

Getting to Know 21st Century Cuba – Havana & Varadero
June 2018



About Us

Cuba Educational Travel (CET) is a leader in cultural travel to Cuba. CET unlocks the best of Cuba by providing access to the country's top artists, academics, tastemakers, and cultural figures. CET's tailor-made programs enable clients to experience Cuba's vibrant culture and gain a deeper understanding of the island, while ensuring full compliance with all U.S. regulations.

CET has been on the frontlines of cultural collaboration, helping to bring Cubans to the U.S. and Americans to Cuba. From Yoga retreats to concerts to dance performances, CET has wide-ranging experience and contacts. Recent highlights include organizing the Diplo Major Lazer concert in Havana, which drew a crowd of over 500,000 people and bringing Liza Alfonso Dance Cuba, the country's top dance group, to perform at the Latin Grammys.

www.cubaeducationaltravel.com

Our Value Proposition

By leveraging this expertise and curated travel capabilities, Cuba Educational Travel offers a product that is unrivaled. Our strong presence on the island and in important cultural circles gives us unparalleled access and knowledge. This combined with the beauty and intrigue of Cuba and its people make for truly unforgettable experiences.



21st Century Cuba – June 17-23, 2018

Sunday, June 17

Afternoon Arrival to Havana.

Check-in at the Hotel Nacional, the home to many important dignitaries during their visits to Cuba and the site of annual Mafia meetings throughout the 1950s. The beautiful grounds are unbeatable and take you back in time.

Orientation talk: overview of the agenda, discussion about local transportation, nearby markets, internet access and other logistics, safety, cultural norms and current events in Cuba.

7:30 pm **Behind the Scenes visit to Fabrica de Arte Cubano**, the premier location for viewing some of the freshest art and Cuban design in Havana. The brainchild of Afro-Cuban fusion musician X-Alfonso, it has become the country's most successful art and music venue and a meeting spot for a young, eclectic crowd of Cubans and foreigners.

8 pm **Welcome dinner at Tierra**, Havana's newest international dining spot. Located inside a container in the Fábrica de Arte Cubano, the restaurant mirrors the eclectic crowd, serving dishes from around the world.

Monday, June 18

10 am **Walking tour of the Old City.** Visit the **Plaza de Armas**, a scenic tree-lined plaza formerly at the center of influence in Cuba. It is surrounded by many of the most historic structures in Havana as well as important monuments. See the **Plaza de San Francisco**, a cobbled plaza surrounded by buildings dating from the 18th century, dominated by the baroque Iglesia and Convento de San Francisco dating from 1719. Wander through the **Plaza Vieja**, the oldest plaza in Havana, dating from the 16th century. **Walk along Mercaderes Street and visit Plaza de la Catedral** where the famous Havana Cathedral is located, the best example of Cuban baroque style in the city.

12 pm **Lunch at Doña Eutimia paladar.** Famous for its *ropa vieja* and frozen mojitos, this cozy paladar made Newsweek Magazine's top 100 restaurants in the world in 2012. The restaurant's location in the beautiful cathedral square is unbeatable.

2 pm **Socio-economic discussion with urban planner Miguel Coyula**, whose presentation will touch on housing, infrastructure, investment and restoration programs. It's bound to leave you with a better understanding of why Havana looks the way it does today and possibilities moving forward.

Free time

6:30 pm **Rum and cigar tasting at AltaMira art loft.** A local expert will explain the qualities and traits of fine Cuban rum and cigars, pairing them together for the perfect match. **Discussion with the AltaMira family** about art, culture and daily life on the island.

8 pm **Dinner reservation at Río Mar**, located in the luxurious Miramar neighborhood, it has a whole terrace overlooking the where the Almendares river flows into the sea. [3ra y Final #11, La Puntilla, Miramar](#) (not included – to be paid on the ground)

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Tuesday, June 19

- 9 am **Morning discussion with the Reina y Real**, a female hip hop/jazz duo. The group's music focuses on breaking down stereotypes in Cuban society, including machismo, healthy relationships, gender relations and race. They will share info about their interesting musical journey and insight into the challenges and opportunities young Cubans face.
- 11 am **Visit to the Nostalgic Cars restoration garage.** Owners Nidialys Acosta and Julio Alvarez have taken advantage of the recent economic opening to put together a fleet of over 20 pristine *clasicos* to provide professional service to their clientele. We will visit the garage to see how they restore these beauties from the 1950s. Following the visit, **enjoy a 1-hour tour in nostalgic cars.**
- 1 pm **Lunch at Mediterraneo Havana**, a modern, family run paladar in the Vedado neighborhood. This cozy paladar produces much of what it serves at a nearby farm in Guanabacoa Cuba, including the vegetables and dairy products.
- 2:30 pm **Visit a centuries-old mansion in Vedado neighborhood.** Step inside this stately residence to discover what lies behind the crumbling facades of Havana's impressive mansions. Josie, who has lived in the house for over 60 years, will show us around and explain its rich history.
- 4 pm **Enjoy a performance by Habana Compás Dance**, which encompasses the rich rhythm and flow of the island, performing traditional and modern dances born from their Spanish, Cuban and Afro-Cuban heritage.

Late afternoon and evening free

- 7:15 pm **Dinner reservation at La Guarida paladar**, famous not only for its delectable dining, but also as the location for the film *Strawberry and Chocolate*. It is housed on the third floor of a large, old town house carrying the charming ambience of the early 1900s. Concordia e Gervasio y Lealtad, no. 418 altos, Centro Habana (not included – to be paid on the ground)

Wednesday, June 20

- 9 am Check-out of hotel. **Venture outside Havana to Matanzas**, referred to as "the Athens of Cuba." Between 1817 and 1827, after the introduction of large sugar mills, the region flourished and attracted a large number of artists, writers, musicians, and intellectuals.
- Stop by the Bacunayagua bridge**, the tallest and longest bridge in Cuba and one of the seven wonders of Cuban civil engineering.
- 11 am Arrive to Matanzas. **Explore the historic quarter including the Pharmacy Museum**, housed in a former pharmacy that was founded in 1882.
- 12 pm **Continue to Varadero**, a peninsula on the north coast of Matanzas Province and Cuba's longest stretch of white, sandy beaches.
- 12:45 pm Check-in at an all-inclusive hotel Melia Varadero.

Afternoon free to enjoy the beautiful beach

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Thursday, June 21

Spend the morning exploring Varadero, including the downtown area and the **Dupont Mansion**, a beautiful home overlooking Varadero Beach.

Afternoon free to enjoy the beautiful beach

Friday, June 22

Morning free to enjoy the beautiful beach

12 pm Check-out of hotel and return to Havana.

3 pm Check-in at Hotel Nacional.

6 pm **Spend the early evening at Café Madrigal with Frank Delgado**, renowned singer and songwriter, for a discussion about the *nueva trova* movement in Cuba, followed by a musical performance. **Café Madrigal**, owned and run by film director Rafael Rosales, is housed in a beautiful colonial mansion with the walls lined with captivating artwork. **Enjoy tasty tapas and cocktails.**

7:30 pm **Farewell dinner at Paladar Atelier.** This restaurant is equally known for its atmosphere and exquisite cuisine. The lighting and textures of the house, which was home to a pre-revolutionary senator, coupled with walls adorned in modern art, create a cozy but modern setting.

Saturday, June 23

TBD Check-out and depart for the airport.