


TRIP NOTES

CUBANIA CLASSIC CYCLE

A two week cycling holiday discovering the culture, natural beauty and Revolutionary history of Western and Central Cuba.

 DURATION	 ACTIVITY LEVEL	INCLUDED
15 DAYS	MODERATE	    

HIGHLIGHTS

- Cycle on Cuba's uncrowded highways and backroads.
- Get to know Cuba's exciting and picturesque capital city, Havana.
- Cycle amid the dramatic and beautiful Viñales Valley in Western Cuba.
- Dance and soak up the atmosphere of Trinidad, World Heritage Site.
- Learn all about this unique country, it's history and way of life.
- Enjoy the rare opportunity to interact with rural Cuba.



WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Transfers from airport upon arrival and departure.
- Transfer of luggage throughout but not hotel portage.
- Bike Hire: Trek hybrid 8.3 DS bikes with front fork suspension.
- Accommodation: 6 nights in hotels, 8 nights in casas particulares on B&B basis.
- Meals: all breakfasts, 11 lunches and 3 dinners. Lunches will be in restaurants or picnics depending on the day.
- Entrances to Las Terrazas Biosphere, a tobacco farm, Che Guevara's Mausoleum and museum, trek in Topes de Collantes, Cienfuegos Botanical Gardens.
- Staff: Local English-speaking Cuban guide/mechanic throughout, and driver. Professional mechanic for bike fitting on Day 2. For groups of 8 pax or more, the mechanic will accompany group throughout.
- Transport: all bus transfers in private air-conditioned bus.
- Support: 100% vehicle support during rides.
- Mineral water and local snacks on cycling days.

WHAT ISN'T INCLUDED?

- Flights to and from Cuba.
- Travel/medical insurance (compulsory to provide proof of cover for entry into Cuba).
- Personal expenses (drinks, laundry, phone calls etc).
- Vaccinations.
- Visas (Tourist Cards).
- Cycling helmet (compulsory) and water bottle.
- Tips for guide, driver and local staff. We recommend that each participant contributes a minimum of CUC 40 - CUC 50 to be shared between the local staff.

IS THIS TOUR RIGHT FOR ME?

- Travel style: Cycling
Discover Cuba on a bike while immersing yourself in local culture.
- Difficulty Level: Moderate
You are used to exercising, you do 2 or 3 sessions a week and enjoy being active.
- Group style: Small
4 - 18 people, mixed nationalities and cycling ability. Minimum age 16 years (accompanied by an adult).
- Notes: Predominantly paved roads, small sections of unpaved, with some potholes. Some long bus transfers involved in order to cover large travel distances.



DAY 1

🏠 Hotel or Casa Particular in Havana

ARRIVAL IN HAVANA

Welcome to Cuba! A Cuban representative will meet you upon arrival in Havana before transferring to the start hotel. The largest island in the Caribbean, Hemingway's much-loved abode and one of the last planned economies in the world. You're soon to discover that Cuba is all that and much, much more, but first sit back, relax and enjoy your first night in enchanting Havana.

DAY 2

🏠 Hotel or Casa Particular in Havana 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

BIKE FITTING AND CITY TOUR

This morning we start by getting acquainted with our bikes before setting off on a panoramic tour of Havana. We'll visit the well-to-do 1950s Miramar district, home to some of Havana's most striking 20th century architecture. Keep an eye out for the imposing Russian embassy and the elegant neoclassical homes, many of which are now embassies. We'll then cycle through Parque Metropolitano de la Habana and Nuevo Vedado (home to Havana's middle classes), before stopping at Plaza de la Revolución, the hub of the Castro regime. From here we wheel through young and vibrant Vedado towards the famous *Hotel Nacional*, which has offered shelter to many a celebrity over the years, including Winston Churchill and members of the Mafia. Now we whizz through bustling Centro Habana to the famous Capitolio building, a mirror-image of Washington's Capitol Building. With the Capitolio behind us we veer left down the regal Prado promenade, a favourite with street artists and skateboarders alike. We finish the cycling portion of our tour in Plaza de las Armas. From here we continue on foot to discover Old Havana's four beautifully renovated colonial plazas and stop for lunch in a local restaurant. After lunch, we cycle back to our hotel along Havana's romantic *Malecón*, a seawall that follows the city's entire coastline. Enjoy this evening at leisure.

🚲 34 km ↓↑ +208m -209m



DAY 3

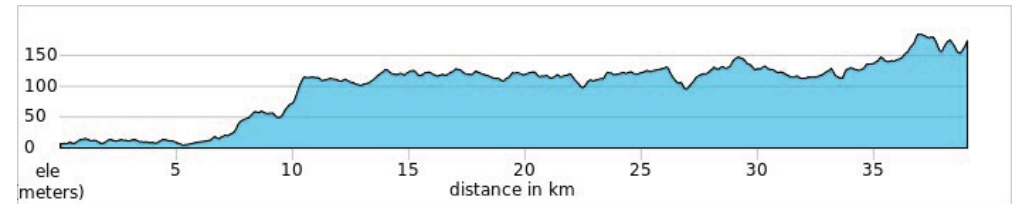
🏠 Hotel or Casa Particular in Soroa 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

TO LAS TERRAZAS ECO-COMMUNITY

Today we wave goodbye to the hustle and bustle of Havana and head west to the calmer climes of Pinar del Rio Province. Once we're outside the city limits we'll saddle up and ride around 40 km through

gorgeous tropical scenery to the Las Terrazas Biosphere Reserve. Upon arrival we'll have lunch and then explore this fascinating eco-resort, once home to one of Cuba's best loved musicians, Polo Montañez. Have a go on Las Terrazas' famous zip-line and take a refreshing dip in the Rio San Juan. Las Terrazas is an enchanting place, but don't fall for it too hard as the only way to join this eco-community is through marriage! Enjoy an evening at leisure in this beautiful Biosphere Reserve.

🚲 40 km ↓↑ +445m -280m



DAY 4

🏠 Hotel Vuelta Abajo Pinar del Rio (or casas in Viñales) 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

TO SAN DIEGO DE LOS BAÑOS

After breakfast we'll be driven to Soroa, home to Cuba's national wine, where we'll saddle up for the day. From Soroa we make our way along the old Havana-Piñar del Rio road through farmland and charming colonial settlements to San Diego de los Baños. Once famed for the healing properties of its waters, San Diego de los Baños is now a sleepy backwater formed of pretty squares and colonial buildings. After a late lunch in this slow-paced town we'll be driven to Piñar del Rio, the capital of Cuba's cigar country. Enjoy the evening at leisure.

🚲 77km ↓↑ +1334m -1445m





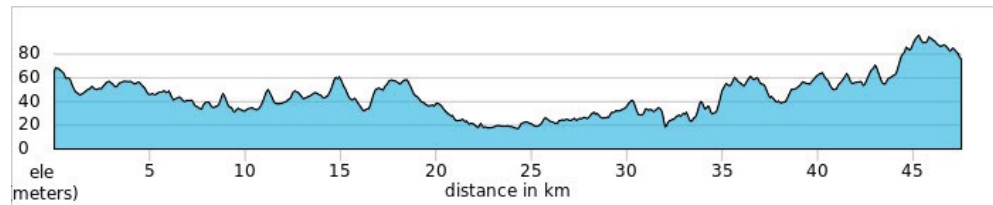
DAY 5

🏠 Casa Particular, Viñales 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

TO VIÑALES

Today we'll be exploring the best tobacco-growing region in the world. We'll begin by riding from Pinar del Rio through the small village of San Luis with its imposing colonial church, before turning left towards San Juan where we'll visit Alejandro Robaina's tobacco farm. Robaina's legendary harvests earned him a reputation as one of Cuba's best tobacco farmers, often referred to as "the Godfather of Cuban tobacco". In 1997 Habanos, the state tobacco company, honoured Robaina by naming a new line of cigars after his farm. After visiting *Vega Robaina* we cycle along country roads to La Guabina, a lakeside cattle ranch with its own small hotel and restaurant. Enjoy a typical Cuban meal in La Guabina's traditional *ranchon*. After lunch we return to Pinar del Rio by bike or bus before transferring to Viñales, a rural valley many consider the most beautiful in Cuba. Tonight we'll be staying in local *casa particulares*, where your hosts will prepare you a delicious homecooked dinner. Despite being a quiet country retreat, Viñales has several venues with live music so if you wander out tonight you're sure to find somewhere to hear some local musicians.

🚲 48 km ↓↑ +307m -298m



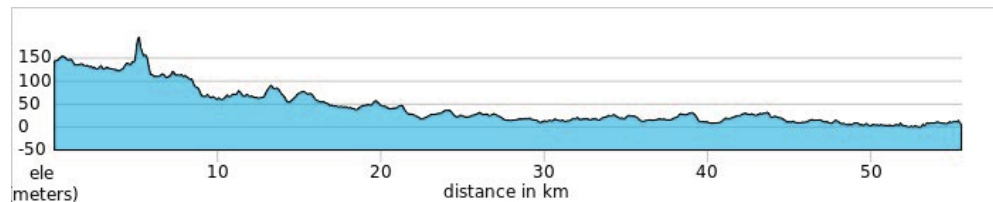
DAY 6

🏠 Casa Particular, Viñales 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

TO CAYO JUTÍAS

Today we cycle from Viñales to Cayo Jutías (via Pons), a 3km-long white sand beach with idyllic turquoise water. Lie back on the sand, bask in the inviting shallows, or discover the *cayo's* underwater life on a snorkelling or scuba diving trip (not included and subject to availability). We'll lunch on the beach and soak in more of Cayo Jutías' delights before transferring back to Viñales for the night.

🚲 56 km ↓↑ +530m -669m



DAY 7

🏠 Hotel or Casa in Santa Clara 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

DRIVE TO SANTA CLARA

Leaving Viñales town in the morning we have a long travel day today as we head eastwards to Central Cuba. Today's journey could take 6 hours in total. We'll have a packed lunch and make some stops along the way, with our guide keeping us entertained with Cuba themed videos and a question session! Arrival in the historic city of Santa Clara where we'll check in to our hotel for the night.

DAY 8

🏠 Casa Particular, Trinidad 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

TO TRINIDAD

This morning we visit the Che Mausoleum, a giant memorial and Che's official resting place since his remains were brought to Cuba from Bolivia in 1997. Located on Santa Clara's impressive Revolution Square, this impressive mausoleum embodies the Cuban revolution and its legacy. From Santa Clara we head to beautiful Topes de Collantes, a natural park in the mountains above Trinidad de Cuba dotted with magical waterfalls and cool pools. You might like to stop for a dip as we go for a walk (approx. 2 hours) on the La Codina trail. After a traditional lunch at the *Hacienda Codina* we head downhill to the charming town of Trinidad, a World Heritage Site and the jewel in Cuba's patrimonial crown. Tonight we'll be staying in *casas particulares*. Accommodation is simple but rooms are clean, with air conditioning and en-suite bathrooms. Enjoy a delicious home-cooked meal at *Casa de Alberto* before heading out to explore Trinidad's vibrant nightlife.

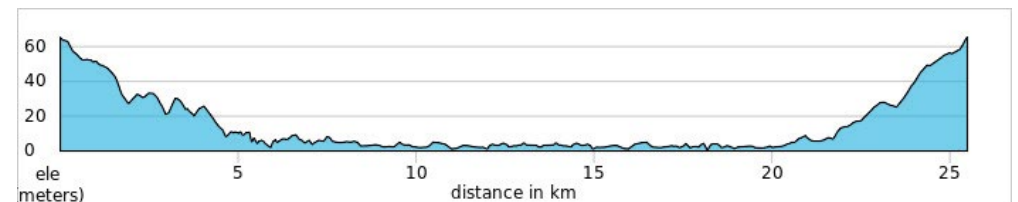
DAY 9

🏠 Casa Particular, Trinidad 🍴 Breakfast

TRINIDAD & PLAYA ANCÓN

This morning we'll have a short and easy ride to the nearby beach at Playa Ancón. After time for a dip in the sea we'll return back via a different route to Trinidad for midday. This afternoon will be at leisure in beautiful Trinidad. Have a stroll around the cobbled streets, visit some of the town's many museums and breathe in the special ambiance of this perfectly-preserved colonial market town. Ask your guide for tips and advice, or for help booking any activities.

🚲 26 km ↓↑ +130m -130m





DAY 10

🏠 Casa Particular, Cienfuegos 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

TO CIENFUEGOS

Today we wave goodbye to Trinidad and hit the saddle for a 66 km cycle to Cienfuegos, stopping first for a look around the botanical gardens just outside the city. Home to more than 2000 different plant species, the garden's collection of 400+ types of orchids is particularly lovely. After lunching in the botanical gardens we transfer to Cienfuegos, Cuba's "Pearl of the South". Home to Cuba's bolero star Benny More, Cienfuegos is renowned for its stylish French architecture and its mini *malecón*, a seawall that goes all around the city's bay. After a quick orientation tour of this World Heritage city we'll check in to our hotel for the night.

🚲 66 km ↓↑ +455m -438m



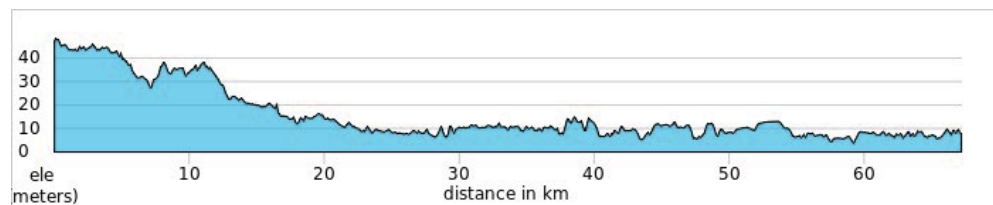
DAY 11

🏠 Casa Particular, Playa Larga 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

TO BAY OF PIGS

Waving goodbye to Cienfuegos, we transfer inland to the small village of Navarra where today's ride begins. Today we'll have a variety of experiences as we cycle through the Zapata Peninsula, a vast marshland home to Cuba's most important bird species and world-renowned as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. We'll stop for a break at Playa Girón, one of the beaches where military forces landed during the Bay of Pigs attack, the failed CIA-backed invasion of Castro's Cuba in 1961. After a bit of history, we'll get back on our bikes for a short ride to our lunch stop at Caleta Buena. Enjoy your midday meal overlooking Caleta Buena's natural sea pool. After lunch we'll transfer to Playa Larga, a beautiful beach that also hosted hostile forces in 1961. Tonight we'll be enjoying local hospitality in *casa particulares*.

🚲 71 km ↓↑ +167m -205m



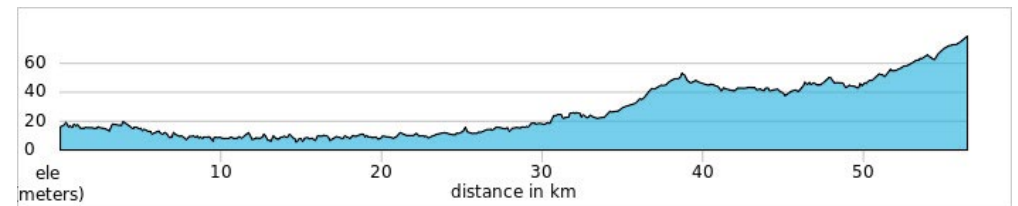
DAY 12

🏠 Hotel or Casa in Matanzas 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

RIDE IN MATANZAS PROVINCE

This morning we start with a transfer to Jagüey Grande, a small town on the north side of the national motorway. It's here that we saddle up and start today's ride through citrus plantations and the small town of Pedro Betancourt (named after a revolutionary major-general in the Cuban war of independence) to our lunch stop, *Finca Coincidencia*. *Finca Coincidencia* is a charmingly eccentric organic farm in the heart of Matanzas province where you can gorge yourself on the farm's varied produce served in ceramic dishes made by the farmer himself. After lunch and a poke around this fascinating farm we transfer to the province's capital, Matanzas. "The City of Bridges", the streets of Matanzas span three different rivers, earning it a reputation as the Venice of Cuba. It has also been called the Athens of Cuba because of the many prominent writers and poets it has produced. Not only this, Matanzas is also the birthplace of two Cuban dances; rumba and danzón, as well as several religions of African origin, making it a vital contributor to Afro-Cuban culture. Though most holidaymakers by-pass Matanzas on their way to Varadero, this small city has plenty to offer.

🚲 57 km ↓↑ +184m -122m



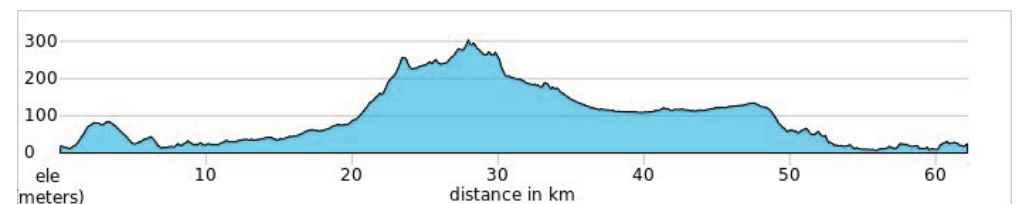
DAY 13

🏠 Casa Particular, Havana 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

TO PLAYA JIBACOA

This morning we'll be getting straight on our bikes and climbing out of Matanzas. Though we may encounter some traffic on the first stretch of our ride, it gets a lot quieter once we turn off at the small town of Ceiba Mocha. From here we ascend the Picadura Valley with gorgeous views, we might stop at one of the small villages along the way to snack on fresh tropical fruit. Our ride ends at the beautiful Jibacoa beach where we'll stop for a bbq lunch, all-inclusive drinks and of course a dip in the sea! After a relaxing afternoon at the beach we will transfer back to Havana in time for a night out.

🚲 62 km ↓↑ +537m -533m





DAY 14

🏠 Casa Particular, Havana 🍳 Breakfast

FREE DAY IN HAVANA

Today you have a free day in Havana. Why not explore Old Havana on foot; it is full of colonial charm and the streets are buzzing with activity. Walk up the famous Malecón coastal road and visit the gardens at the emblematic Hotel Nacional. If you're worn out from your 2 weeks of cycling, you can buy a day pass to relax by the hotel pool (optional). This evening enjoy some of Havana's world-famous live music dance venues or cabaret shows. Ask your guide for their recommendations.

DAY 15

🍳 Breakfast

DEPARTURE DAY

The morning is free for last minute sight seeing or shopping. Check out of your accommodation at midday, so it's *Adiós*, or, as we prefer to say *hasta luego*, see you later! Afternoon transfer (30–40 minutes approx.) to Havana airport. Have a safe onward journey and we very much hope to see you in Cuba again soon.



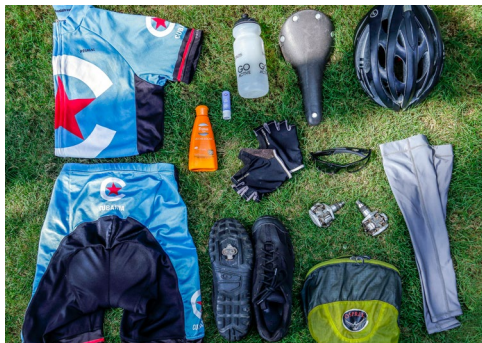
THE CYCLING

- Mostly on paved, quiet rural roads, with some potholes.
- Some challenging climb sections (see daily ride profiles in itinerary).
- No. of days cycling: 10.
- Total Distance: 537 km.
- Average Daily Distance: 53.7km.
- Moderate Pace: approx. 20–25 kmph.
- 100% vehicle support throughout rides—jump on the bus whenever you like!

WHAT TO BRING?

ESSENTIAL PACKING LIST

- Cycling helmet compulsory.
- Water bottle.
- Padded cycling shorts (with loose ‘over–shorts’ if you prefer).
- Lightweight waterproof/windproof top or jacket.
- Breathable clothing.
- High factor sun cream (50+), sunglasses and sun hat.
- Hand sanitizer.
- Insect repellent – tropical strength.
- Long sleeved shirts and light trousers for the evenings.
- A sense of humour and patience are useful in Cuba!



OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Most people bring a small back pack which they keep on the bus for easy access during the day. Typically they will carry a spare T shirt, their valuables, snacks and a camera.
- Shoes with relatively stiff soles are better for biking but are not essential.
- Cycling gloves.
- Comfortable trainers for walking.
- Torch.
- You may like to bring your own pedals and saddle (excluding the seat post) or gel saddle cover to fit to the hire bikes. However, please remember to retrieve your own equipment at the end of the trip!

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Please see our Destination Guide or [website](#) for all Cuba–related practical advice and travel information on our [need to know](#) section. Check with your doctor prior to travel & also your government’s official advice.

ACCOMMODATION

Throughout the tour we stay in a range of accommodation typical to any trip to Cuba, with a mixture of hotels and private accommodation (*Casas particulares*). It’s fair to say that the standard of Cuban accommodation is not always comparable to that which you would expect in other countries owing to years of isolation, under–investment in the country’s infrastructure and effect of the US trade Embargo. Anyone travelling to the island should be prepared to rough it a bit at times! Décor tends to be a little dated, there might be the occasional power cut, and you may find that your water pressure isn’t all it could be. Fortunately, it’s warm enough most days that the lack of hot water is not a major problem!

Most of the hotels we use are 3 star with en suite bathrooms and air conditioning. Depending on the location they are relatively modern international style hotels, traditional colonial hotels, or even a hotel reminiscent of indigenous Cuban culture in Santa Clara.

We use *Casas Particulares* in Viñales, Trinidad, Cienfuegos, Playa Larga and on your return to Havana. Most people love the opportunity this gives to stay in a relatively normal Cuban home and see how Cubans live. These homes are simple compared to ours but the welcome is warm and rooms clean. All the *casas* also have air conditioning en suite bathrooms. You’ll be spoilt at breakfast in the mornings.

FOOD & DRINK

Cuba doesn’t have the same variety of international cuisine we might be used to although in recent years lots of privately run restaurants (*paladars*) have opened (particularly in Havana) offering a wider choice and better quality food than the government run establishments. Think soul food – rice, black beans, slow roast pork and chicken, fresh fish, lobster and plenty of tropical fruit.

For those with special dietary requirements, be prepared for a very limited menu while you are in Cuba. There are very few vegetarians and vegans in Cuba so there are sometimes misperceptions as to what you can eat. Vegetarians often bring snacks and spreads to liven up their meals.

It can also be difficult to find a decent sandwich in Cuba so please don’t give your guide a hard time if he recommends a proper sit–down meal for lunch! Cubans generally eat two full meals a day and don’t have many places that cater for snack lunches yet, so the sandwiches tend to be pretty basic. Some people bring snacks such as protein

bars from home, but this is not strictly necessary as we provide local snacks such as fresh fruit and peanuts on all our rides.

Cuba is the land of the Mojito, Daiquiri and Cuba Libre. You’ll find that plenty of rum–based drinks all over the country with prices ranging from 2–6 CUC for most cocktails. But beware, they don’t use measuring glasses, so they might be stronger than the ones you have tried at home!

GUIDES

All our guides at Cubania are Cuban nationals who are registered with and trained by Cuba’s Ministry of Tourism. They come from all kinds of different personal and professional backgrounds. They’ve been teachers, I.T. professionals, bakers, vets, army officers and even underwear salesmen! What they have in common is that they are all highly educated graduates who are passionate about guiding and proud of their beautiful country. They all speak excellent English and receive annual training in First Aid.

We are especially proud of the training that we have given our bike guides. We are the first travel company in Cuba to take cycling safety seriously and all our bike guides have received Bike Leader certification from British Cycling. Their staff travel to Cuba annually to deliver the training exclusively to our guides. These high standards have been maintained for more than a decade meaning that we are recognised as the most experienced and well–respected cycling company on the island.

For larger groups (over 8 people), a bike mechanic will cycle with the group throughout the itinerary fixing punctures and small mechanical issues on the spot and supporting the lead guide in managing differences in pace between group members.



INTERNET ACCESS

Cuba is one of the last countries on Earth to join the mobile internet so be prepared for a digital detox! 3G Wifi was only introduced in December 2018 and is only accessible through buying and ETECSA Prepaid Internet Card. The cards come in 1 hour and 5-hour denominations and cost CUC1.5/hour (so that's CUC1.5 for 1-hour card and CUC7.5 for a 5-hour card) and are sold at ETECSA offices and hotels across the country. Each ETECSA card has a unique Username (*Usuario*) and Password (*Contraseña*), which you need to log into the ETECSA internet service. You can use the cards on your laptop and your phone.

Make sure you check roaming costs with your service provider before travelling to Cuba. It can be very expensive to connect via roaming.

Since internet access is slow and expensive we recommend you download the following apps before travelling to Cuba:

MAPS.ME

Offline map of Cuba which uses phone grid to pinpoint your location. Great for finding your way round Havana and for navigating your way round the rest of Cuba.

A LA MESA

Offline restaurant and food delivery app. Reviews and contact details of the best places to eat in Havana and other cities throughout Cuba.

SHAZAM

Name that song! Next time you hear that reggaetón hit that's become the soundtrack to your holiday, play it to Shazam and find out what it's called and who sang it.

WHATSAPP/FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM

Cubans are as in love with these apps as you were 15 years ago! They all have them and love using them.

cubaniatravel.com

TRIP EXTENSIONS

PRE OR POST TOUR NIGHTS IN HAVANA

- Choose between hotels in Old Town, Vedado, or Playa district.
- Range of hotels or boutique *Casas Particulares*.

VARADERO BEACH EXTENSION

- Transfers to and from Havana (2 hours) to your choice of all-inclusive hotel at Varadero beach.

CAYO LEVISA BEACH EXTENSION

- Transfers to and from Havana (3 hours) to quiet island retreat in the western Pinar del Rio province.

Please contact us for prices & availability:
sales@cubaniatravel.com

DESTINATION GUIDES

We have created a separate destination guide full of general and practical information relating to visiting Cuba. You can find this in your confirmation email, or ask a member of our staff to send you a copy via email.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Please refer to our website for a full transcript of Cubania Travel booking Conditions:
cubaniatravel.com/need-to-know/booking-conditions

CUBANIA TRAVEL CONTACT DETAILS

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ABTA: Caribbean Biking Company Ltd is a Member of ABTA with membership numbers Y6409 (UK Office) and Y6408 (Cuba Office)