



TRIP NOTES (edited: 22.03.2021)

FAMILY BEACH AND CULTURE

A two-week holiday for the whole family to enjoy Cuba's colonial history and natural beauty.

 DURATION
15 DAYS

 ACTIVITY LEVEL
LEISURELY

 CARBON EMISSIONS
17.5 kg CO2e per day

INCLUDED



HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit 4 UNESCO World Heritage sites, – Havana, Viñales, Cienfuegos and Trinidad.
- Get active: swim in a river, walk in a forest, explore an underground river and ride in a classic car.
- Enjoy relaxing and fun family time on the beautiful beaches of Cayo Levisa.
- Experience staying at traditional family homes.



WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Transfers from airport upon arrival and departure.
- Transfer of luggage throughout but not hotel portorage.
- Accommodation: 5 nights in hotels, 9 nights in *casas particulares* on B&B basis.
- Meals: all breakfasts, 8 lunches and 3 dinners.
- Classic American car tour; entrance to Rum Museum; El Nicho; Topes de Collante National Park; Che Guevara Mausoleum; Las Terrazas Biosphere Reserve; Cueva del Indio; maritime transfers to Cayo Levisa.
- Staff: English-speaking Cuban guide throughout. Driver.
- Transport: all bus transfers in private air conditioned vehicle.

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).
- Tips for guide/local staff. We recommend that each participant contributes a minimum of CUP 1000 – CUP 1250 to be shared between the local staff.

IS THIS TOUR RIGHT FOR ME?

- Travel style: Family holiday
Family holiday offering a variety of activities for all ages whilst exploring the best of Cuban culture and nature.
- Group Style:
Small English speaking.
4 – 18 people of mixed nationalities.
- The tour offers a balance between fun and varied activities for people of all ages whilst seeing the best of Cuban culture and nature. There is also free time built into the itinerary for you to relax or continue exploring as a family.
- If travelling with older children and teenagers, please be aware that accessing the internet will be extremely difficult.
- Hot and humid conditions during summer months. Group Style: Small English speaking.

DAY 1

🏠 Casa Particular, Havana

ARRIVAL IN HAVANA

Welcome to Cuba! A Cuban representative will be waiting for you on arrival at Jose Martí International Airport in Havana. Once you've collected your luggage you'll be transferred to your accommodation with time to relax after your long flight. You can have dinner in town a short walking distance away.

DAY 2

🏠 Casa particular, Havana 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

GUIDED TOUR OF OLD AND NEW HAVANA

After breakfast, your guide will take you on your city tour of old and new Havana, Cuba's capital and the largest city in the Caribbean. Setting off in classic American cars, we enjoy a panoramic view of the city visiting the up-market Miramar district, previously home to the rich and famous of pre-Revolutionary Cuba, then continue to the Museum of the Revolution and the Plaza de la Revolución. The cars will drop you off at the Rum Museum for a short tour to see how Cuba's most famous beverage 'Havana Club' is made. You'll stop for lunch before continuing on foot to visit the heart of the colonial old town and its four main squares. Havana is a bustling capital full of historic monuments, cathedrals and palaces. Preserved by a combination of very little war damage, post Revolution restoration work and the millions of dollars invested since it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982, it's one of the cities with the finest surviving Spanish colonial complexes in the Americas. The rest of the afternoon is free to spend at your leisure. You can have dinner at your casa if you wish or eat out in the old town.

DAY 3

🏠 Casa particular, Havana 🍴 Breakfast

FREE DAY FOR YOU TO CONTINUE EXPLORING HAVANA

Today is free to spend as you wish. You can continue exploring the colonial delights of the old town or venture into Centro Habana or Vedado which are both a short walking distance away. Lunch and dinner are not included today so you can either choose to eat at your casa or you can eat at the many local restaurants available.

DAY 4

🏠 Casa particular, Cienfuegos 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

SWIMMING AT CALETA BUENA EN ROUTE TO CIENFUEGOS

After an early breakfast we depart in the morning for Cienfuegos which is located on the South coast of Cuba, stopping off for lunch (not included) and a swim at Caleta Buena along the way. Our route takes us through the Cienaga de Zapata National Park and the Bay of Pigs which was made famous by the failed CIA backed invasion in 1961. The road along the Bay to Caleta Buena clings to the rocky coastline giving beautiful views of the emerald Caribbean Sea. After lunch and a swim in natural sea pools we continue on to Cienfuegos, a World Heritage Site and once a French settlement for immigrants from Bordeaux and Louisiana. The locals refer to it as *La Perla del Sur* or the Pearl of the South for its beauty and French inspired architecture. The city centre has some fine examples of colonial buildings set around a pretty square. We check into our casas for the night. You can have dinner at one of the local restaurants in town.

DAY 5

🏠 Casa particular, Trinidad 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

VISIT EL NICO WATERFALL, THEN HEAD TO THE COLONIAL TOWN OF TRINIDAD

We leave Cienfuegos and head up into the Sierra del Escambray, Cuba's second highest mountain range. We drive up the winding road into the lush tropical forest, taking in the spectacular views. Our destination is El Nicho, a beautiful waterfall on the Rio Hanabanilla which is reached by a short trail. There are natural pools in which to take a refreshing swim. After a picnic lunch we continue to Trinidad, one of the most famous of Cuba's UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Possibly the best preserved of colonial towns it offers stunning views from virtually every angle with its rows of pastel coloured houses, cobbled streets and pretty squares. Old cadillacs and horse-drawn carriages leave you feeling like you really have been whisked back to place where time has stood still. Playa Ancón, an 8 km white sandy beach is only a short 15-minute drive from the town centre and in the evenings the place really comes alive with live music played in the many mainly open air bars and restaurants centred around the town's two main squares. We check into our local accommodation on arrival and take a tour of Trinidad town.

DAY 6

🏠 Casa particular, Trinidad 🍴 Breakfast

FREE DAY TO EXPLORE TRINIDAD WITH OPTIONS TO GO SWIMMING, TREKKING OR HORSE RIDING

Today is free to spend at your leisure exploring Trinidad or relaxing by the beach. There are a number of excursions you can enjoy including a day trip on a catamaran to the small island keys of Cayo Macho or Cayo Blanco, including a seafood lunch freshly caught en route; alternatively you can take a trekking or horse-riding trip into the mountains surrounding the town stopping off at a waterfall for lunch.

DAY 7

🏠 Hotel los Caneyes, Santa Clara 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

WALK IN ESCAMBRAY MOUNTAINS AND VISIT CHE GUEVARA'S MAUSOLEUM

After breakfast in Trinidad, we depart for the Escambray Mountains, a steep drive to Topes de Collantes about one hour from Trinidad. On arrival, we switch into a local vehicle to go to the start the Guanayara trail which takes us deep into the forest, passing fruit and coffee plantations. We have lots of opportunities to spot Cuba's colourful national bird – the *Tocororo* – with its black, red, white and blue plumage. Half way through the trail we come to El Rocio waterfall and a gorgeous natural pool where you can have a swim. We stop for lunch in a simple country restaurant, and then continue our journey to Santa Clara, about 2 hours away by bus. Santa Clara was the site of the last battle of the Cuban Revolution. In December 1958, Che Guevara and his troops ambushed an armoured train carrying arms to Santiago de Cuba and this was a major turning point in the Revolution. We visit the Mausoleum of Che Guevara and the museum that has many of his former belongings and is a fascinating insight into one of the 20th Century's most revered icons.

DAY 8

🏠 Hotel La Moka, Las Terrazas 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

TRAVEL WEST AND SWIM IN THE SAN JUAN RIVER AT ECO-COMMUNITY LAS TERRAZAS

After an early breakfast we head off to Las Terrazas Community, a biosphere reserve tucked away in the Sierra del Rosario Mountains, arriving in time for a late lunch. The community is a natural area of around 5,000 hectares which is being developed as a sustainable rural economy for eco-tourism. Created after the Revolution to replant the area which had suffered badly from deforestation, it is now a haven for migrating birds from the North. It's a perfect place to spend the day as a family, walking in the hills or swimming in the crystal-clear waters of the San Juan River.

DAY 9

🏠 Casa particular, Viñales 🍴 Breakfast

OPTION TO TRY ZIP-LINING THEN TRAVEL TO VIÑALES

Wake up in Las Terrazas Community, and after breakfast, there will be time to have a go at zip-lining through the forest canopy. An 1500m course with 5 wires takes you right across the Las Terrazas community and lake and is great fun for all, kids and parents alike. Afterwards, we carry on to Viñales where we check into your accommodation for two nights, before exploring the quaint little town. You can have dinner at your casa in Viñales or at one of the restaurants on the main street in town.

DAY 10

🏠 Casa particular, Viñales 🍴 Breakfast

SPEND THE DAY EXPLORING THE FAMOUS TOBACCO GROWING REGION OF VIÑALES

Today we explore Viñales Valley on foot, another of Cuba's UNESCO World Heritage sites located in the Western province of Pinar del Rio. This area is to cigars what France's Bordeaux region is to wines and it is here that the tobacco plants are carefully harvested using traditional methods in order to create the world-class cigars for which Cuba is so famous. Viñales has another-world quality, due to the unique mogotes, strange limestone hillocks that have been formed as a result of erosion during the Jurassic period around 160 million years ago. Our walk takes us to a local fruit farm where you can try natural juices before scrambling up the mountainside to reach a natural tunnel which takes us through to another valley. The scenery is Jurassic and dramatic. In the afternoon you can explore Viñales town or get a day pass to enjoy the swimming pool at La Ermita Hotel. In the evening enjoy live music in one of the bars along Viñales main street.

DAY 11

🏠 Hotel Cayo Levisa 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

CUEVA DEL INDIO – CATCH A BOAT FROM PALMA RUBIA TO THE PARADISE ISLAND OF CAYO LEVISA

After breakfast check out of your casa and head for Cueva del Indio, a natural cave with an underground river. Explore the cave and take an underground boat ride! We leave Viñales for Palma Rubia where a boat will take you to Cayo Levisa, arriving in time for lunch. Cayo Levisa is a beach paradise with 3 km of white sand where you can unwind and enjoy some family time in a truly peaceful and stunning location. The hotel offers full board accommodation.

DAY 12

🏠 Hotel Cayo Levisa 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

FULL DAY ON CAYO LEVISA TO ENJOY ITS WHITE SANDY BEACHES AND TURQUOISE

WATERS Free day to relax on the beach.

DAY 13

🏠 Hotel Cayo Levisa 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

ANOTHER FULL DAY ON CAYO LEVISA

Free day to relax on the beach.

DAY 14

🏠 Casa particular, Havana 🍴 Breakfast

TAKE THE MORNING BOAT BACK TO PALMA RUBIA AND THEN HEAD BACK TO HAVANA FOR YOUR FINAL FREE AFTERNOON

This morning the boat will take you to back to Palma Rubia from where you return to Havana for your last night in the capital. You should arrive back in time for a late lunch and time for some last-minute exploring of the old town.

DAY 15

🍴 Breakfast

FINAL MORNING IN HAVANA AND DEPARTURE DAY

Your final morning in Cuba will give you time to relax, do some final exploring of old Havana or do some souvenir shopping. Your transfer will collect you to take you to the airport for check-in 3 hours prior to departure.

WHAT TO BRING?

ESSENTIAL PACKING LIST

- Small day pack.
- Swimming things and beach towel (consider UVA tops for the children on the beach).
- Light walking boots/trainers for walking
- Light trousers/shorts.
- Lightweight cotton/linen clothes suitable for tropical climates. A jacket or fleece for the cooler evenings from November to March. Avoid bringing expensive or flashy jewellery.
- Sunglasses and cap or sunhat (wide-brimmed hats are best).
- High factor sun cream (SPF 50+), lip salve and mosquito repellent.
- Hand sanitizer.
- Small personal first-aid kit and some tropical strength insect repellent and antihistamines in case of insect bites.
- Camera.
- A sense of humour and patience are useful in Cuba!

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Snacks that your children enjoy (for example cereal or fruit bars).
- Card games for the evening.
- Torch.
- Binoculars.



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.

YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

Cubania has made responsible travel part of everything we do since we first started organizing trips to Cuba; from the local ground staff we employ to the family-run restaurants and B&Bs we use, **we aim to ensure that your money stays in Cuba and supports local businesses.**

We're now going one step further by making a commitment to further reducing our carbon footprint by **measuring the CO2 emissions on each and every trip we offer.**

We teamed up with [ecollective](#), a carbon consultancy specialising in the travel industry to accurately measure the footprint of our trips and our business operations. To do this we looked into the carbon footprint of our entire supply chain from hotels, activities, guide accommodation, included meals and we even included the footprint of our website to name a few. It not only enables our clients to see the carbon footprint of every tour that we run, but it will also show us what we can change in order to further reduce trip based emissions year on year.

Read more about our commitment to sustainability on our website; cubaniatravel.com/sustainability

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 ensuite bathrooms and air conditioning. Depending on the location they are relatively modern International style hotels (Las Terrazas and the beach hotel at Cayo Levisa) whereas the hotel in Santa Clara is inspired by Cuban indigenous culture.

In Havana, Cienfuegos, Trinidad and Viñales we use *casas particulares* – Cuban homestays. 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 an 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. Snacks such as biscuits and crisps are also less varied (and often more basic) than those at home. Whilst there is plenty of fresh fruit, you may want to bring a few snacks that your children particularly enjoy. Beware of ones containing chocolate as it will melt!

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 50–150 CUP 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.

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 CUP25/hour (so that's CUP25 for 1-hour card and CUP125 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.

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](mailto:sales@cubaniatravel.com).

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

sales@cubaniatravel.com
or visit our website cubaniatravel.com

LONDON OFFICE

Office hours: 10.00 – 18.00 (GMT)
Telephone: **+44 (0) 208 355 7608**

HAVANA OFFICE

Office hours: 09.00 – 17.00 (GMT-5)
Telephone: **+53 7 206 9966**

CUBANIA TRAVEL,
Oficina 502, Ed. Santa Clara,
Miramar Trade Center,
Calle 3ra, e/ 76 y 78,
Miramar,
Ciudad de la Habana,
Cuba

24-hour emergency
Telephone in Cuba: **+53 5 287 0805**

Caribbean Biking Company Ltd (Cubania Travel)
UK Registered Company Address: 2 Minton Place,
Victoria Road, Bicester, OXON, OX26 6QB
Company Registration No: 08205075 (England and Wales)

VAT Registration Number: 161 2552 34
ABTA: Caribbean Biking Company Ltd is a Member of
ABTA with membership numbers

Y6409 (UK Office) and Y6408 (Cuba Office)