba and the U.S.
- View Hemingway's famous boat, Pilar, in the home's backyard
- Transfer to the Castillo de los Tres Reyes del Morro, an old Spanish fortress that was built to protect Havana's harbor

Tonight, head to the historic Hotel Nacional to learn about its significance and sip Cuba's signature drink, the mojito. Then, sit down for an included dinner.

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## Remedios → 2 nights

### Day 4: Remedios via Santa Clara

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

En route to Remedios, stop in Santa Clara to visit revolutionary landmarks and get a taste of local music and culture.

- Discuss Cuba's revolutionary history at the Che Guevara Mausoleum
- Walk through Parque Vidal, one of the city's most important parks featuring monuments from various eras
- Enjoy an included lunch, then take in a traditional trova music performance and engage with the musicians

Continue on to Remedios and set off on a sightseeing tour of the city.

- Hop on board a bicycle taxi, known locally as a bicitaxi, for a tour of Remedios
- Head into the main square, where you'll meet your local drivers and share coffee
- Talk with a local guide to learn about the famous Parrandas festival, one of the Caribbean's largest and oldest traditional carnivals with roots stretching back to the 18th century

Sit down for an included dinner this evening at a local paladar.

### Day 5: Sightseeing tour of Caibarién & Remedios

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Head to the agricultural and cultural center of Caibarién this morning.

- Converse with a local artist about Cuba's vibrant creative scene
- Discuss the tools and machinery used in sugar production with local workers at the Marcelo Salado Sugar Mill Museum
- Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, then meet with a parish priest at the Remedios Cathedral to discuss the church's work and community projects
- Enjoy a lively conversation with local baseball coaches at the city's baseball stadium to learn about the importance of the sport in Cuba
- Practice your batting and catching skills during a quick game with the coaches on the field

Gather together at a local paladar for an included dinner this evening.

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## Trinidad → 1 night

### Day 6: Trinidad via Sancti Spíritus

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Make your way to Trinidad, stopping to visit Sancti Spiritus, one of the oldest European settlements in Cuba, along the way.

- Wander through the charming historic center alongside a local guide, engaging in conversation about its architecture and history

- Stroll across Puente Yayabo, an arched bridge that spans the Yayabo River
- Enjoy an open discussion with your guide about restoration projects in the city

Continue on to learn about the history of the frozen-in-time town of Trinidad.

- Enjoy an included lunch at a local paladar
- Explore and discuss the UNESCO-recognized Spanish colonial zone with a local guide
- Pass by Plaza Mayor, the Church of the Holy Trinity, Brunet Palace, Sánchez Iznaga Mansion, and the bell tower of the old San Francisco Convent
- Meet and interact with local artists in Trinidad to learn about their lives, work, and inspiration

Tonight, learn how to salsa dance alongside local masters, and engage with the performers during a demonstration. Then, enjoy an included dinner at a local paladar followed by a group drink at the Escalinata de la Casa de la Música.

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## Cienfuegos Region → 2 nights

### Day 7: Coffee farm walk, transfer to Cienfuegos & sightseeing tour

*Included meals: breakfast, tasting, lunch, dinner*

This morning, head north of Trinidad to tour a coffee farm alongside local farmers.

- Talk about coffee production, as well as struggles that are unique to Cuban coffee farmers, as you walk the grounds together
- Enjoy a tasting of fresh, home-roasted coffee

Make your way to the bayside city of Cienfuegos and enjoy an included lunch before heading out on a unique sightseeing tour.

- Set off on a walking tour of the downtown area and admire the colonial style architecture
- Make your way through José Martí Square and view the cathedral before passing by Teatro Tomás Terry and the neo-Gothic Palacio de Valle
- Meet with local shop owners and residents to learn more about their daily lives

This evening, head to a local paladar for an included dinner with your group.

### Day 8: Sightseeing tour of the Bay of Pigs & snorkeling

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Spend the day exploring the infamous Bay of Pigs, and converse with local experts to learn about its historical significance and marine ecosystems.

- Engage in a discussion with locals to learn about the failed, 1961 U.S.-backed Bay of Pigs invasion from their perspectives
- Sit down for an included lunch at Caleta Buena
- Join in a discussion with a local marine biologist about the bay's impressive marine ecosystem
- Snorkel among the peaceful bay's well-preserved coral reefs and colorful marine life

*Please note: Snorkeling equipment will be provided on-site at the Bay of Pigs.*

Return to Cienfuegos and sit down for an included dinner at a local paladar.

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## Havana → 1 night

### Day 9: Transfer to Havana, cigar factory & vintage car ride

*Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner*

Make your way back to Havana for an afternoon of quintessentially Cuban experiences and insightful interactions with locals.

- Meet and converse with staff at a local cigar factory to see how Cuba's most famous export is made from start to finish
- Engage with local artisans at the Almacenes San José Artisans' Market
- Exchange ideas about art with the artisans, and shop their locally made goods
- Get to know expert auto mechanics at a restoration garage and converse with them about how they maintain Havana's iconic, vintage cars
- Grab a seat in one of the cars and go for a cruise through the beautiful Miramar neighborhood and along the seaside, interacting with your local driver as you ride along

Celebrate your trip with your group at tonight's farewell dinner featuring live performances of traditional Cuban music.

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## Flight Home

### Day 10: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast*

Transfer to the airport for your flight home or continue on to explore West Cuba.

*Go Ahead Tours is pleased to offer educational and cultural exchanges to Cuba. Go Ahead Tours qualifies for the people-to-people general license established by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the U.S. Department of the Treasury ("OFAC"). Under this license, Go Ahead Tours will offer educational and cultural exchanges and conversations with the people of Cuba. The itinerary is subject to change based on day of week and availability, but a complete people-to-people itinerary will always be maintained.*

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## + West Cuba extension

Continue your exploration of Cuban culture, and spend time with knowledgeable locals, in West Cuba. Home to historic sites and picturesque landscapes, the country's quiet and scenic western side offers plenty of outdoor activities, such as scenic boat rides and snorkeling, as well as opportunities to learn about agricultural practices and marine ecosystems from skilled local farmers and scientists.

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## Viñales → 1 night

### Day 10: Transfer to Viñales, tobacco farm visit & boat ride

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Make your way to Viñales and take in some of the country's more unique landscapes. Then, get to know the different sides, and welcoming people, of West Cuba.

- Visit a tobacco farm, where you can watch a farmer roll cigars by hand
  - Meet and converse with a tobacco farmer to learn about the production of the highly prized product
  - Enjoy a locally made Cuban cigar if you'd like
- Head further into the UNESCO-listed Viñales Valley to uncover its beauty.
- Enjoy lunch at an organic farm overlooking the lush valley
  - Engage with the farm's owners and staff to learn about their organic farming practices
  - Travel to Cueva del Indio, the ancient home of Cuba's indigenous habitants
  - Board a boat and cruise through the cave via an underground river to admire cave paintings and archeological remains, conversing with your guide about the region's history as you float along
- Later, sit down for an included dinner.
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## Cayo Levisa → 1 night

### Day 11: Transfer to Cayo Levisa

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Board a ferry and travel to the beautiful Cayo Levisa, where you'll meet local people and discuss wildlife and conservation efforts along Cuba's coast.

- Join a local marine biologist for a fascinating discussion about the north coast's coral reefs
- Chat with locals to find out what it's like to live on Cayo Levisa
- Spend time snorkeling, swimming, or relaxing in what will feel like your own private paradise
- Take time to savor all the natural wonders, including marine life, birds, mangroves, and pine forests
- Enjoy a buffet lunch at the island's resort

*Please note: Snorkeling equipment and instruction are provided, and additional activities can be purchased at the diving center.*

Sit down for an included dinner with your group this evening.

- View the ruins of slaves' stone cells, as well as the former master's house
- See the enormous tajona, or grindstone, that was used to crack the coffee beans

Continue on to Havana and enjoy a farewell dinner as you celebrate your trip with your fellow group members.

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## Flight Home

### Day 13: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

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## Havana → 1 night

### Day 12: Havana via Las Terrazas & coffee plantation

*Included meals: breakfast, tasting, lunch, dinner*

On your way back to Havana, stop to learn about Fidel Castro's "Green Revolution" and Cuba's part in the slave trade.

- Visit the UNESCO-listed Las Terrazas Biosphere Reserve and talk with an expert about the successful reforestation project
- Learn how the mountains, ruined by Spanish loggers and hurricane damage, were salvaged with the planting of more than six million varieties of trees
- Interact with local artisans who call the community home, and learn about their work
- Step inside a local's home to learn more about the Las Terrazas community while sipping coffee and engaging in conversation

After an included lunch at a local restaurant, head to the Buenavista Coffee Plantation, the first of its kind in Cuba.

- Chat with a local guide during a tour of the partially restored plantation, which was started by French refugees after neighboring Haiti gained independence
- Engage in a discussion about Cuban plantation slave labor with your guide