



TRIP NOTES (edited: 21.11.2023)

# CUBAN ACTIVE ADVENTURE

Cuba from a different perspective – cycling, snorkeling, trekking and kayaking!

 DURATION  
**8 DAYS**

 ACTIVITY LEVEL  
**MODERATE**

 CARBON EMISSIONS  
20.7 kg CO2e per day

## INCLUDED



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Cycle through the streets of Havana.
- Visit Las Terrazas Biosphere Reserve.
- Explore caves in Matanzas province.
- Walk in Topes de Collantes National Park.
- Kayak in the Bay of Cienfuegos.



## WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Transfers from airport upon arrival and departure.
- Transfer of luggage throughout but not hotel portorage.
- Bike Hire: Trek or specialized hybrid bikes with front fork suspension.
- Kayaking equipment (kayak, paddle and life jacket), mask and snorkel.
- Accommodation: 1 night in hotel, 6 nights in casas particulares on B&B basis.
- Meals: all breakfasts, 6 lunches and 4 dinners. Lunches will be in restaurants or picnics depending on the day.
- Vintage American car tour in Havana; entrances to Las Terrazas Biosphere reserve, caves in Matanzas, Che Guevara's Mausoleum and museum; walk in Topes de Collantes National Park.
- Staff: Local English-speaking Cuban active guide throughout, specialized local guides for some activities, driver.
- Transport: all bus transfers in private air-conditioned bus.
- Support: 100% vehicle support during rides.
- Mineral water included during all active 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 50 – 60 EUR to be shared between the local staff.

## IS THIS TOUR RIGHT FOR ME?

- Group Style: Small  
2 – 18 people of mixed nationalities and walking ability. Minimum age 16 years (accompanied by an adult).
- Busy days with a variety of activities, travel and exposure to Cuban culture. You need to be a confident swimmer to participate in the water activities. Hot and humid conditions, especially during summer months.
- You enjoy exercising and being active.

## DAY 1

🏠 Casa Particular, Havana 🍴 Dinner

### ARRIVAL IN HAVANA

Group Transfer from Jose Marti International airport.

Welcome to Cuba! 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 Havana. You'll be staying in a local casa particular, a family-run B&B; the perfect opportunity to experience a Cuban household. Rooms are simple but comfortable with in-suite bathrooms. Head out for dinner in one of Havana's many new paladars – private restaurants – and enjoy a Cuban cocktail with our guide as he/she talks us through the days ahead.

## DAY 2

🏠 Casa Particular, Havana 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### CYCLE TO LAS TERRAZAS; OPTIONAL ZIPLINING; OVERNIGHT HAVANA

This morning we hit the ground running and transfer to the outskirts of Havana to start our ride to Las Terrazas community.

We will be cycling in the Sierra de Rosario; the closest mountain range to Havana and an area UNESCO declared a Biosphere Reserve. The Las Terrazas community was created in 1971 so that farmers in the area who had been living in desperate poverty and isolation could participate in reforestation. Nowadays Las Terrazas is a self-sufficient community surrounded by spectacular landscapes. Enjoy a traditional lunch in a community-run restaurant. After lunch you will have the opportunity to have a swim in the San Juan River or ride Las Terrazas' famous zip line (optional), affording an adrenaline-fuelled panoramic view of this lush biosphere.

Return to Havana, freshen up and head out for dinner together in a local paladar.

🚲 48 km ↓↑ +499m -377m

Link to route: [San Antonio -Las Terrazas](#)



## DAY 3

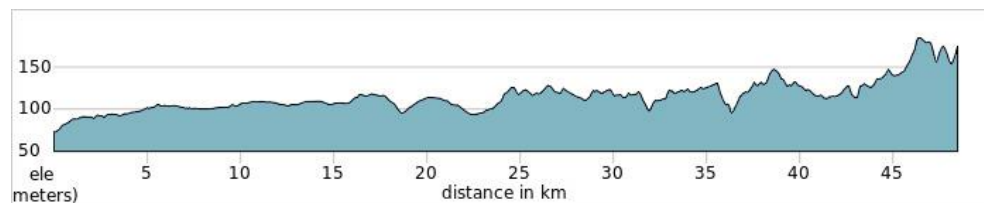
🏠 Casa Particular, Matanzas 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

### HAVANA CITY TOUR BY BIKE; TO MATANZAS

This morning we'll set off on a two-wheel tour of Havana. Cycle Havana's famous Malecon sea wall and visit the well-to-do Miramar district, home to the city's foreign diplomats and some of Havana's most striking 20th century architecture. Keep an eye out for the sprawling and strange Russian embassy. We'll then cycle through Parque Metropolitan de la Habana and Nuevo Vedado before stopping at Plaza de la Revolution, the political heart of Castro's Cuba. From here we wheel through vibrant Vedado towards the famous Hotel Nacional, which has offered shelter to many a celebrity over the years, including Winston Churchill and prominent US mafia members. We finish our cycling tour on the edge of the Old Town next to the Bay of Havana. After lunch in a typical Old Town restaurant, we continue our tour of Havana by foot and in the late afternoon we transfer to Matanzas about an hour from Havana. Check in to our casas particulares for the night. Matanzas is a pretty coastal town, once a busy port and hub for exportation of Cuba's sugar.

🚲 30 km ↓↑ +192m -193m

Link to route: [Havana City Tour by Bike](#)



## DAY 4

🏠 Casa Particulares, Santa Clara 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch

### SNORKELLING; CAVING; TO SANTA CLARA

This morning we head to the Bellamar district on the outskirts of Matanzas to visit a cave network. Then continue to Coral Beach for a swim and snorkel. Afterwards we'll transfer south to Finca Coincidencia, an organic farm and ceramic workshop. Enjoy a delicious home-cooked lunch and a tour of this charmingly eccentric farm.

After lunch we will transfer further east into Villa Clara province and to the provincial capital, Santa Clara. The city of Santa Clara was founded in 1689 by settlers fleeing the coast and constant lootings by pirates. Today Santa Clara is an important university town but it's best-known for the historic events that surround revolutionary Che Guevara. Che led his rebel forces in the battle of Santa Clara, a decisive victory over Batista's army that resulted in the Triumph of the Revolution. Che's remains were brought here from Bolivia in 1997 and are kept in an impressive mausoleum which we will visit, along with the Tren Blindado memorial park. Enjoy the evening at leisure.

## DAY 5

🏠 Casas Particular, Trinidad 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### TREKKING IN TOPES DE COLLANTES, SALSA IN TRINIDAD

This morning we will transfer to Topes de Collantes in the stunning Escambray mountain range, where we will trek along shady mountain paths, stopping for a dip at a spectacular waterfall. Enjoy lunch at an atmospheric eco–restaurant tucked away in the forest before transferring to Trinidad, the jewel in Cuba's patrimonial crown. Named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1988, Trinidad's collection of beautifully preserved colonial buildings has the Sierra del Escambray as a backdrop and overlook the Caribbean Sea. Much of the city's fortune was made during the sugar boom of the early 19th century when the city's nucleus of elegant mansions was built. In the late afternoon have a salsa class with a local teacher and we'll dine together in a local casa that serves wonderful cuisine. Later this evening you might like to sample Trinidad's lively nightlife and try out your new moves!

## DAY 6

🏠 Casa particular, Cienfuegos 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### WALKING TOUR OF TRINIDAD; PLAYA ANCON BEACH; RURAL COMMUNITY VISIT; TRANSFER TO CIENFUEGOS

This morning we'll take a walking tour of Trinidad: the city's cobbled streets and pastel houses will make you feel as though you're walking through a time capsule. Afterwards we'll drive the short distance to nearby Playa Ancon beach, where we'll have time for a swim and lunch.

We continue onwards to Cienfuegos. The city of Cienfuegos is known amongst Cubans as 'The Pearl of the South' and its colonial centre was named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2005. Cienfuegos is the only city in Cuba founded by French migrants fleeing the slave revolution in Haiti in the early 19th century. This evening we enjoy a Cuban dinner with our hosts – followed by a couple of rounds of dominoes, Cuba's national pastime.

## DAY 7

🏠 Casa particular, Havana 🍴 Breakfast, Lunch,

### KAYAKING IN CIENFUEGOS; TO HAVANA

This morning we will go on a kayaking excursion in the bay of Cienfuegos. We set off from the Cienfuegos Yacht Club harbour after receiving an instruction and safety briefing. Donning our life jackets, we set off across the bay, a wide natural harbour which provides sheltered kayaking. We paddle towards the narrow mouth of the harbour at Pasacaballo and there is a chance to stop and visit the imposing Castillo de Jagua before finishing at Rancho Cristal for lunch. After lunch we return to Havana, check into our casas particulares and freshen up before heading out for the night.

This evening we enjoy a sunset ride along the Malecon in classic Cars, the perfect way to end a week of adventure in Cuba!

## DAY 8

🍴 Breakfast,

### WALKING TOUR IN HAVANA AND DEPARTURE DAY

If flight departure time allows, we will continue exploring Old Havana together. Havana is the finest surviving Spanish colonial city in the Americas and one of seven towns or “villas” founded by the Conquistador Diego Velazquez in the 16th century. Post–revolution restoration work and the millions of dollars invested since it was declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1982 mean that Old Havana has been well–preserved and is often referred to as a “living museum”. The many marvellous monuments, cathedrals and palaces of the city's historical centre are brought to life by a constant hustle and bustle and the unmistakable sound of Cuban son. After this morning's tour it's time to part ways and say Adios, or, as we prefer to think of it hasta luego, see you later! Have a safe onward journey and we very much hope to see you in Cuba again soon. Afternoon transfer (30–40 minutes approx.) to Havana airport.

🗺️ City Tour

## WHAT TO BRING?

### ESSENTIAL PACKING LIST

- Cycling helmet compulsory.
- Water bottle.
- Comfortable cycling clothes, cycling shorts are preferable.
- Lightweight waterproof/windproof top or jacket.
- Swimwear.
- For kayaking and snorkeling you may want to bring a UVA top or T shirt.
- Breathable clothing.
- Sturdy trainers suitable for uneven and slippery surfaces.
- 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 backpack which they keep on the bus for easy access during the day where 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.
- 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!
- If you have a mask, snorkel and fins, and would prefer to use your own, feel free to bring them.
- Torch.

## ACTIVITY

### CYCLING

- Cycling mostly on paved, quiet rural roads, with some potholes.
- No. of days cycling: 2.
- Total Distance: 78 km (see ride profiles).
- Moderate Pace: approx. 15–20 kmph.
- 100% vehicle support throughout rides—jump on the bus whenever you like!

### TREKKING AND CAVING

- Walking on uneven paths and trails. Expect a variety of surfaces which can be slippery when wet. Please bring appropriate footwear.

### KAYAKING

- Takes place in the bay of Cienfuegos. Participants must be confident swimmers.
- Local kayaking guide will provide instruction and safety briefing before you set off.
- Lifejacket provided and compulsory.

### SNORKELLING

- Independent snorkeling on a reef close to the beach. Participants must be confident swimmers.
- Masks and snorkel provided. Fins available for hire.



## 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 specializing 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](http://cubaniatravel.com/sustainability)

## 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 bed and breakfast accommodations typical to any trip to Cuba; these are called *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!

We use *Casas Particulares* because they are the sustainable solution and because 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 and 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.

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 EUR 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 recognized 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, followed by 4G in 2019, 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 sometimes 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.

### TUNNEL BEAR

Or any VPN which enables you to navigate incognito. Many websites and banks will prohibit access from Cuba.

## 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](mailto: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:email).

## BOOKING CONDITIONS

Please refer to our website for a full transcript of Cubania Travel booking Conditions: [cubaniatravel.com/need-to-know/booking-conditions](http://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  
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Y6409 (UK Office) and Y6408 (Cuba Office)