CUBA - an Exploration of Arts and Culture

About this trip:

Our 6-day Art and Cultural Cuba trip features the highlights of Havana, Cuba's historic capital city and an incredible day-trip to Viñales Valley. Cuban Cultural Trips' experienced travel coordinators will assist you throughout the registration and preparation process. For the duration of the trip, you will be accompanied by a professional Cuban guide, NMC faculty members and a US-based tour leader. We provide comfortable private transportation, lodging in a Cuban-Style B&B, daily ground transportation, meals at the top private restaurants in Cuba and many more meaningful interactions. Experience the real Cuba with Cuban Cultural Trips.

Why Choose Cuban Cultural Trips?:

The Cuban Cultural Trips team has over 15 years of experience facilitating complex travel arrangements around the world. We know travel and more importantly, we know and LOVE CUBA. By choosing to travel with Cuban Cultural Trips, you are supporting local communities throughout the island. We work with a variety of Cuban entrepreneurs and small businesses in an effort to support the growing Cuban private sector.

100% Legal Travel to Cuba:

This trip will be conducted under the "People-to-People", general license for travel to Cuba. Your travel will consist of a full-time schedule of activities that will result in meaningful interactions between the travelers and individuals in Cuba with the goal of supporting and empowering Cuban civil society. Travelers subject to US Jurisdiction are responsible for complying with US Treasury Department guidelines and will complete an affidavit stating their purpose of travel to Cuba.

Adjusting Expectations:

Traveling to Cuba requires that you adjust all expectations throughout the trip. The Cuban people are incredibly warm, generous and excited to welcome visitors from abroad with open hearts. However, some of the facilities and infrastructure are not to the same standard that you may be accustomed to in the US and other destinations. Traveling with an open mind will help you to enjoy your trip and to have a better understanding of the effects of decades of isolation as a result of political and economic policies of the US and Cuban Governments.

What's included:

- Transportation

In-country transportation for all included activities

- Guide

Professional English speaking Cuban guides will accompany you for all daily activities

- Lodging
Lodging in Cuban "Casas Particulares" (B&B Style lodging)

- Meals

5 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 4 dinners (gratuities included)

- Activities

Entrance fees to all included activities

Itinerary:

Day 1 - March 23

WELCOME TO CUBA

Transfer from Airport to Casa Particular

As you exit baggage claim area Jose Marti International Airport, meet your guide and begin your adventure. Your driver will take you to your Casa Particular where your guide will assist you with your check-in and currency exchange.

Casa Particular (Check-In)

Your driver will take you to your casa particular where your professional guide will assist you with your check-in and currency exchange.

Plaza de La Revolución

Visit the Plaza de La Revolución - This public square is used for large speaking events, concerts and has been the site of catholic masses conducted by Pope John Paul II in 1998 and more recently by Pope Francis in 2015. Surrounding the plaza there are large sculptures commemorating the lives and revolutionary spirits of José Martí, Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos.

Professor Miguel Coyula

Enjoy the presentation, ‘Havana - past, present and future’, by Professor Miguel Coyula world renowned professor of architecture and former assistant to the city planner of Havana Cuba’s future, followed by an informative Q&A session.

Dinner at Mediterraneo

Mediterraneo restaurant in the Vedado neighborhood is the best Italian restaurant in town. Their menu features fresh pasta, incredible fish carpaccio and some of Havana’s best pizza.

Optional Nightlife Activities
Your guide and professional trip leaders will give you suggestions for the best nightlife activities. Such as casa de la musica, for a live salsa show or El Gato Tuerto, Havana's most famous jazz lub.

Day 2 - March 29

OLD HAVANA

Typical Cuban Breakfast

Enjoy a breakfast hosted at your casa particular.

Old Havana Walking-Tour

Enjoy a professionally guided walking tour of the major plazas of Old Havana. Your guide will brief you on the history and significance of each plaza and provide you with free-time at each stop to explore on your own.

Lunch at Rum Rum Paladar

Rum Rum Paladar located in the heart of Old Havana has excellent food and a comfortable atmosphere. This is the perfect choice for lunch in Old Havana.

Hands-on Art Workshop with Nicolas Carballosa

Participate in a hands-on drawing and painting workshop with Cuban Artist Nicolas Carballosa in his studio located in the heart of Old Havana.

El Morro

Visit El Morro, Havana's primary fortress which was inaugurated by the Spanish in 1589 to protect the Bay of Havana in response to raids by pirates and foreign armies.

Dinner - El Del Frente

Enjoy an incredible meal at El del Frente, one of Old Havana's best rooftop restaurants/bars. The food is prepared with the freshest garnishes and the creatively presented drinks are arguably the tastiest in Havana.

Fabrica de Arte Cubano

Fabrica de Arte Cubano is located in re-purposed oil factory that is incorporates art galleries, bars, performance spaces and much more. A must do nightlife experience in Havana!
Day 3 - March 28 30

DANCE & CULTURE

Typical Cuban Breakfast

Enjoy a breakfast hosted at your casa particular.

Havana Compas (Dance & Drum Performance)

Attend a demonstration and performance of Havana Compas, an all female Afro-Cuban inspired dance and percussion troupe. After the performance, meet with dancers to discuss their unique style of music and dance.

Lunch at La Guarida

La Guarida is a private restaurant located in the same building that was used as the set for the Oscar nominated film Fresa y Chocolate. This is the most popular paladar in all of Havana and well worth a visit.

Callejon de Hamel

Tour the eclectic neighborhood of Callejon de Hamel, where the Santeria rumba and other religious rituals are practiced each week.

Dinner at Your Casa

Enjoy a festive dinner hosted at your casa particular. This is your chance to try a truly home-cooked Cuban dinner prepared by your hosts.

Optional Nightlife Activities

Your guide and professional trip leaders will give you suggestions for the best nightlife activities. Such as casa de la musica, for a live salsa show or El Gato Tuerto, Havana’s most famous jazz club.

Day 4 - March 29 31

VINALES VALLEY

Typical Cuban Breakfast

Enjoy a breakfast hosted at your casa particular.

Finca Agroecologica el Paraiso
Visit one of the most unique farm-to-table restaurants in Cuba. Learn about the history of this organic farming cooperative and enjoy fresh vegetables and meats that are all locally sourced. There is a lot of food, so be sure to pace yourself.

**Tobacco Plantation**

Located just outside of the town of Viñales, travel to the home of a local tobacco farmer. Learn about the tobacco growing and aging process and you may even have a chance to try your hand at rolling a Cuban Cigar.

**Cave Tour & Boat Ride**

Visit Cueva del Indio and explore the limestone caves know as "mogotes". The cave tour ends with a boat ride through an underwater river.

**Photo Stop & Craft Market**

Stop at "El Mirador" for an impressive view of Viñales valley. You will have the opportunity to take breathtaking photos. Souvenirs and refreshments will also be available.

**Dinner on Your Own in Havana**

Enjoy dinner at your own. Your guide will assist in making dinner reservations at a great local restaurant.

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**Day 5 - March 27 April 1**

**SALSA & ART**

**Typical Cuban Breakfast**

Enjoy a breakfast hosted at your casa particular.

**Salsa Workshop**

Participate in a hands-on salsa dancing workshop. Learn the fundamentals of Cuban salsa with our team of professional Cuban dance teachers.

**D' Brujas**

Meet with the members of the cooperative, Las Brujas, a female-owned owned and operated private business that create and sells natural beauty products. After learning about their products and history, a Q&A will follow. Feel free to ask about the challenges of starting a small private business in Cuba.

**Lunch On Your Own**

Enjoy lunch on your own as you explore Havana.

**Self-Guided People-to-People Interactions**
Take some time in the afternoon to meet Cuban artists, musicians and entrepreneurs. Some of the most meaningful experiences in Havana happen organically.

**Dinner at San Cristobal**

San Cristobal is one of Havana’s top private restaurants. The restaurant is located in a beautifully restored colonial home in Central Havana and President Obama dined there on his historic trip to Cuba in March 2016.

**Live Music on the Malecón**

Travel to Havana’s Malecón, the seawall that hugs the coast of Havana, for live music with a group of musicians and friends of Cuban Cultural Trips.

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**Day 6 - March 28 April 2**

**ADIOS CUBA**

**Typical Cuban Breakfast**

Enjoy a breakfast hosted at your casa particular.

**Fusterlandia**

Visit the small fishing village of Jaimanitas and visit of the home of artist Jose Fuster. Since the early 1990’s Fuster has transformed his entire village into a giant mosaic village. You must see this Dr. Seuss like fantasy world is a must see.

**Casa Check-Out**

Check out of your casa particular and prepare to say "hasta luego" to Cuba.

**Transfer to Airport**

Head to the airport with to catch your flight back home. Have a safe trip!