

COMPLETE CUBA

US\$11800 + 450 CUC Local Payment

Duration:	20 days / 19 nights
Group Size:	Minimum 2 / Maximum 14 / Average 9
Accommodation:	Guesthouses. Twinshare.
Single Supplement:	Single Room for the tour - US\$625 extra (read more)
Transport:	Private land transport - mini-bus or taxi (depending on group size) & domestic flight
Activities included:	Walking tour of Old Havana, Che Guevara Museum, Ballet School visit in Camaguey, Music & dance night in Santiago, Visit to community art projects of Callejon de Hammel and Fusterlandia, Visit to Tobacco Farmer's house.
Other Inclusions:	19 breakfasts , airport arrival transfer, local Cuban tour guide throughout
Suggested combinations:	Combine with dance or language classes in Havana, or a Beach stay package!

Itinerary Summary

Day 1 - Arrival Day **Havana**
Day 2,3,4 - **Baracoa**
Day 5,6 - **Santiago**
Day 7,8 - **Camaguey**
Day 9,10,11 - **Trinidad**
Day 12 - **Cienfuegos** via Santa Clara
Day 13 - **Havana** via Bay of Pigs
Day 14,15 - **Havana**
Day 16 - **Soroa** via Jaimanitas and Las Terrazas
Day 17 - **Viñales** via Soroa
Day 18 - **Viñales**
Day 19 - **Havana**
Day 20 - Departure Day

* Please Note: Itineraries for the tours in Cuba can and do change during the course of the year due to a variety of reasons. We are not always able to advise you in advance of these changes. We ask for your understanding and flexibility in these cases.



Tour Description

Our 20 day Complete Cuba tour is a combination of our 15 day Original tour of Cuba and our 6 day tour of Western Cuba. We highly recommend this tour to travel the entire length of the island to experience Cuba's fascinating diversity. It takes you to many of Cuba's natural and historic highlights, however the emphasis of the tour is on contact with the Cuban people and their culture. We also give you plenty of time to do your own adventuring. Nevertheless, your local tour guide is available everyday to recommend places to explore and to help you arrange excursions and day trips if you want.

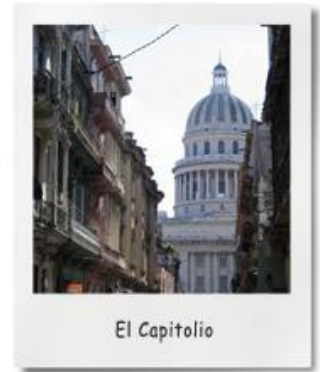
Itinerary Details

Day 1 - Havana - arrival day

Today is set aside as the arrival day of the tour, so you are free to arrive in Havana at any time. There is a chance that some of your fellow tour participants will arrive quite late at night, so we haven't included any group activities for today.

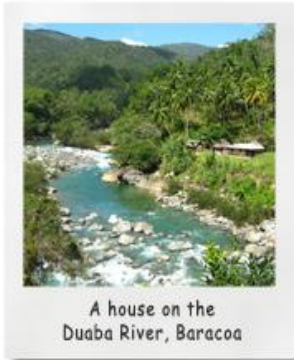
If you do happen to arrive early, you can go for a walk around the area that surrounds your guesthouse, which will be either in Old Havana, Central Havana, or a central area in Vedado. After booking on the tour, we will send you a set of maps with the latest information, and some of our recommendations, for all the cities you will visit in Cuba. You can use these maps to visit specific places that you are interested in, or otherwise you can just explore. Don't forget to take a business card from your guesthouse so that you can easily show people where you are staying, just in case you do get lost (which can be fun as well!).

If you prefer your time to be more organised, we recommend you book one of our Havana Day Tours. Please note that this 20 tour package includes the "Walking tour of Old Havana" on Day 14, so there is no need to book this separately.



Your tour guide will leave a note for you at your guesthouse with details about the evening gathering for those tour group members that have arrived early. The guide usually has a formal group meeting on the morning of Day 2, however if you are keen to get to know the other group members today, you can meet up with the guide and go out for dinner and drinks.

Day 2,3,4 - Baracoa



To get to Baracoa we take a mid-morning flight from Havana. Baracoa is a special place within Cuba and feels even more lost in time than the rest of Cuba. This is because, despite being the first Spanish settlement in Cuba, its location is quite remote and difficult to access from the rest of the country. Many of the houses are still made from wood and some of the locals show physical traits of the indigenous people that populated this part of the world before the Spanish obliterated most of them. The natural environment that surrounds the town of Baracoa is nothing short of spectacular. In fact Christopher Columbus noted in his log-book that this was the most beautiful land that human eyes could set upon. Apart from the forested mountains, you can find pristine beaches with sand of various colours, coffee and chocolate plantations, and some stunning freshwater rivers (in fact, the biggest rivers in Cuba are found

here). We have 2 full days here and your tour guide will offer you the options and offer to organise the best ways to explore it.

Day 5, 6 - Santiago de Cuba

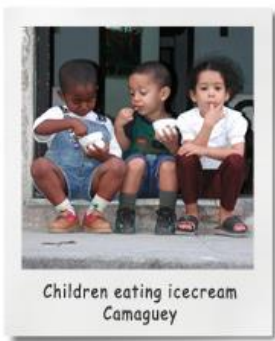
The well-built road that leads out of Baracoa towards **Santiago** was only made in the 1960's and previous to that the main way to get from Baracoa to Santiago was by sea. It takes us through the densely vegetated mountains of eastern Cuba, along a windswept section of sparsely populated coastline and then we go close to the area of land that is leased by the US military in Guantanamo Bay. We finally reach Santiago de Cuba, a city known as **the origin of many important things in Cuba**. It's where Fidel first started his revolutionary struggle against the Batista government, and it's from this area of Cuba that much of Cuba's famous traditional music originates. It's where rum was invented by *Emilio Bacardi*, and the rhythms of the *Son* and the *Conga* which are said to come from Santiago. When you go to one of Santiago's traditional music houses (such as the *Casa de la Trova* or the *Casa de las Tradiciones*) you can actually hear (or rather 'feel') the difference in the music from the rest of Cuba. Somehow it seems richer and more traditional.



As Cuba's second city, and for a time the nation's capital, the city also has some interesting buildings such as the former **Bacardi family residence** (now a museum), and the *Casa Velazquez*, which is known as Cuba's oldest building. There are also museums, colonial churches and buildings of more recent historical importance, such as the Moncada Barracks, which are well worth visiting. **Some of the best views of the region** can be had from the fort at the entrance of the Bay, called the *Castillo del Morro*. This place was the centre of the a battle between the US and Spanish navies in 1898. Many of the Spanish ships from that battle are still at the bottom of the ocean just beside this fort.

Day 7, 8 – Camaguey

A long travel day (6 to 7 hours) in our private transport takes us to **Cuba's third largest city -**



Camaguey. It lies about half way between Havana and Santiago de Cuba. Camaguey has a reputation as being fiercely proud and independent, and it's with this spirit that the city has embraced with enthusiasm the idea of restoring its colonial centre, which now boasts **some lovely small plazas, public squares, and pedestrian streets.** The story goes that the city was originally designed in the 17th century in such a way as to disorientate potential invaders such as pirates, so the street layout is a jumble of narrow alleys where no two streets are parallel.

The city is a **regional centre of culture and education** with a large population of students, many of whom are foreigners who have come here on scholarships offered by the Cuban government to students who wouldn't normally get the chance to go to university in their own countries. There

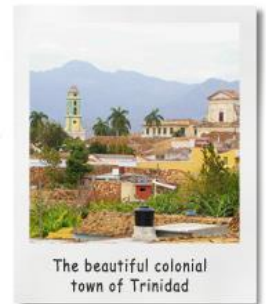
are various private art galleries and cultural centres, and we include a guided **visit to a ballet school.**

Day 9,10,11 - Trinidad

Trinidad, for many visitors to Cuba, is their favourite place. It has a very **well preserved colonial centre** with numerous churches and many beautiful colonial buildings. It has the feel of a village rather than a city and because of the sometimes steep cobblestone streets, most residents get around on foot.

Nearby are several points of interest such as the lovely *Valle de los Ingenios* (Valley of the Sugarmills), Ancón beach, and the *Escambray* mountains - that contain coffee plantations, abundant birdlife, and some refreshing waterfalls. Including diving, snorkelling, and horseback riding, there are no shortage of activities for those who want to get out and about.

In town there are craft markets and many small bars, restaurants, and night spots where you can enjoy some fantastic Cuban music and dance in an intimate setting. If that is still not enough to win you over, there is even a disco in a nearby cave.



Day 12 - Cienfuegos via Santa Clara



Today we travel to **Cienfuegos** via the historic city of **Santa Clara** where we visit **the Che Guevara museum.** On top of the museum is a massive bronze statue of the famous revolutionary, and there is also a mausoleum where Che's remains are kept (since 1997). We take time to visit the museum and learn about Che's fascinating life.

We then head back towards the Caribbean coast eventually reach Cienfuegos.

In Cienfuegos you might notice a slightly *European flavour* with the architecture of its main buildings and wide pedestrian boulevards. Most visitors are charmed by the setting on a wide and tranquil bay and by its friendly and peaceful residents.

Day 13 - Havana via Bay of Pigs

Today's road trip takes about 5 hours. We first head past the **Bay of Pigs**, which is where that famous US-backed failed invasion of **counter-revolutionary exile militia** occurred in 1961. Your guide will explain in more detail the dramatic events. If the conditions are favourable, we can stop for a swim at a beautiful spot on the bay that is **ideal for snorkelling.** Snorkelling masks are available at a small cost.

We then drive through a densely vegetated area called the *Peninsula de Zapata.* It's a swampy area full of alligators, snakes, and other wildlife. Finally we arrive back in Havana.



Day 14,15 – Havana

We arrive late in the afternoon of Day 13, so you have 3 nights and 2 whole days to experience the Caribbean's largest and most famous city in this middle part of the tour. Your tour guide will provide an introduction with the included **walking tour of the Old town** scheduled for the morning of Day 14. You always have the option to skip this and explore on your own. We also offer **a range of other day tours in Havana** that you can add to your package.

This concludes the first section of your tour. On Day 15 you may lose some of your travelling companions and possibly welcome some others to the group who are only doing the last section of this tour. It's also possible that you will have a change of tour guide, however we do always try to schedule things so that the same guide takes you for the entire 20 days.

Day 16 - Soroa - via Jaimanitas and Las Terrazas



Callejon de Hammel
Havana

Heading west of Havana in private transport, we stop in a couple of Havana neighbourhoods to see some community art projects. The first one is an alley called the **Callejon de Hammel**. This is where local artist *Salvador Gonzáles Escalona* has done some colourful decorations of the street with a distinctive African flavour. In fact, many of the works are dedications to specific Afro-Cuban religious demi-gods.

Next we visit a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Havana called **Jaimanitas**. It is here that *Jose Fuster* has made a very impressive project called **Fusterlandia** in which works are made in mosaic ceramics. It extends from his own residence to surrounding houses and streets. Even the local medical clinic has been targeted by his creative efforts.

Next stop is a mountainous area called **Las Terrazas**. The town itself was built as part of an environmental project in the early days of the Revolution. You'll have time for a walk around the town and to meet some of the locals. Apart from its environmental characteristics, Las Terrazas is also known as for its art, and there are a few woodwork, painting and pottery studios, that are open to the public.

Eventually we reach the tiny settlement of Soroa, which for many is the *prettiest* area of the region. We stay in local guesthouses.

Day 17 - Viñales - via Soroa

On the way to Vinales we check out a Soroa which is beautiful area in the mountains with quite a few interesting things to see. There is an excellent orchid garden with about 200 different types of orchids, more than half of which are Cuban species.

For the more actively minded, there are **a couple of short walks**. One short one to a waterfall and a longer one to the peak of a mountain with some fantastic views.

Before reaching the town of Vinales **we can stop at a lookout** which has some great views of the Vinales valley. Parts of this stunning area are listed with UNESCO for the value of their rural scenery and heritage.

In the afternoon we have time to take you **to the home of a local tobacco farmer**, who will show you his life and how he rolls his own cigars.



The spectacular
Vinales Valley

Day 18 - Viñales

Today you have **a full day with no included activities**. This is your *opportunity* to do as you please, and there are plenty of options available that your guide can arrange for you. Our travellers in the

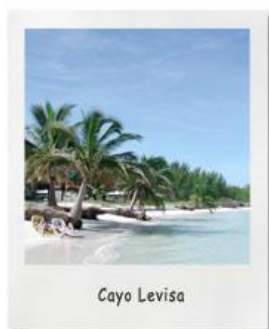
past have highly recommended the **walk through parts of the valley with a guide** that is local to the Vinales area. There are also caving, horse riding, and biking excursions available.

Another option is to do some *voluntary work* on a **local organic farm** (and staying for dinner!), or heading to one of the beautiful beaches nearby - Cayo Levisa or Cayo Jutias.

There are a couple of hotels on the outskirts of the town with some swimming pools you can use for a small fee - a good option if you just want to relax and enjoy the views while drinking a cocktail or two.

The **nightlife in Vinales is very friendly and active**, and the locals are always enthusiastically involved. There is live music nightly and usually a dance performance or two. But the main emphasis is on participation and

the locals are not shy in asking visitors to share a dance. In fact, many travellers will tell you that Vinales is one of the best places in Cuba to interact with the locals.



Cayo Levisa

Day 19 - Havana

We return to **Havana** to celebrate **the last night of the tour**, and for some, their last night in Cuba. With recent changes to the laws in Cuba, and legal opportunities for Cubans to open their own businesses, there are many more **good options for restaurants, bars, and night spots**. Your tour guide will no doubt suggest a few for a group celebration.

Day 20 - Depart Havana

Today is the departure day of the tour, and you are free to depart at anytime. Don't hesitate to ask your guide for help if you want to organise a few extra days in Havana at the end of your tour.

Summary of Travel Times

- Havana to Baracoa – 4 hours (flight 1.5 hours)
- Baracoa to Santiago – 6 hours
- Santiago to Camaguey – 7 hours
- Camaguey to Trinidad – 6 hours
- Trinidad to Santa Clara – 3 hours
- Santa Clara to Cienfuegos – 1 hours
- Cienfuegos to Havana – 5 hours
- Havana to Soroa - 2 hours
- Soroa to Viñales - 3 hours
- Viñales to Havana - 4 hours



Arrival and Departure Accommodation in Havana

Accommodation in Havana at the start and end of the tour in Cuba is in Guesthouses. The houses we use for the tours are all centrally located in either Old Havana, Central Havana, or Vedado. An arrival transfer from the Havana airport is included in the tour package. If you are already in Havana before the tour, we can include the transfer to the joining Guesthouse Accommodation, from where you are staying before the tour Havana.

On the booking form, you can request extra nights before or after the tour in the same guesthouse you will have for the tour. [Click here to see prices.](#)

We also offer other accommodation options in Havana for before or after the tour. [Click here to see options.](#)

Late arrivals or Early Departures

Late Arrival - If you plan to arrive on Day 2 or after, we can arrange for you to catch up to the group. This may involve you paying transport costs to do so.

Early Departure - The group will arrive back in Havana, late in the afternoon of Day 19, so a departure from Cuba in the evening of Day 19 is possible. An earlier departure than this is also possible and may involve you paying transport costs for us to send you back to Havana by yourself.

Spending Money

We estimate you will need between US\$900 and US\$1400 for local expenses during the tour, such food and optional activities (but not including the Local Payment!). [Click here to see details of expenses you will have while on the tour in Cuba.](#)

Not Included in the Tour

- International Flights
- Visa and passport fees
- Insurance (Travel Medical Insurance is required to participate on the tour)
- All meals (except for 14 breakfasts)
- Drinks
- Tips
- Optional activities/day-tours/excursions
- Airport departure transfer