

# Highlights of Cuba

**Trip style:** Worldwide holidays

**Destination:** 📍 Cuba

**Trip code:** CUB14-WHW10

**Grades:** 1, 2

**Carbon Footprint:** 🚗 3147kg CO2



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

From the vibrant and salsa-loving capital of Havana to the tobacco fields and rainforest of the Viñales Valley, Cuba packs in a glorious variety of natural wonders and cultural thrills. Highlights include following in the footsteps of Ernest Hemingway, learning how to roll a tobacco criollo, exploring the Caribbean coast in the Northern Cays, and discovering the historic heart of Trinidad – the UNESCO-listed city famed for its incredible architecture and laid-back Cuban vibe.

## WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Taking a walking tour of Habana Vieja (Old Havana)
- Walking among the tobacco fields of Viñales
- Learning how to roll the perfect cigar
- Debating the legacy of Che Guevara
- Staying in in a casa particular (private home)
- Cocktails at El Floridita, Hemingway's favourite bar

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London Gatwick including baggage and transfers
- Guided walks and sightseeing with local leaders
- 14 nights' touring accommodation across Cuba
- 14 breakfasts, 14 lunches & 14 dinners
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- A walking tour of Old Havana
- All in-destination transport

## ITINERARY

### **Day 1:** Arrive Havana

On arrival in Havana you'll meet your local guide and driver who, depending on your arrival time, will take you to your hotel for a welcome drink and, later, a typical Cuban dinner at La Barraca in the gardens of the Hotel Nacional. If your flight arrives late, a snack dinner will be arranged upon arrival.

---

### **Day 2:** Havana

We take a walking tour to the historic heart of Havana. Granted UNESCO World Heritage status in 1982, the old town, or 'Habana Vieja', has been handsomely restored and features unique Baroque neoclassical architecture. Our tour will take in many of Havana's sights, including a visit to Plaza de Cathedral, Plaza Vieja and the old City Walls. Lunch will be in a local paladar restaurant. You will also visit the Hotel Ambos Mundos where Ernest Hemingway lived for more than 2 years, and you'll see the room where he lived and wrote "For Whom the Bell Tolls". This evening we'll have dinner in a local paladar restaurant.

---

### **Day 3:** To the Viñales Valley - Cuban Tobacco Country

Today we drive west into the heart of Cuban tobacco country. We'll head to the provincial capital, Pinar del Rio, for a visit to a traditional tobacco factory. From here, we travel to the beautiful Viñales valley, a picturesque region of small farms and old tobacco plantations. We'll enjoy lunch on arrival followed by a tobacco rolling demonstration with local farmers. Using tobacco leaves they have grown and cured themselves, the farmers roll cigars known as "tabaco criollo". In the evening, after checking into our hotel in Viñales, we set out for a walk along the Sendero Valle del Silencio. Exploring this enchanting countryside will prepare your appetite for dinner at Wilfredo's Organic Farm, set in a beautiful hilltop location overlooking the town. With luck, we will witness a marvellous sunset as we enjoy our meal. Distance: approx. 2.5 miles (4km) Driving distance – approx. 210km

---

### **Day 4:** Viñales Valley

This morning, we rise early and set off with packed breakfasts on the Acuaticos trail which takes us up into the hills for a spectacular sunrise over Viñales Valley. After lunch in a local 'paladar' - a small Cuban family-run restaurant - we carry on along the Palmarito trail, which leads through small villages that still have a traditional way of life, before returning to our hotel. Dinner will be in a local paladar Distance: approx. 4.5 miles (7km)

---

### **Day 5:** Santa Clara

Today is mostly a travel day (approx. 6 hours over approx. 500km) as we head towards central Cuba. We'll visit Las Terrazas Biosphere Reserve to learn about the reforestation programme started in the 1970s and take a short trail, La Serafina, in the hopes of spotting local birdlife. Distance: approx. 4 miles (6km). After lunch on an old coffee plantation, we continue to Santa Clara. If time allows today, we'll visit the Che Guevara memorial, resting place for Che and sixteen of his men who were killed in action in 1967 in Bolivia, and have dinner at the hotel.

---

### **Day 6:** To Remedios and Cayo Santa Maria

If we didn't have time to visit the Che Guevara memorial yesterday, we'll do this today before departing for the city of Remedios, located about an hour to the northwest of Santa Clara. Well off the beaten path and forgotten by most tour operators, Remedios is one of the oldest towns in Cuba – now a National Monument town – and the 17th century colonial architecture dominates this peaceful town. We'll take in the city and its historic centre on a relaxed tour. The key attraction is the main square with its colonial church, 'Iglesia Mayor' of San Juan Bautista, which possesses thirteen beautifully decorated gold altars. We continue to the beautiful Northern Cays of Cuba and our all-inclusive hotel, where we'll have lunch and the remainder of the day is at your leisure.

---

### **Day 7:** Free Day

Today, take some time to relax in the resort. Enjoy the hotel's facilities or explore the nearby area – perhaps a swim in the sea or a short walk along the white sand beaches or through the nearby tropical woodland.

---

### **Day 8:** To Trinidad

Today we travel towards Trinidad to visit the Valley of the Sugar Mills ('Valle de los Ingenios'). This fertile plain, with the Sierra del Escambray in the distance, is carpeted in the green hues of sugar cane. The valley is dotted with ruins of 19th century sugar mills. We also take a walking tour of the historic heart of Trinidad and enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. Founded in 1514 by Diego Velazquez, Trinidad has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1988 thanks to its past as the centre for the sugar trade. The city's cobbled streets and lovely architecture bear witness to its former glories. This evening we will have dinner at Alberto's House.

---

### **Day 9:** Trinidad

After breakfast we travel to the Escambray Mountains to visit Topes de Collantes, a natural park above Trinidad de Cuba dotted with magical waterfalls and cool pools. Here we'll walk the Guanayara trail, often lauded as the most rewarding hike in the park. We travel to the start of the hike by truck and descend to the El Rocio waterfall. This section is steep, and we recommend walking poles if you usually use them. Distance: 3.7 miles (6km).

---

### **Day 10:** Trinidad

Today is a free day. There are many options including taking a visit to Playa Ancon, joining a catamaran trip to the offshore cayes, or exploring the charming streets of Trinidad a little further. A picnic lunch is provided today, and dinner will be together as a group at a local paladar.

---

### **Day 11:** To Cienfuegos

Driving distance approx. 90km After breakfast, we'll walk around Hanabanilla Reservoir along the La Atalaya trail. During the walk you will see typical country houses of the area, before finishing at Lago Hanabanilla from where we will be taken by boat to Rio Negro for lunch. Distance approx. 4.5 miles (7km), with some rough sections of ascent and descent. After lunch, a 1½ hour transfer takes us to Cienfuegos Bay, where we check into our hotel. Dinner will be in a local paladar.

---

**Day 12:** Cienfuegos

After breakfast we set off for a visit to the Cienfuegos Botanical Garden, with its impressive array of orchids and tropical palms. We explore the garden and have lunch in the gardens themselves before returning to Cienfuegos for a tour of this beautiful town. Cienfuegos is one of Cuba's most charming cities. Set on the shores of a huge natural bay, the city was originally one of Cuba's most important harbours. It was settled by French immigrants fleeing the slave uprisings of Haiti, the city has elegant boulevards and classical homes, as well as spacious squares and one of Cuba's most famous theatres (Teatro Terry). We will explore the city with a sightseeing tour, including visits to the theatre and the main square. This evening we enjoy dinner in a local paladar on the waterfront.

---

**Day 13:** Bay of Pigs and to Havana

Driving distance approx. 260km Today we return to Havana via the Zapata National Park. We stop at Playa Giron, or the Bay of Pigs, the site of the final battle between Fidel Castro's forces and the counterrevolutionary army and visit its museum to learn about the US/CIA involvement in the anti-Castro movement. We stop for lunch on the coast with the option of swimming in waters full of tropical fish. This evening we'll enjoy a guided walk on Havana's atmospheric waterfront promenade, the Malecon, and enjoy a cocktail at El Floridita, one of Hemingway's old hangouts, and round off the evening with a special lobster dinner in Old Havana.

---

**Day 14:** Havana

This morning, we'll visit the Havana Rum Museum where you will have the chance to try some of Cuba's finest rums. We then depart for a visit to Finca Vigia, which is lovingly kept as it was when Ernest Hemingway lived here. After the visit, we continue by bus to Cojimar, where the author moored his boat, The Pilar. The fishing village is full of memories of the great American novelist and its setting was the inspiration for his novel "The Old Man and the Sea". To round off, we'll enjoy an ice-cold daiquiri at one of his favourite restaurants – Las Terrazas – which overlooks the Atlantic Ocean. We'll return to Havana for lunch and a classic American cars tour. Enjoy some free time before sharing our last group meal in local paladar.

---

**Day 15:** Departure Day

Our final morning is at leisure. After lunch, our with-flight guests transfer to Havana airport to begin our return journey back to the UK.

---

**Day 16:** Arrive UK

With-flight guests arrive back in the UK.

---

## **Hotel Nacional de Cuba, Havana - Cuba**

Located on Havana's stunning seafront promenade, the Malecon, the historic Hotel Nacional de Cuba is a true icon of the city. Once a hangout for famous stars like Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner, powerful heads of state, and American mob bosses, it's now a UNESCO-listed National Monument. A symbol of Cuban identity, this imposing hotel offers commanding views of the sea and the city from Taganana Hill. Featuring eclectic 1930s architecture, the Nacional boasts 457 rooms, three restaurants, a café, four bars, and a snack bar. Enjoy a drink in the Hall of Fame bar, where you can spot photos of the famous faces that have visited over the years.

## **Los Jazmines, Viñales Valley - Cuba**

Our accommodation in the beautiful Viñales Valley; its comfortable rooms and pool make it the perfect place to relax after our walks. If we are not in Los Jazmines, then we'll be staying at Casas Particulares (bed & breakfast) with evening meals in local Paladars.

## **Hotel Iberostar Cayo Los Ensenachos, Cayo Santa Maria - Cuba**

This is a all-inclusive 5\* hotel resort on the northern coast of Cuba. Within a short distance of some of the island's finest beaches, you're sure to enjoy spending time here relaxing before your journey continues.

## **Hotel Los Caneyes - Cuba**

Less than two miles from the Che Guevara memorial, this hotel offers a great location for a one-night stay. The hotel benefits from an outdoor swimming pool, restaurant, snack bar and small shop. Dotted around the hotel's large gardens, the rooms are cabana style and come with ensuite facilities, air conditioning and a television.

## **Casa particulares Alberto y Osmary - Cuba**

A popular casa in a central, quiet location, Casa Osmary and Alberto is ideal for small groups. Rooms are simply furnished but comfortable, each with its own theme, all with air conditioning and ensuite facilities.

## **Casa particulares Don Pepe - Cuba**

Putting you in the heart of vibrant Cienfuegos, this casa is a true Cuban experience. Each room enjoys ensuite facilities and air conditioning.

## Dietary requirements for Cuba Guided Walking Holiday

Please contact us as far in advance as possible if you have any specific dietary requirements; we will do our best to accommodate you. Provision in Cuba may be quite basic and repetitive, so you may wish to consider bringing some snacks with you. If you require a specific meal on the flight, please let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 96 hours before travel.

## Vaccinations & health information for Cuba

This information is subject to change. We highly recommend that you consult your doctor before travelling. For further information on country specific advice, visit [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk) Hepatitis A and Tetanus vaccinations are recommended. Diphtheria, Rabies and Typhoid vaccines are sometimes recommended too. Dengue fever, Zika virus, meningitis and Chikungunya may also occur in-country. Please take suitable measures to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. Please note: the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is banned in some countries. If you will be carrying medication, please check with the country's embassy/consulate prior to travel. As an extra precaution, it is recommended to: Keep medication in its original packet Take a copy of your prescription If possible, ask your chemist to write the name of your medication in the language of the country you're visiting. Any medication you may require during your trip should be taken with you. It may not be possible to obtain medication such as paracetamol or antihistamine on the island due to national shortages. General standards of health and health services in Cuba are of a high standard. However, there is no reciprocal agreement with the UK. As with all international travel, medical insurance is essential. Cuban authorities have strengthened their health screening at entry ports; if you show symptoms of a temperature or infectious disease you may be subjected to a medical examination. The Cuban authorities are carrying out chemical fumigation across the island to control the spread of mosquito-borne diseases; the chemicals used may cause some discomfort if you come into contact with them.

## Passport & Visa information for Cuba

Passports British nationals require a full valid passport with six months validity from the date of departure from Cuba, and a visa or tourist card to enter Cuba. Other passport holders please check with your nearest Cuban embassy or consulate for entry requirements. Visas From December 31st 2024, visitors from the UK will need an e-Visa to enter Cuba. The cost of the e-Visa is included in your holiday and provided by our local partner. We will provide your e-Visa details via email prior to departure, and your details for how to fill in a D'Viajeros Form (a Health Declaration and Advanced Passenger information form). You must complete your D'Viajeros Form no more than 1 week before departure, and remember to bring the QR code you receive with you to travel into Cuba, either on your phone or printed. For more details on e-Visas and the D'Viajeros form, please [click here](#). US citizens should check the current legislation controlling travel to Cuba for the purposes of tourism, what entry requirements are needed. Those who do not have British passports, or British passports with full right of residence in the UK ("British Citizen") should check entry requirements with a Cuban Embassy or Consulate.

## Packing list - Overseas Guided Walking

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing. Essentials Walking boots Waterproof jacket Waterproof trousers Insulated jacket/top Walking clothing Walking socks (plus spares) Sunhat Gloves/mitts and warm hat Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity) Headtorch High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30) Sunglasses with a dark lens Rucksack (15-30 litres) Mobile phone Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.) Passport Visa (if applicable) Copy of your travel insurance policy UK Global Health Insurance Card (formerly known as EHIC) Recommended Collapsible

walking poles Swimwear and travel towel Snacks Dry bags Rubbish bags Insect repellent Optional extras Camera  
Sit mat Flask for hot drinks Durable lunch box Gaiters GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)

---